

Virilities For Rent:
Navigating Masculinity, Sexuality,
And Class in İstanbul

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Cenk Özbay

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for my mother
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ABSTRACT

VIRILITIES FOR RENT:
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AND CLASS IN İSTANBUL

By

CENK ÖZBAY

This thesis is an endeavour to understand the encountering dynamics of different masculinities of *varoş* youth and gay men in the context of male prostitution. On the one side, there are the young rent boys of poor, tough, male-dominated *varoş* culture. Rent boys pretend to be “normal”, straight men, desire more money than they have, divide their times and social milieus between gay and non-gay partners. On the other side, there are well-off, refined, heterosocial, urban gay men. Gays develop a self-distaste towards assumed effeminacy of other homosexuals and seek sexual escapades with more masculine *varoş* boys, as if they were converting straight men into having sex with themselves.

The two sides are queering what they seem to have in terms of identity categories through desire and sexual action. Rent boys are queering heteromascularity by disobeying its unwritten rules by having sex with men. They are subverting the restrictive straight framework when they are with gays, and reconstruct it when they need to pass as straight. By doing this, they uncover the inner, unchangeable, unified status of heterosexuality, and actively construct it as a field of mutual agreement, illusion, and performance. Gays are queering gayness by internalizing global fashions and styles of being gay, sexual rights, and cultural products, and simultaneously rejecting the assumed versatility of homosex, forming desire for straight-acting, and employing local categories of heterosexual imagery. Thus, gay identity becomes an incoherent, destabilized, and insecure possibility of maneuvers. With the help of queer theory, this thesis attempts to unmask (male) gender privilege, dualistic accounts of gender, and compulsory heterosexuality.

Male prostitution, homosexuality, masculinity, urban segregation, queer theory.

ÖZET

KİRALIK ERKEKLİKLER:
İSTANBUL'DA CİNSİYET,
CİNSELLİK VE SINIF

CENK ÖZBAY

Bu tez, İstanbul'da erkek fuhuşu bağlamında karşılaşılan genç varoş delikanlıları ile geylerin farklı erkekliklerinin dinamiklerini anlamak üzerine bir çaba. Bir yanda, yoksul, sert, erkek-egemen varoş kültürünün genç *rent boy*'ları var. *Rent boy*'lar "normal", *straight* erkeklermiş gibi hareket ediyor, sahip olduklarından daha fazla parayı arzuluyor, zamanlarını ve sosyal çevrelerini gey olan veya olmayan muhataplarına göre ikiye ayırıyorlar. Öbür yanda, görece zengin, kültürlü, heterososyal, kentli geyler var. Geyler kendilerinin ve diğer geylerin efemine olduğunu düşünüyor ve bundan hoşlanmıyorlar. Daha erkeksi varoş gençleri ile cinsel temas peşinde koşup, *straight* erkekleri kendileriyle yatmaya ikna etmiş gibi davranıyorlar.

Her iki grup da arzu ve cinsellik yoluyla sahiplermiş gibi göründükleri kimlik kategorilerini *queer*'leştiriyorlar. *Rent boy*'lar, heteroerkeklığı, erkeklerle seks yapmayı yasaklayan yazılmamış kurallarına uymayarak *queer*'leştiriyorlar. Geylerle beraber olduklarında kısıtlayıcı *straight* çerçeveyi tahrip ederken, gerektiği zaman *straight* olarak hayatlarına devam etmek için onu yeniden inşa ediyorlar. Bu yolla, heteroseksüelliğin içsel, değişmez, yekpare statüsünün aldaticılığını meydana çıkarırken, onu bir karşılıklı mutabakat, hayal ve icra alanı olarak vücuda getiriyorlar. Geyler, gey olmanın küresel akımlarını ve tarzlarını, cinsel hakları ve kültürel ürünleri içselleştirirken, aynı anda homoseksin çift taraflılığını reddederek, *straight*-gibi olana öykünerek, ve yerel heteroseksüel deyişleri benimseyerek, geyliği *queer*'leştiriyorlar. Böylelikle, gey kimlik tutarsız, istikrarsız ve güvensiz bir manevra olasılığına dönüşüyor. Queer teorisinin yardımı ile, bu tez, erkek cinsiyetinin ayrıcalığının, ikili cinsiyet açıklamalarının ve zorunlu heteroseksüelliğin maskesini indirmeyi amaçlıyor.

Erkek fuhuşu, eşcinsellik, erkeklik, kent bölünmüşlüğü, queer teorisi.

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1 INTRODUCTION

THE CITY AND QUEERED ENCOUNTERS

“Later, I found out that sexual relations can be tedious and unrewarding. These are categories and divisions in the homosexual world. The queer gets together with the queer and everybody does everything. One sucks first, and then reverse roles. How can that bring any satisfaction? What we are really looking for is our opposite. The beauty of our relationships then was that we met our opposites.”
Reinaldo Arenas (1994: 106)

In this short introductory chapter I will briefly mention the physical and social context, and the methodological concerns that shape my initial curiosity and keenness to study male prostitution in İstanbul. First, I try to illustrate the post-1980s İstanbul in which *varoş* culture and the ways of living it emerged. Second, I recount the stimulating effects of queer theory and research upon my thoughts about sexuality and my own position within the research. Lastly, I sketch out the plan of the thesis in a few words.

1.1. *Varoş* Culture: Cross-Class Constellations in İstanbul

The urban divide in Istanbul has been sharpened since the liberalization and privatization policies of the early 1980s as Turkish society entered a process of social fragmentation and differentiation (Gürbilek, 1992; Gürbilek, 2001; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001; Kandiyoti, 2002b; Erman, 2004). New squatter districts continued to join the older ones as more and more peasants came to the city, while income and consumption gaps between different segments of society became greater and more visible. Spatial segregation between the rich and the poor had always existed in İstanbul. The large flow of migrants during the 1990s exacerbated this

segregation and created a feeling of a divided city with opaque and impermeable borders not only geographically but also culturally. Now, it is continuously declared that there are two discrete groups of people living in Istanbul, the peripherals (*varoş*)¹ and others. These two groups are deemed that they do not regularly meet physically, economically, culturally, and of course sexually.

Recent social science research has described out this urban division in Istanbul (Erder, 1996; Erder, 1997; Erdoğan, 2002; Gürbilek, 2001; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001; Keyder, 1999; Yüksek, 2003). They depicted the walls and borders of the two subworlds within the city, and especially emphasized ‘the other side’ of the coin: lives in a *varoş* as seen through its inhabitants’ eyes. Even though there are crucial contributions to the study of the urban poor in Turkey these generally ignore encounters between the two.²

¹ Although everyday conversations, the language of journalism and even songwriters (“Ben Varoşlar Prensiyim-I am the prince of *varoş*”) use the word *varoş* without hesitation and therefore construct a commonsensical agreement on what the term specifically means, academic style of writing had been using “gecekondu” instead of *varoş* although it also started to change toward including *varoş* (Erman, 2004). Indeed, to call the space and the people who live upon it “gecekondu” implies the fact of informal housing, the ephemeral situation of illegality, and to underestimate the cultural side of mutual understandings between “us” and “them”. On the other hand, to use “to live in *varoş*”, or better, “to be *varoş*” reflects and depicts the sharp urban segregation and underlines the aspect of identity-(self)recognition. Thus, in spite of seeming less cool, I prefer to use *varoş* throughout the thesis even when I do not attempt to verbalize it.

² For some clues regarding these encounters, see Kandiyoti, 2002a; Öncü, 1999; Öncü 2002; Özbek, 1997; Özyegin, 2001; Özyeğin, 2002. Joel Migdal also calls our attention to such encounters: “the effects of the modernity project can be found not in examination of elites and their institutions exclusively, nor in a focus solely on the poor or marginal groups of society, but on those physical and social spaces where the two intersect.” (1997: 253, quoted by Özyeğin, 2002: 44). On the other hand, popular attention frequently focuses on this urban misfit. Yıldırım Türker (2005) is one example of it: “[Kimi muktedirler] Şık ve şanına yaraşır bir dünya kenti olarak tasarladıkları İstanbul’un, rant mücadelesinden, gelir dağılımındaki vahşi adaletsizlikten hiç söz etmeden varoşlarından silkinip bütün taşları boyalı, bütün sokakları çiçekli bir pırlanta olmasını istiyorlar. Varoşların dilsizleri, dolaşımın dışında bırakılmışlar, şehre zaten saklanarak köşeden bakanlar, durmadan

The media has now been depicting the city as a site of struggle in which recently migrated *varoş* people -those unable to be publicly visible unless they do something irregular (if not illegal)- are pitted against to the ‘indigenous’ upper-middle classes³ –who in view of the sheer numbers of the newcomers try to remain ‘clean’, secure, and exclusive by retreating behind the high walls of gated communities. Possible social, cultural, economic, political, spatial, and sexual encounters between the two are thus minimized and ignored when it cannot be prevented. Middle classes are increasingly avoiding such encounters with the popular classes at all levels of social

küfür gibi çoğalanlar canlarını sıkıyor... Kimi kesimlerince ulaşılamaz onca tepesi, fethedilemez onca kalesi olan, yalnız bayram günlerinde kendini *varoş* ahalisine teslim eden bu şehir, ancak şan şöret, para pulla edinilebilecek bir paye gibi sunuyor, hemşehriliğini... Varoşlara sığmayıp bize sıkça görünmeye başlamış olan edepsiz çocukların, hırsız delikanlıların ve onların kalabalık ailelerinin de İstanbulluyuz diye tepindikleri yok. Onlar, ıslah edilseler de bu şehre yakışmayacaklarını biliyorlar...”. (Some of the powerful elite wants to transform İstanbul, which they designated as a chic world city as appropriate to its reputation, from struggles of benefit, sharp inequality, and its *varoş* to a city like a diamond that all of its stones are painted and all of its streets flowered. This elite is bored by the dumb of the *varoş* who are out of circulation, hides themselves looking at the city from its corners, and reproducing disregarding the reactions. Having many unreachable hills and unconquerable castles, and reveals itself to *varoş* people only in *bayram* days, İstanbul presents its compatriot status only for fame or money. Kinky kids, thief youngsters, and their crowded families that cannot fit into *varoş* and become frequently visible do not have an anxiety to prove their İstanbulite identities. They know that they will not fit with this city even if they are ameliorated.)

³ As Norbert Elias names them: “The ‘established’ and the ‘outsiders’. An influx of outsiders always presents a challenge to the way of life of the established population, whatever the objective difference between the newcomers and the old inhabitants. Tensions then arise out of the necessity to make space and so recognize the newcomers. Resulting anxieties become hostile feelings, but the established inhabitants tend to possess better resources to act upon their prejudices. They can also invoke the rights they have acquired by their sheer length of habitation as encapsulated in such phrases as ‘this is the land of our forebears’.” (Bauman and Lay, 2001: 33).

interaction. Gated communities have been sprouting around the city and private security groups grow in numbers.⁴

Deniz Kandiyoti (2002b) argues that it is not possible anymore to understand and explain fragmented, divided, diversified Turkish society with models of modernization. Effective critiques of modernist and oppressive republican ideology and regime have proliferated in the last ten years.⁵ Kandiyoti starts by trying to explain modern Turkey but then embarks on a criticism of the social sciences and the crises of representation, and concludes that the conventional methodologies and questions in the social science cannot deal with the new times. In Turkey, this paralysis is apparent in the distance between the social sciences and the everyday problems experienced by the masses. This gap is exacerbated by the mass media which demands short answers for its yes-or-no questions.

Melih Işık and Oğuz Pınarcıoğlu (2002) argue that the new migrants occupied and shared state-owned lands and then developed new systems of advantage and profit, while already settled middle classes of the city remained immobile and unchanged - both physically and socially, meanwhile the *nouveau riches* (or the ‘upstarts’, Bauman and May, 2001: 36) of the country (born out of in the economic crises of the last ten years, and best symbolized by jeeps they use) exhibit specious consumption and strive to protect themselves in their “enclaves”. As stated earlier,

⁴ I learnt these from Ayfer Bartu Candan’s current work. Bauman and May (2001: 39) also note: “The value that segregated areas provide in orienting our conduct and expectations is attained by routine practices of exclusion: that is by selective and limited admission. Exclusive residential areas, policed by private security companies, are but one example of this phenomenon, in which those financial means exclude those who do not enjoy the possibilities that are derived from their income and wealth.” For a well-documented analysis of such an urban segregation in Sao Paulo, see Calderia, 2000, and for the new middle class *sites* in Ankara, see Ayata, 2002, for İstanbul, see Öncü, 1997.

⁵ See, for example, Bozdoğan and Kasaba, eds, 1997.

any possible social encounter between these loosely defined three urban poles is deemed undesirable. Therefore, it is possible to mention an increasing fragmentation in the Istanbul social geography, lifestyles, tastes, and perhaps most importantly, morality. Within this fragmented city, Deniz Yüksek (2003) constructs the relations of trust between her Russian and Turkish-Kurdish counterparts as the critical role in her analysis for the urban commercial borderland, Laleli, and constructs a sociological model of trust/risk behavior, while Sema Erder (1999) points to informal networks amongst poor migrant people in the *varoş* districts of the city as well as between older and recent migrants. For her, those burgeoning networks have the potential to transform dramatically the nature of urban tension and struggle. Those links vis-à-vis the hostile city may be crucial in comprehending the conditions of Istanbul after the 1980s.

I would like to look at this increasingly globalized and fragmented urban texture of İstanbul in the year 2000 and after, the inter-class encounters between *varoş* and middle-upper classes at two different levels: Cross-class representations and cross-class relations. This double view of relations and representations provide the framework through which I shall approach the interconnection between gays and rent boys.

As an example of cross class representations, Ayşe Öncü (1999; 2002) studies caricature as a space of cultural production and circulation in independent comic journals that have the highest circulation in all the printed media. She interviews writers and caricaturists who change rapidly and renovate themselves, and analyses the differentiated and differentiating sense of humor sustained through repetitions and symbols which are closed to outsiders (adults, the majority, etc.). According to Öncü *maganda* is a key figure that originated in these comics and then moved out to

almost all discourses. She gives a detailed explanation of the satirical humor and global interpretations of youth studies, concurrently draws a vivid picture of the historical-social specificity of Istanbul at the beginning of the 1990s, and underlines the context of urban polarization in which her analysis would be meaningful. In this fashion, she criticizes the naturalized story in which Istanbul is presented as poisoned and “degenerated” by migrations since 1950s. This story, according to her, is “an urban narrative”.

For her part, Gül Özyeğin (2001; 2002) investigates the shifting notions, experiences, and circulation of notions of modernity through critical daily encounters and relations between tenants, doorkeepers, and domestic workers in urban Ankara. She argues that the dominating idea of the modern cannot be considered as solid as the apartment walls in which the new upper-middle classes hide themselves. Özyeğin enables readers to see encounters, interactions, and interferences between different social classes in the spaces they share. The description of the “outsiders within” that Özyeğin provides shows that key terms such as tradition, modern, urbanity, parenthood, masculinities, femininities, etc. are all open to negotiation through an active process of navigation and change. Norms and exceptions are constantly reproduced by intercommunication and challenge.

Erder (2001[1996]) cites that there are ever-growing ubiquitous zones around the city center that came into being in the last 20 years or so, in which particular informal structures, rules, networks, and relations are dominant. In other words, she recounts that *varoş* culture exists without exactly verbalizing it. In this understanding, *varoş* is not a particular place to mark on the city map; on the contrary, it is a cultural, political, moral, and embodied life style that might arise

even from middle class neighborhoods because of the process of becoming hegemonic. Within this process the concept *delikanlı* becomes significant.

Delikanlılık (literally virile youth, connotes a real, tough, honest, incipient masculinity) is the trademark of *varoş* masculinity, although being a *delikanlı* existed long before the invention of *varoş* culture. Attempts to reappropriate the notion of *delikanlılık* led to serious discussions between elites and popular classes regarding the shape of hegemonic masculinity in the 1990s. For example, in a television show, Müjdat Gezen, an experienced actor and more importantly presented as an “eski İstanbul Beyefendisi” (old Istanbul gentleman, whose refined cultural background goes back to the 1940s, even to imperial İstanbul) claimed that the young arabesk singers who claimed to represent the fundamental aspects of the new *varoş delikanlılık* notion were nothing but “kıro” and *maganda* (in the sense Öncü uses the term). He insisted that the young people of the country did not really know what the authentic *delikanlılık* was all about. Indeed, this was a discursive conflict between the representatives of urban Turkish masculinity (i.e. educated, refined, secular, etc.) and what recent (mostly Kurdish) migrants manifested as their own (i.e. peasant-background, traditional, more homosocial, etc.). The encounter between the two expressions of masculinity set the terms of hegemonic masculinity in the country. At the representational level, all young arabesk singers that Gezen once blamed with faking the real *delikanlılık*, transformed themselves and adopted a more western, “modern”, and urban profile.⁶ In everyday interaction, this transformation paved the way for *varoş* boys to put forth themselves as mixed with both discourses and empower themselves as the future actors of the new Turkish

⁶ Eventually, Gezen met with Alişan whom he had criticized in the past because of the latter’s attempts to rewrite “delikanlılık kitabı” (the book of *delikanlılık*) in a TV series in which both of them act as gypsies.

urban masculinity.⁷ This process of hybridization, rearticulation, and legitimation of the *varoş* masculinity enabled rent boys to gain self-assurance and pompous high opinions about themselves, their bodies, and their masculinities: Urban, *tarz* (stylish), attractive, but also real, authentic, and uncontaminated.

⁷ Alperen Atik (2004) puts a harsh note on the current condition of *delikanlılık* in the *varoş* atmosphere in accordance with the changing patterns of hegemonic masculinity: “Metroseksüalite varoşlardaki delikanlılık olgusunu bile dönüştürdü. Yeni bir delikanlılık türü doğdu: Neo-delikanlılar. Bu tür kendisini eski delikanlılardan görünümüleri ile farklılaştırıyor. Saçlar çok aşırı jöleleniyor, alttaki Adidas Tygun’u göstermek için kot paçaları ayakkabının içine sokuluyor, markaların seri sonu veya defolu kot modelleri tercih ediliyor, fotoğraf çeken cep telefonları ikinci el pazarından alınıyor, korsan CD’ler ile müzik zevkleri oluşturuluyor. Dönüşüm bir eksikle tamam: Küpe. Kulak memesi deldirmek varoş kültüründe tabu sayıldığı için bu delikanlılar kelepçesiz küpeleri ‘**korsan**’ takıyorlar... Öyle bir ‘**karizma yapma**’ hırısı var ki, bu karizmanın saç dökücü, ikinci el, kopya, fason, defolu ve seri sonu olması önemli değil... Aslolan kıroluk zincirlerini kırmak ve ‘**MTV çocuğu**’ olarak kabul görmektir... Ucuz jöleler, seri sonu kotlar, ikinci el cep telefonları, güçlendirilmiş oto hoparlörleri ve Beckham posterleri üstüne kurulu alternatif bir delikanlılık anlayışı doğdu,” (emphasis original). (Metrosexuality transformed even the notion of *delikanlılık* in *varoş*. A new type of *delikanlılık* emerged: Neo-*delikanlı*. This type differs itself from the former *delikanlıs* by appearance. Hair is too much sprayed, sleeves of the pant put into Adidas Tygun to show the sneakers, preferring to faulty jeans of famous trademarks, buying second-hand cellular phones with cameras, setting musical taste with copied CDs. The transformation is complete with one missing thing: Earrings. *Delikanlıs* put fake earrings without piercing their ears because it is shameful in *varoş* culture. It is an ambition to be cool and it does not matter this coolness is balding, second-hand, fake, faulty, or copied... What does matter is breaking the chains of *kıroluk* and is approved as MTV-child. An alternative style of *delikanlılık* emerged from cheap hair sprays, faulty jeans, second-hand cell phones, empowered automobile stereos, and Beckham posters.) On the other hand, Prieur (1997: 148) finds these changes usual from a Bourdieusian point of view: “The dominated classes may try to adopt the dominant taste and lifestyle –a strategy favored by social climbers. Or they may contend themselves with imitations or substitutes: Polyester has not the same qualities as silk, but it is much cheaper. On the other hand, a lipstick with the “wrong” color is not necessarily cheaper than the one with the “right” color, and the length of the miniskirt is not determined by its price. The popular classes have, according to Bourdieu, some autonomy of evaluation in their own aesthetic choices. And among the basic principles of this autonomous taste are a taste of necessity (they learn to like what they can afford), a taste for what is practical and functional, and a taste for what can provide a maximum of effect at minimum cost.” Hence, it would be meaningless to read this process of imitation and change in *delikanlılık* as a duality of good-bad or real-fake but the hegemonization of a particular masculinity in relation and negotiation with other sources, references, and necessities.

In the context of spatially and socially segregated İstanbul, masculinity in general and *varoş* masculinity in particular presents another point of cross-class encounter like the everyday relations of doorkeepers, the circulation of *maganda* caricatures, and the transmission of arabesk music (Özbek, 1992; Stokes, 1992; 2002). This encounter between *varoş* masculinity -embodied with rent boys here- and the meanings and values of middle-upper class, indigenous İstanbulites can give us an intimate insight about how both sides (*varoş* boys and gay men) perceive their position in relation with the other and develop strategies to empower themselves while reconfiguring the cross-class constellation they are embedded in.

1.2. Queer(ing) Qualitative Research

In İstanbul, next to the *varoş* cultural practices and class segregation, a striving and visible gay culture⁸ that I will delve into in the next chapter, now offers new urban encounters to the young men of these *varoş* by becoming rent boys. In recent years rent boys have appeared as novel actors in the gay life of İstanbul. Most of them live in one of the *varoş* in poverty, generally coming to the city for weekends, and hardly having money for the bus fare. In general, they are in their late teens and early twenties, mostly uneducated and/or unemployed, and the majority are sons of recent migrants. They engage sexually with men that they meet only in anonymous settings like bars, parks around Taksim and through the Internet.⁹ Gays or frequenters of the

⁸ Alas there is no one (or more) scholarly satisfying, systematic work to represent gay culture embedded in the Turkish context. Some of the endeavours that already made could only be received as contributions to a partial background, see Alper, 2004; Hocaoğlu, 2002; Özbay and Soydan, 2003; Selek, 2001; Tapınç, 1992; Armbrecht, 2001.

⁹ We know that “public places where men meet for sex such as parks, beaches, toilets etc., are called “beats” in Australia, “cottages” in Britain, “tea-rooms” in the

bars can understand who is for rent or not without even talking to them. Rent boys engage in sex with gay men for money, adamantly refuse to call themselves gay, and define themselves as real men. They do not kiss gays or employ any sort of love-making but are only concerned with taking the active role in sexual intercourse (they are strictly “tops”, a significant aspect of reclaiming virility) and earning money. They lead double lives in terms of both class and sexuality.

Researching for this thesis, I met these young men, whose conceived *varoş* masculinity being at risk in terms of their hidden homosexual engagement, are involved in reclaiming, demonstrating, and emphasizing their heteromascularity. Rent boys in Istanbul continuously endeavor to distance themselves from the gays they sleep with in terms of physical contact, shared understandings and empathy, or cultural codes, and language. In other words, they reconfigure and affirm their real manhood by ignoring their sexual encounters with men and distancing themselves discursively from gays. Gays are apparent others for rent boys in Istanbul. Nevertheless, their sexual encounters with gays are risky enterprises in the sense that their masculinity is constantly in question.

The idea of risk is not limited only to the rent boys. I, as a young, middle-class, gay graduate student, also took a risk in involving myself with them since they construct themselves sometimes aggressively as opposite to “us” and have thus become the symbols of anti-gay violence in the country. What do we researchers honestly think or feel about the people we investigate, talk to, spend time with, visit at their places or put them up at ours, share something? Or, do we strive to make ourselves or

United States, and “boxes” in South Africa.” from the work of noted sociologist Gary Dowsett (1996). In Turkey, basic promenades like Taksim Park, in front of Aga Camii on Istiklal Caddesi (especially after midnight) and special rent-boy bars are all called “çark”, and “çarka çıkmak” means going to visit these places to cruise.

others believe that we are in effect sharing something? In this framework, it might be meaningful to ponder on the critical comments directed at Joanne Passaro (1997) who writes an ethnography in New York City with homeless people without staying with them in the street. From such a viewpoint, the physical danger or the physicality of the encounter between the researcher and her informants may seem as the rite-de-passage of the study. Its existence is the proof of how different our subjects are to us, in other words the honor of the project, while its absence demonstrates the sameness of “them” and “us”: “Is ‘better’ knowledge that which is produced/secured at great risk?” (Passaro, 1997: 147). Risking himself as a researcher has at least two aspects here: one is about physical danger, yet the more salient risk than this physical danger is at the level of emotions, reactions, and reflections when “we” are continuously humiliated, belittled, and even dehumanized in the speeches of the informants.

I did not react to these discursive tactics of rent boys to otherize gays. I always strove to keep my distance from the gay community in talking with rent boys¹⁰. Indeed, I do not believe in an uncritical belonging to the contested gay groups anyway. This does not mean that I denied that I was gay. I just did not provoke a situation in which I had to defend my sexual self or the gay community. Acceptance, empathy, equalizing the different mutual views, and developing an understanding of their subjective and fragile situations were my priorities.¹¹ To achieve this gay-but-

¹⁰ I am experienced (although not successful every time) to this act of speaking critically about gays with lesbians and bisexual women without taking “a gay position”, Özbay and Soydan, 2003.

¹¹ Such a technique brings in a reflexive investigation of relative positions within a dialogical talk: “When the asymmetry between researcher and informants regarding cultural and economic capital is as strong as it was indeed in this case, there is always a danger that the research relationship becomes a sort of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1996). The informants may feel objectified and judged by a person who represents the dominant categories of their society... The researcher is a

not position I attempted to employ the language of rent boys that they use carefreely. I knew this way of talking from my high school years in a *varoş* neighborhood.¹² Of course, the linguistic parameters that I utilized shifted and specialized during the time I spent with rent boys.

My aim is not to assign an inner and inflexible (sexual) identity to rent boys; on the contrary, I wish to comprehend the ways they (inter)actively construct their relational selves and (re)actions, the ways these reactions change contextually, and the purposes they have behind the exaggerated masculinity they enact. My stance against those already defined, stable subjects is informed by queer theorists¹³ who insert a poststructuralist critique of the unified, sovereign, autonomous self and recognize partial, instable sexual subjects that carry no inner, natural, unchangeable identity category (i.e. sex, gender, race) within and on their bodies. In other words, I did not accept “homosexuals” and “heterosexuals” as pregiven identities. I have the “queer” suspicion that unified sexual subjectivities exist and can be encapsulated in a study. Neither do I agree with the sexual binarism between homo and

representative of what is culturally legitimate, and the informants may expect the researcher to share dominant views of them. This may make them withdraw from dialogue, or take on an aggressive and combative attitude toward the researcher. The researcher may try to compensate this asymmetry by arriving alone, and by allowing herself to be tested by them. Pierre Bourdieu (1996) recommends that the researcher should already know the informant or have common acquaintances, and that they preferably also should have some traits in common that makes it possible somehow to change the objectifying *you* and *we*, to create a situation where the two may try to reach an understanding together,” (Priour: 1997: 16).

¹² Surely our high school talk did not include anything about rent boys. However, as I said earlier *varoş*-speak is powerful because of its ability to diffuse. This language is a non-political, tough, centred on sexuality, demeaning of women and gays, endorsing penetration, using slang, indifferent, and humoristic. From prominent linguist Deborah Cameron’s (1998) work we know that there are certain tactics used to construct a heteromale talk amongst young men. Analyzing *varoş*-speak is an extremely worthy study for further research.

¹³ See for the summary of the claims queer theory invoked, Seidman, ed, 1996; Jagose, 1996; Kirsch, 2000; Namaste, 1996; Spargo, 1999; Sullivan, 2003; Warner, ed, 1993.

heterosexualities that assumes an objective, exclusive, and impervious border. Rather my aim is to demonstrate how these so-called lines might be penetrable, intermeshed, and deceptive in the daily sexual encounters between people. In the queer research approach the sexual organization of society as falling between neatly defined categories is understood to be extremely heterocentric and homophobic. Therefore, my focus is not to determine who is gay or who is straight, but to show how these identity boxes are fragile, false, and open to reconstruction even on a daily basis.

Homo and heterosexuality as a determining axis of sexual order is not meaningful in the context of rent boys in İstanbul. More than that, I aim to have the partial and open-to-negotiation navigation of sexual experiences that are largely molded by class backgrounds and active-passive sexual roles, which are also changeable in time. In this queered understanding, men who have sex with men are not entrapped in the superficial category of homosexual, the rest (the majority) being heterosexual. This is a particular socio-cultural (sexual) arrangement, started in the first sexology studies and sex role researches (Seidman, 1996), which we are supposed to participate in and contribute to through our academic work. Queer theorists challenged this and directed our attention to the formation of these boundaries, focusing on deconstruction and unthinking (sexual) identities. George Chauncey (2000: 311) describes the fluid sexual world of early 20th century New York: “Many of those unmarried men, and even many of the married ones, interacted with queer men openly and publicly and with the support and encouragement of their peers, and even had sex with them; that there were saloons –open to the public on the busiest commercial streets of Manhattan- where so-called normal Italian immigrant working men went to buy the sexual services of young male prostitutes or to watch the show put on by the fairies who gathered there and entertained the ‘normal’ men with their

campy repartee; that the records of the police –not just the wishful memories of older gay men- show that sailors regularly went to Times Square to pick up gay men and that gay men regularly went to sailor bars to pick up straight men; that whatever else it took for a sailor or an Italian immigrant worker or many another man to claim the mantle of normality in the early twentieth century, it was not necessary for them to claim the mantle of heterosexuality; that heterosexuality –no less than homosexuality or bisexuality- is a socially constructed and historically specific identity; and that, in an important sense, *there is tradition of heterosexuality in this society.*” (Italics original)¹⁴

Marxist anthropologist/queer theorist Max Kirsch (2000) likens the situation of contemporary queer theory to Marx’s criticism of New Hegelians by claiming that the latter do not perform anything materially in terms of struggling against class inequality, but just ponder about it. Kirsch similarly maintains that queer theory pays scant attention to class matters. For him, queer theory is concerned with almost everything but class and queer research is limited to cultural/literary/film studies. Anthropologist Roger Lancaster (2003: 196) succinctly defines queer theory after almost fifteen years of its inception as: “A montage of theories underscoring the flexibility of the body, the performative superficiality of gender, the contrived nature of the heteronorm -in short, the ‘constructedness’ of identity.” He, like Kirsch, also warns us about the future of queer studies and social sciences: “Queer theory will not move forward again until it accounts for the real-world successes and latter-day predicaments of the LGBTQ bloc whose interests it claims to represent, whose multifaceted perspectives it purports to convey, and whose existence it supposedly researches... It will remain ill-equipped to really engage the new social conditions

¹⁴ For broader and detailed versions of his claims and his queer historicism, see Chauncey, 1994.

until it attends to political-economic problems and institutional articulations as credibly as it took up questions related to signification, representation, and performance in the nineties.” (2003: 346). Those and other similar criticisms motivated me to design this research as an outcome of cross-class relations and urban segregation manifested here in sexual encounters of different parties as well as representations of homosexuality and relations through queer spaces of the city.

Keeping the queer challenge in mind, now I sketchily introduce three different queer qualitative research tactics that Gamson (2000) underlines and I aimed to use through the thesis. First is the preoccupation with unstable, multiple, fragmented processes of identity formation and to put “the process of identification *with*” (Kirsch, 2000) into queer studies. This means not to concentrate on a particular identity but to hear voices about a specific experience or a set of interrelated experiences in order to specify and externalize the “identity work” (Gamson, 2000) that people perform in their everyday lives. Such a perspective enables one to see clearly the queer aspects of this identity work and to gain insights about the tenuous and illusory borders of identity and community. That is why I do not define rent boys as heterosexual (as they claim), bisexual (as some of them actually seem to be), or gay (as most gays believe). Instead, I opt to talk with them without fixing their sexual identity as a pre-condition of their sexual selves. What they do under which circumstances, what they say to whom, what are the little nuances they negotiate with, and where the possible vulnerable points are that challenge and change claims of identity were the topics of conversations, inviting them (and of course myself) to question the categories they verbalize.

A second point in queering the research is about escaping the authority of the writing experience. This possibility is highly limited in a master thesis where the

time for both researching and writing “multivocally” is very short and the stress of completing it by the time is acute. Still, I tried to position myself as one of the gays that speaks here in a shared fashion. This was quite difficult sometimes because I am neither a rent boy nor a client. Although mostly dominant, my voice is positioned between other people’s and reveals itself in the language I employ differently according to whom I talk. Nevertheless, I wanted to mix my voice, the reflections of informants, and our shared expectations of the readers in a more transparent mood of writing and rewriting. This desire remained as one of the most unsatisfied aspects of this thesis.

The last strategy is about putting myself in what I wrote as a fundamental actor and making the readers feel the way I did. This does not mean disclosing the author’s sexual identity on the first page of the text as a natural, unchanged fact or as an outsider (objective) given and then to go on writing as if everything is okay with it. In my comprehension, in queer research, my sexual position is also a site of negotiation and open to examination and change. My gayness here just like my middle class background or my age is exposed to informants. Furthermore, my personal history interpenetrated the thesis sometimes or my experience and testimony speaks for itself. Because I do not get involved with male prostitution as a bodily/sexual practice, I could not write this thesis as an autoethnography, or as “memory work” (Messner, 2004). But some of its basic principles seem highly relevant to cite here, such as “We need a form that will allow readers to feel the moral dilemmas, think with our story instead of about it, join actively in the decision points that define an autoethnographic project, and consider how their own lives can be made a story worth telling.” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 735) Reflexivity, own voice, fiction, literature, research, and memoirs might be combined in the name of queering the genres: academic or not.

This thesis consists of two basic chapters. In chapter 2, I present the organization of homosexual culture in İstanbul. In terms of queering the principles of qualitative methodology, I talked with 12 gay men in irregular settings and for different periods of time (mostly around one and a half hour). Before the interviews I knew some of them and I talked with them as one friend or acquaintance. The rest first met with me during our interviews. In addition to what they elucidate, I put my own experiences into the story as well as the collection of representations of same-sex desire from fiction and non-fiction books and from the media. In chapter 3, I portray the lives of rent boys.¹⁵ For this part, I talked with five rent boys and two clients. Again, I followed the same pattern of different settings and times to talk with my informants. I paid money two of them. In this chapter, I also use the material from newspapers, weekly magazines, TV programs, novels, and Internet sites to better understand what rent boys exactly perform, say, and their relation with their public image.

1.3. Outline of the Thesis

Manifestation, experience, and representation of sexualities matter in and for every distant corner of the world. While some cities and local governments use their sexual diversity as a way of promoting their tourism potential as a proof of their tolerance, creativity, colorfulness, and enjoyment (Rushbrook, 2002), a more

¹⁵ For example, McNamara (1994) reports the way and strategies how he could participate the culture and spaces of hustling in New York City as if he is an anthropologist and entering into a totally different culture than his own. I do not have such great stories and tactics maybe because rent boys in İstanbul do not constitute a well-organized group with sensitive borders as hustlers have in New York. Rent boys generally do not know themselves personally and they cannot control whether a stranger appears near them.

historical and comparative gaze can document difference in attitudes towards homosexuality and constitute a broader sexual politics of history from changing positions (Aldrich, 2003; Trexler, 1995). It might be stated that homosexuality and its “out” living is a sign that society progressed so as to reach applauding human rights and democracy. The North American anthropologist Richard Parker (1999: 1) referred to this defining element of sexualities: “Sexuality has become a quintessential test case –a fundamental marker of difference within a global system of symbolic exchanges. Much like race, sexuality has been neatly packaged as an especially important figure in the range of images used to distinguish North from South, the First World from the Third World, the developed nations from the developing countries.” Although Western cultures are first and foremost about the emergence and mainstreaming of “modern gay communities” (and the struggles they had), the eastern or southern cultures are always represented through their “exotically different” sexual freedom symbolized as harem and carnival (Schick, 2000; Parker, 1999; Aldrich, 2003). Turkey in this wider picture (and positioned as usual between the east and the west) presents a problematical liminal zone because of its non-western, imperial, and Islamic roots and the experience of modernization in the last two centuries. As I argue in the next chapter, homosexualities in Turkey can be classified as modern urban gay men and lesbians or some other strong and resisting local forms of (sometimes invisible) same-sex sexual practices such as *varoş* boys who try to combine heteromascularity and male prostitution in this context.

Although it is still possible to stress the difference between the recently gained right of marriage by Spanish gays and the shocking reticence of Iranians about modern gay and lesbian identities, no one can ignore the accumulating influences of the process of globalization that is felt almost everywhere on our planet. As I explain

later, modern gay identity cannot cover everything about men who have sex with men and their visibility, and yet, it is totally impossible to disregard the globalization of “gayness” as a concept and as a life style. Richard Parker thinks that local measures play a significant role in the formation of “global queering”:

“Whatever might have been the case in the past, within the complex global system of the late twentieth century, notions of sexual difference, linked to broader configurations to cultural difference, can no longer be understood along such static and bounded lines. Sexualities, like cultures, can no longer be thought of as neatly unified, internally coherent systems that can somehow be set off and studied, interpreted and understood, compared and contrasted, and help up individually as examples of diversity and difference. On the contrary, sexuality, as much as any other aspect of human life, has increasingly become subject to a range of rapidly accelerating, and often highly disjunctive, processes of change, taking place within the context of the exceptionally complex globalization that has marked the closing decades of the twentieth century. And it is only by seeking to interpret the specificities of local sexual cultures as they are caught up within the cross currents of these global processes of change that we can begin to move past a largely superficial reading of sexual similarities and differences in order to build up a more complex understanding of the vicissitudes of sexual experience in the contemporary world.” (1999: 2)

İstanbul may provide a unique chance in our larger attempts to comprehend and locate globalized sexualities and their various forms that exist together. This endeavour necessitates forming links between the globalization of fashion, identities, and rights of gay-identified men and the local web of complicit milieux (i.e. rent boys, or heterosexual-identified *varoş* boys who have sex with men) and indigenous meanings (i.e. being active or passive, or being *kaşar*) attached to sexual acts.

In the next chapter, I provide a detailed account of male homosexualities in Turkey first through their relations in queer spaces, and then through representations of men who have sex with men, turning finally to the burgeoning gay political movements. In the process I describe some local features of same sex desire like being a *kaşar*, active-passive distinctions, and classed experiences of same sex eroticism as part of a dialogical relation with globalized sexual identities. Gay men in Turkey are queering gayness by simultaneously accepting the globalized bodily norms (fit, smooth, casual wear, etc.), identities (gay movements, spaces, festivals, etc.), and sexual standards (masculine look, versatility, broadly-accepted fetishes, etc.) as well as reproducing concepts largely borrowed from heterosexual relations such as active-passive, *kaşar*, or *varoş*. Because this queering is an overlapping process and it includes some features of self-denial, it is very difficult to grasp and interpret it without noticing the queer, slippery, and tricky character it has.

In chapter three, I make an attempt to map rent boys out in the social geography of İstanbul, focus on their culture and style which permit them to personify the exaggerated *varoş* masculinity, the processes of negotiation and relations between rent boys and their clients, and the representations of rent boys by various gay men in the public media. While self-identified gay men of the country are queering gay identity by blending globalized characteristics with local notions, rent boys are queering normative heterosexuality which forbids straight men to engage sexually with other men by male prostitution. From a viewpoint of hegemonic heteromascularity in Turkey, rent boys are present in gay bars where they should not, they are dividing their time between straight worlds of daytime and queer hours of the night, selling sex to men or pretending to, navigating relations between a straight environment (who do not know) and gay/rent boy milieu (who know) while they insist on their masculine selves and heterosexual (“normal”) identities. As

George Chauncey (2000) refers above for New York, rent boys in İstanbul are but one actors of a heterosexual tradition that prohibits homosexual sex to straight men which they do not seem to take seriously.

In the short concluding chapter, I underline some further aspects of active-passive binarism in the construction of the identity of rent boy in relation to other examples of male prostitution from the world. I refrain from starting new discussions as well as reiterating what I say in the thesis.

2
**ILLUSIONS OF PROMISCUITY,
 DREAMS OF LIBERATION!**

**ON THE DYNAMICS OF
 HOMOSEXUALITIES IN TURKEY**

“Gay culture –especially in places like Chelsea- is utterly triumphant and completely visible. But it seems very much a body culture; not at all a bookish culture.”
 Edmund White (2000: 79)

“We would find that man... who wanted desperately to fuck us. We were fucked under bridges, in the bushes, everywhere, by men who wanted satisfaction while they penetrated us... Everything here is so regulated that groups and societies have been created in which it is very difficult for a homosexual to find a man, that is, the real object of his desire.”
 Reinaldo Arenas (1994: 107)

In this chapter, I will strive to present a general portrait of the underworld¹⁶ of same-sex sexual relations in İstanbul. First of all, I ought to recognize that this is an effort that consists of contradictions, incoherencies, with overlapping, multiple experiences. From what I have witnessed or heard from my informants, I learnt that it might be equally easy to belittle homosexualities, sexual communities, or simply men who have sex with men in Turkey as immature, invisible, local, or trivial as well as to rhapsodize over them as a free-floating, tolerated, out, and spiced framework of sexualities. I am not doing either of these here. Instead, this chapter will attempt to document a very brief contemporary history and current situation of same sex sexual desire and the ways it is expressed.

¹⁶ Here I use the term underworld to mean the sometimes invisible and unrecognized status of homosexuality at both relational and representational levels.

In İstanbul, it is possible for a man to narrate his same-sex sexual adventures as a secret success hidden from public surveillance, lived across rigidly defined sexual identities such as gay or straight, and at places almost nobody can check such as parks or hamams. On the other hand, it is equally possible to depict his experiences as an integrated part of a vivid social life, institutionalized as activist meetings and in bars, recognized in certain social millieux in metropolitan areas, and demanding a fair representation on the media without humiliation or abuse. Although the two narratives can be illustrated separately, they are in fact intermingled and juxtaposed, depending on the actor's situation and the audience. It is feasible to compare substantially some aspects of what is going on in Istanbul with New York, Barcelona, or Sydney; it is similarly possible to do it with Fortazela, Islamabad, or Beijing. Homosexualities in Turkey are actually lived in a liminal zone between various identities constituted in terms of precise dichotomies regarding sexual practice or class identity. However, more importantly, same sex erotic actions are already fragmented in themselves by the separation between the east and the west, modern versus traditional, or clarity against ambiguity. Those simultaneous and intersecting dichotomies have confused the intellectuals and occupied a large space in the discussions of modernization of the country since the late 19th century. Therefore, it is futile and meaningless to mention that only one homosexuality exists in Turkey, not because there is a clear diversity of acts or actors, but because there is a multiplicity of conceptualizations, categories, and ways of naming largely determined by the almost constant in-between situation and history of the society in this part of the world.¹⁷

¹⁷ Even though I do not have an intention to generalize what I am saying about the Turkish case over the whole (indeed disunited) Islamic world, Roscoe and Murray's (1997: 6) words can be revealing: "Indeed, the contrast between 'western' and 'Islamic' homosexualities is not so much one of visibility versus invisibility or modern freedom versus traditional repression, but of containment versus elaboration, of a single pattern of homosexuality defined and delimited by institutions and

My experience as a closeted gay youth, who was looking to find anything ‘gay’ –a movie, a book, a picture on newspapers, or better a person, goes back quite some time. My participant observation of homosexualities, largely in İstanbul, started in February 1999 when I first joined a small-scale activist meeting, one of the earliest attempts to gather regularly in the country. Now it seems very meaningful to look back and remember six years ago when a youngster went to such a meeting with great enthusiasm, yet fearing a possible police raid. The venue did not belong to homosexuals but was rented from a leftist organization for two hours a week and was situated on the roof of an unkempt building in the city center, Taksim Square. Today, almost everything has changed regarding gay activism and socialization. First of all, the importation and diffusion of the Internet radically altered recruitment patterns. Second, even though they have not broadened their population or strength, activist groups have gained considerable visibility at both spatial and representational levels. Third, the danger of a police raid –a poignant reality of the 1980s and a powerful myth of 1990s- has totally disappeared. From the beginning of 1999, I have actively participated in the gay life of İstanbul in different guises such as a student who tries to complete his homework on the subject, an activist who contributed to ignite a gay movement on university campuses, a researcher who prepares a book on lesbians and bisexual women, or simply a young gay person who flirts or hangs out.

In addition to my insider voice and my observations for more than five years, I talked with twelve gay and bisexually identified men, aged between 17 to 54, and from different social backgrounds, in addition to the rent boys and their clients that I

discourses closely linked to the modern nation state versus the variety, distribution, and longevity of same sex patterns in Islamic societies.”

will refer to in chapter 3. Because my interviews with them were not on a regular basis –sometimes recorded sometimes not, in my house, in theirs, or in public spaces, or through the Internet- and lasted sometimes for more than four hours and sometimes only twenty minutes, I do not have any claim on methodological objectiveness nor can I claim the representativeness of my informants. Instead, what my aim here is just to introduce a glimpse of how homosexualities in Turkey are fragmented, differentiated, and instable.

At this point, I have a fundamental claim that in Turkey homosexualities are performed through two basic distinctions: class and sexual role¹⁸. Class, according to my framework here is a defining element which cannot be reduced to the levels of income and consumption, but it basically determines the universe of perception one has.¹⁹ In the gay culture of Istanbul, the easiest ways to figure out the class one belongs to is to look at appearance, clothes, shoes, accessories, etc. or better to ask where he lives or where he haunts. Nevertheless, there are other strong elements of class rather than lifestyle and consumption patterns, like educational level, family values, cultural refinement, or basic career aims and plans for the future²⁰. In addition to shape the pool in which a gay finds possible matches for multiple purposes, class controls whether one can be gay or not. Gayness is a strictly classed concept in Turkey. Identifying oneself as gay requires imagining and accessing

¹⁸ This distinction enlightens the roles that are enacted in oral and anal penetration as well as attitudes in love making, like inserter-insertee, active-passive, top-bottom, or fucker-fucked. Gays in Turkey mostly use the terms active-passive to signify sexual roles in their interactions.

¹⁹ Or, as Annick Prieur (1997: 11) nicely puts it: “Almost all [of her informants in Neza, Mexico City] belong to the working class –not necessarily in a strict Marxian sense, where the question is the relationship to the means of production, but at least in a Bourdieusian sense, where the question is rather about lifestyle...”

²⁰ This research shows that cross-class sexual interaction between rent boys and gay men affects the aims, expectations, and tastes of the former while they progress to meet with gays and experience their social worlds in addition to the material differences in homes they visit.

cultural capital of gay identity and communities. The only exceptions to this classed notion of (sexual) identity are young gay boys from *varoş* with university education. Although they may have enough courage and cultural-symbolic capital to resist this classed understanding of sexuality they are highly disempowered in creating a working-class gay subculture. They mostly call themselves gay, however and especially in Istanbul, being gay is not something that only concern only with names, but things one can buy, places one can go to, and more importantly, desires and imagination one has –lifestyle. The only possible alternative for these boys is surfing in virtual space. Yet, in the heterogeneous milieu of chatting rooms declaring oneself gay does not signify a sexual identity, instead, it denotes a sexual role of versatility, if not passivity.

This opens the second sharp dividing aspect of homosexualities in Turkey: enacting particular sexual roles. Contrary to many Western fictions on versatile gays who take turns during mutual penetration, in Turkey, most of the gays that I have talked to do not believe in such absolute versatility. Rather, they conceive of versatility as a temporary situation or position –such that you are mostly top if you are with a bottom, or vice versa, or a stable role that define one’s particular sexual identity under the gay firmament. The stories I have heard for years of relationships established or dissolved because of class struggles or sexual role implementations are endless.

In this chapter, first, I give a detailed account of the basic components of gay culture in Turkey. Then I focus on this doubly troubled prominence of class and sexual role that leads the lives of men who have sex with men into the divided state of identity and practice. In the last sections I briefly refer to representation and politics of same sex desire in order to define the context in which sexual encounters take place.

2.1. Same Sex Sexual Relations in Queer Spaces²¹

It can easily be stated that the most known gay place in the world is Greenwich Village in New York City. We learn from George Chauncey (1993: 159) that it is the first place that had a gay reputation: “Part of the attraction of an amusement district such as Greenwich Village was that it constituted a liminal space in which visitors were encouraged to disregard some of the social injunctions that normally constrained their behaviour, allowing them to observe and vicariously experience behaviour that in other settings –particularly their own neighborhoods- they might consider objectionable enough to suppress.” Of course, today we know that many neighborhoods in distant corners of the world have reputations as ‘gay spaces’ such as Soho in London, Maré in Paris, Castro Street in San Francisco, West Hollywood in Los Angeles, Oxford Street in inner Sydney, or Icaneba Beach in Rio. In Istanbul, some leading public figures and their avid supporters in the media endeavored to create another gay district in Cihangir, near Taksim Square at the end of the 1990s. But, maybe because of the evil character of the neighborhood that stems from the transvestite bashings of 1996 (Selek, 2001), or just because their power was not enough to effect such gay gentrification, they simply did not succeed. When we explore the early history of the Village we find that it was established as a migrants’ setting in the north of the city center. It simultaneously turned into a bohemian environment including poets and painters due to low prices of rents. Although even bohemians forcefully resisted them, gays persistently appeared in the tolerating milieu of the village. When the city expanded north with the start of the new subway route, it lost its remote position. Prices and rents increased and buildings were

²¹ An evocative definition queer space is: “as a “misuse or deformation of a place, an appropriation of the buildings and codes of the city for perverse purposes.” (Betsky, 1997: 5, quoted by Kirsch, 2000: 35).

reappropriated. Chauncey (1993, 1994) shows that gay subculture endured and triggered a novel spatial transformation from a space of living to a space of going out, though still stigmatized.

It is not feasible here to compare neither any neighborhood in Istanbul, including Cihangir, to the Village in terms of the social and spatial change it has experienced, nor the history of urban (re)development of New York with Istanbul. Not only histories but also current situations are rather different: Istanbul, or other big urban areas in Turkey, have no a particular gay zone. On the other hand, Cihangir and more generally the Taksim area, has a powerful public image of heterogeneity, acceptance, and diversity just like the Village as described by Richard Sennett (2002: 319). The character of Taksim area might give an idea as to why all the gay spaces are located in the vicinity of Taksim.

Sennett (2002) also refers to classical sociologist Georg Simmel and his famous portrayal of the city as people having tea without talking to each other in the cafés or across the American continent sitting without conversing in trains, in order to present his understanding of the city as people wandering aimlessly without any tête-à-têtes, alienating what they see, just like photographic images seen only for a second. It is a spectacle city –whether multicolored, bohemian, or queer. That city can only talk in the course of such spaces, such encounters. Queer spaces or queering straight spaces enable people to interact and amalgamate. That is why I portray same sex erotic relations as a highly spatial construction below.

Beyond the importance for both sexuality studies and urban sociology/anthropology of such queer spaces in cities, it should also be underscored that there are gendered spaces in urban areas as well as sexualized ones. In other words, sexualized (queer)

places such as a gay bar or a lesbian bookstore might have great prominence in comprehending the complex relation between city-space-sexualities; however, this significant role should not shadow the ordinary hamams, coffee shops, taverns, or barber shops and other gendered places.

Prostitution also has a critical position in understanding the relations between sexuality, gender, and space. It is very interesting to note that there is striking a historical tendency in different parts of the world to institutionalize prostitution: the opening of various sorts of brothels for male, female, transgender, or child prostitutes, therefore enclosing sex selling, negotiations, and bodies from public spaces, confining them between four walls, the process of defining the *location* of prostitution, privatizing it against its more public character, simultaneously forming neighborhoods or red light districts that may allow or connive in sex selling easily while other zones within the city rigidly oppose it, and enabling the surveillance, control, and intervention of the state through police and municipal policies²². Hence, the commercialization, profitability, and exchangeability of bodies and sex services have never been only an issue of social or individual morals; instead, these have undeniable social, spatial, and political implications.

As Peter Nardi (1999) and Lawrence Knopp (1997) demonstrate, forming gay neighborhoods, or any other spatial enterprise is highly critical in grasping the social and economic power that gay communities, networks, or friendships have: “[gays] are moral refugees... paid for their identity,” (Knopp, 1997). It is possible to say that we, gays have a tendency to disregard the fact that sexualities and sexual expressions have commonly urban characteristics today, especially in Turkey where

²² See references in chapter 3 for a comprehensive bibliography of (male) prostitution worldwide.

urbanization is an ongoing social process. The work of the Danish sociologist Henning Bech (1999) indicates that our urban bias about gay lifestyles is not unique to Turkey. He maintains that urban sexualities have widespread characteristics like the constant exploration of gazes, gestures, bodies, and conversations –cruising, in order to find suitable matches, unplanned encounters, surprises, spontaneity, increasing visual significance, physicality of sexual perception, and bodily quality of desire, coexisting with high demand and high supply –in addition to Simmel’s abundance of stimulus. These daily components of sexual lives are not only about the other, but also about the self –the emotions of self-liberation, self-acknowledgement, and self-realization through sex. As argued by Simmel classical social theory or urban sociology has ignored the necessary link between the city and sexualities although this ignorance is largely challenged today. However, Bech argues, the sexualization of urban space does not just affect gay men but all the urban population. One of the crucial points that Bech points out regarding the sexual sensitivity of urban lives is that they are relevant only sometimes, and only for some people. In other words, the sexualized environment of the city and its possibilities are not universal or available to everyone at all times. They are situational and unstable and doubtlessly depend on the actors around them. Gay men obviously have more chances to experience this sexualized notion just like the police, artists, prostitutes, journalists, or urban sociologists do.

It would be misleading to assume that the city is a homogenous whole and see those daily sexual potentials as being relevant in every corner of the city. For an example, Jon Binnie (1995) says that gay zones within the city are distinguished from other stigmatized neighborhoods such as red-light districts by producing their own counter-normativity. That means nobody who lives in gay ghettos think that gay spaces trigger or constitute a totally new way of life. Perhaps the sexualized space

can engender an alternative life style, yet this can never produce an exact other side of the heterosexual style. Gay regions and communities produce an alternative normativity that stems only from the different sexual orientation that they all share in the houses they have, parks they visit, stores they shop from, or clubs they frequent. It might be quite significant to note that the prominent critique against queer theory and its dependence on literary/film texts springs from the notion of living which includes people who consume, have sex, go on holidays, earn, vote, write, etc. These are real bodily personifications that live somewhere specific. Gay people are simultaneously both reproducer and interpreters of the social, political, sexual and spatial interrelations that they generate. Space –whether “gay” or neutral (read “straight”), has an interpenetrative role in the mutual construction of sexualities and space. Sexuality is organized and circulates in a particular concrete topography. Bell and Valentine (1995) maintain that even Judith Butler’s specification of performativity is highly connected to the spaces in which it occurs.

In this section I talk only about the gay spaces and manly same-sex encounters of Istanbul although the city has also clearly defined time-space arrangements for transvestites and transsexuals (Kandiyoti, 2002; Selek, 2001), for lesbians and bisexual women (Özbay and Soydan, 2003), and for prostitutes of all genders (Yıldırım, 2002). In terms of the diversity and visibility of queer spaces, İstanbul is the first and the foremost city in Turkey, both currently and historically. Six years ago, when I first started to catch a glimpse of the gay face of the city, Istanbulite gays did not have as many alternatives as they have nowadays.²³ Bars-clubs, cafés,

²³ A simple comparison with Brazil can ease our grasp that we do not have rich potential for spatial contact amongst homosexually identified men in Turkey. I see Brazil as a worthy example in comparing Brazilian homosexualities with Turkish ones despite sharp differences between the two. On the other hand, the two developing countries near the postmodern north have large and young populations, they are both struggling with migration, poverty, industrialization, urbanization,

hamams and saunas, parks, movie theaters, and some specific public areas might be considered as spaces in which gays become visible –at least each to other. Virtual space is just another aspect of the ongoing same-sex interaction that I will lastly focus on here.

2.1.1. Bars-Clubs

Gay bars or clubs are crucial for men who have sex with men in Turkey simply because they are the only steady spaces that they have to meet, chat, relax, cruise, and hang out. Bars and clubs are unique in Turkish gay culture for establishing networks of friendships and hostility and commercialization that therefore legitimate gay life, to have the possibility of sexual encounters and engage in rituals of preparing himself for the night. Most remarkably these bars are the basic source of weekly gossip. The fundamental change that took place in the last six years about bars –and all gay spaces in general, is their enhanced visibility and reputation. But they still have a semi-secret character of being exclusive only to people who know.

segregation, informal sector, democracy and human rights, environmental issues, and tourism. In Brazil male-male sexual acts have a larger social importance and visibility in addition to the broader spatial opportunities which we do not have in Turkey. For example, for Brazilian gays everywhere even the streets are places of cruising. Such a leeway is unthinkable for Turkey. Parker (1999: 44) articulates this sharp distinction: “Within this model, virtually any public space might become a locus for homoerotic interaction. Public toilets, parks, plazas, public baths, and the like became invested with erotic meaning, mixing pleasure and danger in an almost constant game of *çaça* (hunting) or *pegação* (cruising).” Such an available, street-based homoeroticism can make it easier for us to comprehend how gays in Turkey feel encapsulated by the already insufficient gay spaces. This sense of suffocation can also enlighten us as to why gays generally do not like gay spaces and even express their hatred towards them. For example, the young gays I talked with always dream about and yearn for a gay beach in the city without knowing that even in the 1980s some beaches like Florya were well known for their homosexual and transvestite visitors (Yüzgün, 1986).

Barbahçe (or BB, literally means “garden-bar”) opened around the mid 1990s in the basement of an old building in Cihangir. The oldest gay bar in İstanbul, Barbahçe has been patronized regularly by young gay students, professionals, artists, and some older gays of the Cihangir-Taksim area for years without any interruption or radical transformation even though its managers have changed almost annually. The most distinctive quality of this small dark club consists of a main dance room about 100m², a narrow corridor, toilets, and a back room with chairs to chat and rest, for those who seek privacy. Some nights especially in the summer and at weekends, it houses approximately 150-200 people and hence there is obviously no space to even move from one place to another. Each corner including the corridor and toilets, of the bar is used to meet, cruise, or match. Gays who frequent Barbahçe have various opinions about it:

“BB’nin en iyi yanı mütevazı ve samimi bir ortam olmasıdır. Yani siz başka yerlerde birilerini beğenebilir, hatta kesişebilirsiniz ama gerçekten birini bulmanız çok çok daha düşük bir olasılık. BB’de ise insanlar çok daha easy-going oluyorlar. Poz atma değil de, zaten birbirimizi biliyoruz havası daha hakim. Ben o yüzden çok uzun yıllardır giderim.” (Ömer)

“Ben Barbahçe’yi hem eski olduğu için hem de diğer yerlere göre çok daha homojen bir kitleye hitap ettiği için seviyorum. Barbahçe’de sadece orta-üst sınıf eğitilmiş geyleri görebilirsiniz, bir de tabii turistleri... Ama lezbiyenler, travestiler, rent boylar, aktivist geyler veya başkalarına göre bir yer değil, hiç bir zaman da olmadı...” (Nedim)

“Aslında bu kadar senelerdir gittiğimiz, para kazandırdığımız bir yerin sahibinin kim olduğunu bilmemek tabii garip, hatta ayıp. İşletmecilerinin devamlı değiştiğini biliriz de... Aslında Barbahçe çok kitsch bir yerdir, geçen sene dekorunu biraz değiştirip daha minimalist bir çizgiye bürünmekle bence hata etti, öyle bir yere hep ihtiyacımız vardı çünkü. Öyle renkli, komik, biraz da eski görünümlü bir yer insanları rahatlatıp serbestleştiriyor çünkü...” (Abdullah)²⁴

²⁴ “The best aspect of BB is its humble and warm character. You may fancy or even contact with someone in other places, but to find someone is a really low possibility. People are more easy-going in BB. The general atmosphere is not cool but that we all know who we are. That is why I have been going to it for years.” (Ömer)

“I like BB because it is old and it has a homogenous group of patrons regarding to other places. In Barbahçe, you can see only upper-middle class, educated gays, as well as tourists. It is not a suitable place for lesbians, transvestites, rent boys, activist gays, or others. It has never been.” (Nedim)

“Indeed, it is strange, even shameful that we do not know the owner of it where we have been going to for years. We only know that managers continuously change. In

In addition to BB, gays have been going habitually to other clubs such as Neo, Prive, Queen, Love, 14, 2C –former Club20, Neva, Prop, etc.²⁵ for quite short or sometimes rather long periods. These are similar places with heterogeneous settings and audiences although they have slight differences. In the last two to three years, gay subculture in Istanbul came across a novel sort of public space. Those are the bars designated evidently for upper class patrons. The basic feature of those clubs is their location in quite distant places from the Taksim area, which is identified with transvestites or effeminate-bohemian homosexuals. This point is also interrelated with the class connection of Istanbulite gays that I will further discuss later. Some of those bars are BE, Chocolate, Cahide, 34.5, Soho, and others; nevertheless, the most significant example is Douche, because it fundamentally changed the gay nightlife pattern of the city. Douche is open only in summers in the garden of the historical Sepetçiler Pavilion, which is located in Eminönü. Eminönü is almost totally empty at nights and quite away from the other trendy places to hang out. Buses stop early in the evening and the frequenters of Douche can only reach it by taxi. It is the first and only open-air gay disco of the city near The the Bosphorus, about 250m². It houses famous Djs and international dance shows, and is relatively expensive. At Douche the night starts at midnight and ends with the first daylight, literally as the sun rises from the east coast of the Bosphorus. It is also very popular among tourists visiting Istanbul. Most of the gays I interviewed clearly admire and are proud of Douche while some others criticize its classy and exclusive atmosphere:

fact, Barbahçe is a highly kitsch place. I think they did wrong to change its decoration and made it more minimalistic last year, because we always need somewhere like it. Because such a colorful, funny, old-looking place makes people relaxed and liberated.” (Abdullah)

²⁵ Yüzgün (1986: 114-5) cites that the most important and famous gay club of the city from the 1960s to the late 1980s was Vat-69. This spatial center of gay life for decades had already been closed when my cohort grew up and started to frequent gay bars in the late 1990s.

“Douche başka bir şey yaa.. Biz ondan önce gay life görmemişiz diye düşünüyorum. Ben straight veya gey kimi götürsem herkes büyülenip, Türkiye’de böyle bir gay bar da varsa her şey mümkün diyorlar. İçinde olmaktan utanmadığım, mazeret aramadığım tek bar Douche, çünkü diğerleri normal mekanlar olsa asla uğramayacağım dandik barlar.” (Berkan)

“Tabii ki havası çok güzel, ortamı, imajı çok güzel ama esas bence önemli noktası, nereye giderseniz gidin kimseyi bulamazsınız ama Douche’tan biriyle çıkacağınız mutlak. Bilmiyorum Boğaz havasından mı, saat daha geç olduğundan mı, yaz olduğundan mı, ama herkes çok daha rahat oluyor, ve geyleler arası sex patlaması yaşıyor, Douche yaptı bunu.” (Fırat)

“Bir yanım herkese göre bir yerler olsun ne güzel diyor, ama içimden bir ses de oranın o kokuşluğuna, pahalılığına direniyor. Düşünün saat 12-12.30 gibi Eminönü’ne gitmek, oraya girmek, o kadar saat en az 2-3 içki içmek, sonra haydi tekrar taksi... Benim bir haftalığım gidiyor oraya... Ama mesela bazen sabah 6.30’u bekleyip ilk otobüse biniyoruz, çok komik düşünsene, gay bardan çıkmışız, hem ne gay bar, geylelerin Laila’sı, oradan otobüse, sabah sabah...” (Ömer)²⁶

Gays communicate in bars mostly through their associations of friendship and previous hook-ups. The actual rate of finding someone may be considered rather low when one listens to gays and their interpretations of their life. Most of them complained about this bare reality of their sexually dissatisfied lives and pointed to the dilemma they experience between disappointed sexual desire and the stigma of *kaşar* (literally a kind of round cheese, means immoral, debauched, or sexually experienced at best):

²⁶ “Douche is a different thing. I think we hadnot seen gay life before it. Everyone, straight or gay, whom I brought to Douche is enchanted and says if Turkey houses such a gay bar, everything is possible in this country. Douche is the only bar that I am not shameful to be within it, or where I do not try to find excuses. Other gay bars are places that I would never frequent if they are not gay.” (Berkan)

“Of course, its ambiance, atmosphere, public image, are very beautiful, but I think more importantly, it is certain that you will find someone in Douche while you go to other places and cannot find anyone. I do not exactly know the reason, because it is near Bosphorus, it is later in the morning, or it is summer. Everyone is much more relaxed, and a sex boom is experienced amongst gays. Douche did this.” (Fırat)

“On the one hand, I think it is very nice to have a diversity in bars, on the other hand, I in part resist its expensiveness and voluptuousness. Imagine going to Eminönü on 12-12:30 am, entering the bar, and drinking at least 2 or 3 beverages, and then return. This costs my weekly pocket money. But sometimes we take the first bus in the morning, at 6:30 am. It is very funny, is not it? We are coming from a gay bar, not an ordinary one, Laila of gays, in that hour of the morning...” [Ömer]

“Nasıl tanışıyoruz? Öyle bodoslama gidip konuşmak olmaz... Gavurlarla oluyor da, biz bize olmaz çünkü herkes herkesi tanıyor.. Sonra hakkımızda ne denir, hem de milletin götü kalkar. Derler ki –o bana yazdı, bu bana yazdı- vermedim, ama ondan sonra eve gider de yalnız uyur. Peki o zaman niye geliyorsunuz bara, bu kadar para ve zaman harcaıyıp?” (Arda)

“Birisini beğenirsem, yanındakilerin kim olduğuna bakarım, zaten bir süre gözetim altında tuttuğun birinin kimin nesi olduğunu anlarsın kimlerle konuştuğuna kimlerle selamlaştığına bakarak. Tanıdığımın tanıdığı çıkarsa genelde haber gönderirim.. O gece olmazsa sonra konuşmak tanışmak için. Lezbiyenler aslında bu işi daha iyi yaparlar. Ne de olsa dışardan bir bakış. Ama sonuçta bardan birini çıkarmak her zaman zor, çok easy-going olsan adın kaşara, orospuya çıkar. Eğer süzülürsen de bu sefer kimseyi bulamazsın. Ortamdaki insan sayısı çok az olduğu, herkes birbirini tanıdığı için bir kilitleme var bence.” (Koray)

“Bak ben iyi kötü üniversitede okuyan bir geyim, elim ayağım yerli yerinde, belki Brad Pitt değilim ama herhalde çirkin de değilim. Geçen yaz en az 10-12 kere Douche’a gittim. Peki kaç koli kestim, biliyor musun? Sadece 2. Bilinen tanınan geyler birbirleri ile olmak istemiyorlar, e zaten herkes herkesi tanıyor, kim kaldı geriye? Turistler, başka şehirlerden gelenler, veya yeni düşenler? E kaç kişi düşer ki yani bir yılda?” (Atıl)²⁷

Another significant point on gay bars and sexuality touches upon the double tension between class and sexual performance. To guess who is top or bottom might be really difficult because most of the gays consciously endeavour to look really masculine. To ask whether one is active or passive is entirely shameful for “gays”

²⁷ “How do we meet? It is not good to go directly and talk. It might be with strangers, but not with us because everyone knows the other. Otherwise, what everybody would tell about us, in addition to everyone feels himself cooler. They would start saying this wanted me, that wanted me, I did not accept them. Afterwards, he goes to his house and sleeps alone. Then, why do you come to the bar, spending all those time and money?” (Arda)

“If I like someone, I check with whom he is together. Actually, I can understand what type of person he is by looking his friends and acquaintances. If I find the link I send him a hello. It may not be for that night, but after that night. Lesbians do this negotiation better than us because they are strangers to us in a way. Nevertheless, it is always very difficult to find someone from the bar. If you look very easy-going, you have a reputation as *kaşar* or slut. If you look cool, you cannot find anybody. There is a gridlock because there is a few people around and everyone knows each other.” (Koray)

“I am attending a university, I have no physical disabilities, maybe I am not Brad Pitt, but I am not ugly at all. I went to Douche at least 10-12 times last summer. Do you know how many boys that I slept with? Only 2. Gays that know each other do not want to have sex, actually everyone knows each other. Who remains? Tourists, gays from other cities, and new recruitments. How many people can be recruited in a year?” (Atıl)

who believe they should be versatile in order to reach a more Western-type sexual identity:

“Birisini bulmak bir dert, kafana gore birisini bulmak neredeyse imkansız. Bir kere varoşlarla benim hiç işim olmaz. Bu da ciddi bir grubu baştan atmak demek. Zaten onlar mutlaka aktif olacağım, ben gey değilim falan da derler.. Tam kabus! Ben pasif ağırlıklı versatile'im, ama ne sorarım ne de bunu açık açık soran birisine yanıt veririm. Hepimiz gey değil miyiz yani sonuçta?” (Abdullah)

“Ben çok digil [versatile] bir tip olduğum için daha rahatım, duruma göre biraz daha aktif veya biraz daha pasif olabilirim. Yeter ki hoşlanayım. Ama, yani tipi güzel diye de, tutup da üstü başı dandik, ayakkabıları çamurlu biriyle de beraber olacak değilim. Biraz doğru düzgün dans etmesi lazım, ne içtiği de önemli. Sonuçta bir tane vücut satın almıyoruz ki, her şeyiyle biriyle beraber oluyoruz.” (Deniz)

“Ben geylere tahammül dahi edemiyorum. Elbette ki kendime politik olarak gey diyorum, okulda okurken herkese açtım, hocalarıma bile, işte bile bazılarına söyledim! Sonuçta okuyorum, yazıyorum, her şeye eyvallah! Ama o bizim geylerin kadınlığı noolcak? Ya ben saçını başını yaptırmış, buram buram parfüm kokan, aslında bara üzerindeki bilmem ne marka t-shirt ü veya ayakkabıyı gösterip hava atmaya gelen insanlarla yatmak istemiyorum. Geylik bu değil ki! Aktif olursun, pasif olursun o ayrı, ama önce biraz erkek olmalısın bence..” (Kaya)²⁸

2.1.2. Cafés

²⁸ “To find someone is a problem, to find someone suitable for you is almost impossible. First of all I do not have an interest for *varoş* boys. This means excluding a serious group at the beginning. They always say I would be the active part, I am not a gay, etc. Like a nightmare! I am a bottom-versatile, but, I do not ask it directly, nor I answer such a question. I mean do all of us gays?” (Abdullah)

“I am a little bit relaxed because I am versatile. I can be active or passive according top situation. As far as I like him. However I cannot have sex with a dirty guy with muddy shoes just because he is cute. He should dance properly, what he is drinking is also important. This is not buying a body, we are being together with a total guy.” (Deniz)

“I cannot stand with gays. Of course I call myself gays in terms of politics, or I was totally out even to my teachers in the university, and I told some people in my workplace. I am reading, writing, etc. Everything will be okay! What about the femininity of our gays? I do not have sex with gays in the bar who went to a coiffeur before bar, using heavy perfumes, exposing his designer t-shirt or sneakers. This is not gayness. Being active or being passive is rather different, but first of all you should be a man.” (Kaya)

Gay cafés are attractive places for more discreet gays, gay students below the age of 18²⁹ or poorer ones, people who live in distant corners of the city and do not have places to stay for the night, or people who are interested in gayness but who try to avoid the stigma of the gay bars. Although gays have always frequented specific cafés for multiple purposes, the short histories of gay cafés in Istanbul started in late 1999 when the first and most famous Café Cute opened. Unfortunately for most of its regular visitors, it was closed in 2002 after having dramatically changed the spatial notions gays had, demonstrating that gays cafés might also be very secure and profitable, and that gays were in desperate need of daytime spaces to hang around. It was located in Galatasaray Square on Istiklal Street in the city center, on the third floor of an old but pretty nice apartment building. Visitors could enter only by ringing the bell and then the waiter/waitress opened the door to welcome the visitors to one of the two little rooms of the place. Lesbians and people from all other sexual orientations as well as gays liked Cute and went there regularly. The first meeting of the local gay students' association was also held there. In the years when it was open, there were strong habits formed by gays about Cute, for example students visited it at least once in weekdays, preferably in the afternoon, in addition to the more ritualized weekend visits. Working gays of twenty-something were welcomed in the evenings. The highest season was during the Film Festival because all the gays preferred to spend their time between movies in Cute. All my informants declared their powerful loyalty, nostalgia, and craving for Café Cute because, for the first time in their lives, they could meet in daytime and out of bars. Whenever they went there they were sure to find someone they knew –or more significantly, they could talk with anyone, and felt a sense of belonging to a more visible and legitimate community even if they never talked to any one.

²⁹ The age of 18 is the official age to enter bars in Turkey and gay bars are extremely vigilant about this age requirement in order not to have to deal with the police.

“O zaman 16 yaşındaydık, ve Cute’u gazeteden okumuştuk, -Geyler kafe de açtılar diye. O zaman Kartal’da oturuyorduk, benim kankam Songül ile sözleşip kararlaştırıp kalkıp Taksim’e geldik ama saat daha sabah 10’du. Tabi o saatte gidip de ne yapacağız diye, bir filme gittik, çıktık yemek yedik, ama ne girdiğimiz filmden ne de yediğimizden haberimiz yoktu tabi. Acaba nasıl bir yer, kimler vardır, travestiler de geliyor mudur, polis basar mı, ailelerimize yakalanır mıyız, daha neler neler... Sonunda saat ikiye doğru cesaret edip de kapıyı çaldık. Güleç bir kız kapıyı açıp merhaba dedi. İçeri girip oturduk, masalar vardı 7-8 tane, yarısı doluydu, ama içerisi boş gözüküyordu. Bir süre sonra rahatladık, o gün üç saatten fazla kaldık ve kimseyle konuşmaya cesaret edemedik.. Ama hep dinledik ve etrafımızda konuşulanlardan çok şey öğrendik. Ondan sonra da her hafta gittik..” (Kaya)³⁰

After it closed down, many other attempts were made to create a second address for gays in Istanbul. One of those cafés was only for lesbians, but, it did not succeed. Now gays have Sugar Café (instead of its English most gays pronounce it as from gypsies’ language “şugar” means cute, good.) Even though it visibly does not have the same magnetism as Cute had, Sugar is also a regular address for gays now. The intense advantage it has is its location just on the street level and glass walls to maintain a greater amount of visibility. On the other hand, my informants complain about Sugar because it cannot foster the same cohesive and friendly atmosphere as Cute had.

2.1.3. Hamams

³⁰ “Then we were 16 years old and we read Cute from the newspaper, “Gays opened a Café”. We lived in Kartal in that time. I and Songül, my buddy, decided and came to Taksim. It was ten in the morning and we thought it was very early to go to the café. We went to a movie, had a lunch, however we did not understand anything neither from the movie nor the lunch. We were pondering how the place looks like, are there transvestites, or worse the police, what will we do if our families discover that, etc. At last, we dared to knock the door at 2:00 pm. A smiling girl opened the door and said hello. We entered and sat down a table. There were 7 or 8 tables and half were occupied although it looks empty. We relaxed after some time, stayed more than 3 hours, but could not talk with anyone. We listened to talks around us and learnt too much. After that day we went there every week.” (Kaya)

Neither gay bars-discos, nor gay cafés... The real challenge that the researcher encounters with the western-modern-liberated understanding or dominant appearance of young urban gay identity occurs when s/he enters one of the gay hamams of the city. More or less, what you can see in previous queer spaces are fit, disciplined bodies that dance to hip music and drink popular beverages like energy+vodka or tonic+pomegranate. Those dancing bodies may be richer or poorer, younger or more experienced, students or professionals, male or female, however they are homogenous with regard to their endeavor to create and reproduce a specific style that they share and promote. This style is already highly globalized: good-looking masculine-muscular gays with t-shirts, jeans, and sneakers, and butch girls with again jeans, short sprayed hair with exaggerated silver accessories. Man-in-the-street or regular-typical-average types with obsolete clothes, moustaches, over hairy chests, love handles, bellies, discolored footwear, etc. are totally invisible or excluded from that scene.

Çukurcuma Hamamı is located in the southwest of Taksim Square, hidden amongst regular apartments, little shops, or antique stores that are the trademark of the district. It just looks like numerous other hamams in many corners of Istanbul. On the other hand, when you go into it, you are extremely surprised if not shocked, whether you are wholly stranger to the gay subculture of Istanbul or a actively participant researcher(!). On an ordinary Sunday afternoon around 4pm there are 45-50 people inside. Some of the visitors are generally tourists but the ratio depends on the season (surely summer is more touristic). There are some young gays that one might be familiar with from bars. Yet, the unique thing is the other half of the hamam: men between 30 and 60 years of age, mostly with moustaches, bald, fat, specifically opposed to what has stabilized as the modern gay look. What is more striking is that they are clearly flirting, making love, and even penetrating each other

or other customers with modern gay looks. The hamam consists of three separate spaces, a perspiration room (used as a dark room), the largest saloon with taps (used as cruising area), and the last small dark part (used also as a semi-dark room to show and more significantly to watch). The burgeoning gay imaginary in Turkey among my informants, the self-image that my informants draw on, the representation of homosexuals on the media and in films, the commonsensical opinions any one has cannot generate or even imagine the scene in the hamam. Beyond the sharp coexistence of the dazzling nightlife of gay bars, or the cool social atmosphere of the cafés with the strong tradition of men who have sex with men and do not call themselves gay, the intriguing dilemma here is the disconnectedness, strangeness, and ignorance between the two. They do not exist as distinct parts of the same palette or as different tastes of the same register. Instead, they are juxtaposed and conditioned not to take any notice of each other. My gay informants have no idea or attitude against “the-other-homosexuality” experienced –for example in hamams- so near them. I couldn’t gain an insight about “non-gay” frequenters of the hamam because all my attempts remained futile. They did not see themselves as gay and they did not have a conception of research about male sexualities. This is one of the weakest points of my research because I could not find a way to break their reticence and lead them to perceive me as a researcher just wanting to talk about sexuality and not a young boy in search of sex.

Most of the gay tourists find hamams very exotic and attractive, and they do not hesitate to look for and find gay hamams to visit and have sex, especially after Ferzan Özpetek’s film *Hamam-Il Bagno Turco* (*The Steam*, 1997). I have to confess that it was a great shock and a sense of paralysis that I first entered a gay hamam because what is experienced there is neither a total counter modernity regarding sexuality nor a harmoniously homogenous blend of different homosexualities. This

is also not a well known narrative of traditional male-male sexualities taking place in hamams between so-called straight men, it is decreasing, disempowering, and marginalizing. It is not. To state that there is a growing vivid gay subculture among the youth especially from middle class families might be accurate; however, in hamams, parks, public toilets, particular movie theaters, specific taverns or pubs – not around Taksim but in Aksaray and Laleli, there are also other lived homosexualities. This is not a linear story with a beginning and end point from Baghdad to Paris. Instead, what is socially (and sexually) practiced and organized are (at least) two-faced cultural experiences that have impervious borders, unique actors, spaces, rules and unequal visibilities. The easy way is to overlook this other Istanbulite homosexuality and depict only what is going on in the gay façade of fit bodies and resplendent spaces. Unfortunately, I did not have sufficient time or necessary research strategies to handle and present such a vibrant comparative portrait of these dual coexisting homosexualities within the city that I grew up in.

2.1.4. Virtual Space

Despite the fact that gays in Turkey do not have a powerful local web site in order to connect to each other like the German *gayromeo.com*, British *gaydar.co.uk*, Montreal-based *gay411.com*, or totally international –and actually heterogeneous in terms of sexualities- *face-pic.com*, the role of virtual space mostly in finding someone to date (also for other purposes like friendship or information) is very strong. It can be stated that almost all of what is experienced as homosexualities in Turkey occurs through the web. In other words, Internet-based ways of interaction between same-sex sexual partners have a central significance in the process of understanding the Turkish case. Gays in Turkey use the Internet through two different channels of communication (a) specifically gay sites, (b) by queering

straight sites. Gay sites include the WebPages of activist associations such as Kaos GL, Legato, LambdaIstanbul, Ayılar, Bilitis, Regl, etc. Indeed, those organizations always try to catch a high rate of visitors by updating sites and creating distinct forums for hot topics among gays and lesbians. Nevertheless, those efforts seem insufficient in view of the rapidly changing high demands of the users. Thus, it is very hard to see a virtual network of activist oriented queer people in Turkey. The other channel is Turkish non-activist gay sites and the most known example of them is *eshalem.com*. It might be stated that there is a clear-cut class differentiation in Internet use, because English-medium foreign sites that are frequently visited in Turkey like *gaydar.co.uk* or *gayromeo.com* have a middle class population –urban, educated, students or professionals- who can understand, present themselves, and reciprocate in English. On the other hand, *eshalem.com* specifically created its audience among men who might have sex with men from popular classes and middle class gays who are in search of them! In this constellation of cyberspace, the Englishspeaking milieu and the prompted masculinity of foreign sites represents the notions of modern-western sexual identities and lifestyles, which are reasons for distraction for many gays in Turkey. They look for the signs of real virility or for a sort of exaggerated masculinity that are taken for the trademarks of a guaranteed active sexual role in anal intercourse as a result of the high value they attach to finding a real man, not another *lubunya* like themselves. Exaggerated masculinity does not ensure sexual satisfaction as even commonsensical views demonstrate. However, actual sexual functioning (physical conditions of the body, penis size, duration of intercourse, acts and mimics during sex) is just one (although major) aspect of the ongoing sexual adventure. The sexual satisfaction process for gay men can be basically outlined like this: (1) Successfully positioning oneself in the (western, versatile, etc.) gay polar and putting his partner into the other (*varoş*, real men, etc.), (2) effectively developing strategies for finding someone from the other

socio-sexual polar and succeeding to have sex with him, (3) maintaining his reputation for the sexual acts that he engaged in to find a real man, and therefore he is not into gay men. These are all interrelated processes and because such a sexual universe rarely provides long-term relations, one other crucial point for gays is to refresh themselves continuously and hastily and to find the necessary amount of time, money, energy, and mood to carry on searching.

The real encounter between the two poles of same-sex sexual encounters takes place through chat rooms that not specifically designed for gay –or curious men. Conversations go on virtual spaces like *IRC* or *MyNet* in which young men from *varoş* navigate between a particular configuration of heteromascularity and their desire or engagement toward homosexual sexual acts. Even tough it is forbidden, in terms of the norms of straight masculinity, the same-sex desire of *varoş* men reveals itself even from their nicknames such as “aktif_ama_duygulu”, “sikici+sevisme”, “vurucu_erkek_19”, “bagcilarinprensi_a”, etc. while on the other hand they steadfastly call themselves normal straight men offering love making and even emotionality to self-identified gay men. Then, through this contradictory situation between sexualities from a gay viewpoint, what does a real man mean for gays in this virtual mis-en-scène? Zeki defines what he looks for:

“Her şeyden önce şunu söylemeliyim ki, ben internete sohbet etmeye falan değil seks yapacak birini bulmaya giriyorum. Bir kere nerede oturduğundan yola çıkıyorum öncelikle. Ben biraz daha kadınsı bir eşcinsel olduğum için ona uygun birini arıyorum, yani beğenim daha erkeksi, sert tiplerden yana. Onları da varoş semtlerde bulmak tabi çok daha kolay. Yani bazen kolilerim Beşiktaş veya Kadıköy de olabiliyor ama aslında onlar hep istisna, straight’ler yani! Varoştan bir çocukla buluşunca onun kadınsı çıkması veya daha önemlisi pasif olmak istemesi gibi bir tehlike yok sonuçta. İkinci nokta kendine gey deyip demediği. Eğer ‘ben de geyim,’ derse bana hemen suratına kapatırım. Benim aradığım bizimkilerden biri değil ki, öyle olsa bara giderim ben de... Omo kadınlar kulübü gibi.. Neyse, benim ‘sen gey misin?’ soruma karşılık ‘o ne demek? Sorularına dikkat et!’ veya daha cool bir biçimde ‘ben sadece erkeğim!’ falan demesi lazım. Bu sınavı da geçerse, sadece anal ilişkiye mi girmek ister, yoksa sevişme vb türü cinsel oyunlara da ilgi duyuyor mu onu sorarım. Tabi bu eğitim seviyesi ile de ilgili ama benim tercihim ‘sadece

sikerim,' diyenler. Zaten 'ben de bazen sevişirim,' falan diyenleri 'ayol erkek adam sevişir mi?' diye tersliyorum. Bu işin kuralı bu, benimle yatacaksa, kalkıp da Allahın varoşundan benim Erenköy'deki evime gelip burada beni sikecekse, adam gibi adam olmak zorunda. Hayır, yoksa ben niye kendimi düşüreyim, bütün bunlara niye katlanayım ki, vurur kafamı uyurum daha iyi!" (Zeki)³¹

According to my view the most common pattern is this sort of encounter between two totally different personifications of (not necessarily effeminate) gay men and (at least) straight acting *varoş* boys. On the other hand, such encounters cannot summarize all of what is going on around gay matches. For example, gays who are searching for other gays are another serious population. Too many people that I know in person or chat with through the Internet remain within the borderline of the division between self-identified gay men and "non-gay" men who have sex with other men. If they name themselves as gay, they seek to hang out with other gay men. Especially students of universities in and around Istanbul almost always find hook-ups and long-term relations in self-identified gay environments.

Internet use among gays in Turkey has also two visual aspects that ought to be highlighted here. One of them is about the self that gays enact as a consequence of

³¹ "First of all, I ought to say that I do not connect to the Internet for chat but to find someone for sex. At the beginning, I think something from where he lives in. I look for more masculine, tough guys because I am a more feminine homosexual. Of course, finding more masculine types in *varoş* districts is easier. I sometimes have hook-ups from Beşiktaş or Kadıköy, but they are exceptional, straights! In fact, there is no danger of femininity or more importantly, passivity in a boy from *varoş*. The second point is about whether he calls himself as gay or not. If he says to me that he was gay, I closed the window immediately. I do not search for one of us, if it was the situation I would go to the bar like everyone. Like a women's club! Anyway, he must reply my question as "what does it mean, be careful about your questions" or in a cooler way, "I am a man". If he passes this test, I ask whether he only wants to fuck me or he engages into lovemaking. Sure it is also about the educational level, but my taste is the ones who declare only to fuck. If he says "sometimes I make love" I refuse him by saying that "is it possible for a man to make love?". This is the rule of the game, if he wants to be with me, coming from *varoş* to my house in Erenköy to fuck me, he should be a real man. Otherwise, why do I belittle myself, endeavour to find a real man, I would better stay at home and sleep!" (Zeki)

the profiles they have in various Internet sites. A gay boy who wants to have a profile (for example, in *gaydar.co.uk*) first ought to select six of his photographs as his bodily representation. Of course there are special codes and meanings to these pictures. They never show only the gay boy! Crucial here are which parts of the body are demonstrated, in where, distinctly in which mood, the looks, the mis-en-scène, alone or together with someone, etc. The more important point is about the process of formation of identity and preferences that our gay boy should mark on his body, the kinds of pleasures he is looking for. I am personally aware of how some of the sub-identities beneath the all -embracing gay identity like *twink*, *sm*, *chubby*, *sports kit*, *casual*, *defined*, etc.- have become visible during my own experience in the last 5-6 years. Sexual role preferences are limited with five possible options in *gaydar.co.uk* (active, active-versatile, versatile, passive-versatile, passive) while *gayromeo.com* also purposefully asks about FF (face-fuck, or position during oral sex). Drug use, alcohol use, conditions of body hair, or safe-sex preferences are also asked in detail.

Six years ago when highly primitive versions of chatting rooms and Internet cafés first appeared, there were hardly any pictures of gay men to exchange before meeting. We could see each other's face or body only when we had sufficient energy and boldness to go somewhere. Then, this without-picture period ended quickly and another "no-pic-no-answer" period began. All profiles we have had or all virtual conversations we have taken on wind up asking first one and then more than one pics in order to verify that he is really the one whom we are talking with. In the last 2 years we have experienced a new era when pics-not-enough to believe just because it is so easy to modify them –even I personally noticed that I could look like Ajda Pekkan. This new model of chatting in chat rooms or *msn.com* stems from digital camera use. No one wants to meet without seeing his possible partner on camera

view! Although gays begin to comprehend that cams are also not reliable as they first assumed, and the look they see through the cam depends on the color of background and light effects, it is still very surprising how gay culture in Turkey transforms itself into a more and more visual and –inescapably bodily one. If your look from the cam does not fit with your virtual partner’s standards, unfortunately you have already lost your chance to meet with him! This powerful stream surely affects *varoş* boys. The Internet cafés that house *varoş* boys quickly turned into servicing them with cams and *varoş* boys immediately started to demonstrate their looks through little boxes of cams on computer screens.

2.2. Fragments from the Universe of Same-sex Sexual Experiences

Through globalization, homosexualities in the non-western world often follow the same trajectory from a tolerated but unrecognized personal strangeness to being medicalized as an objectively defined illness that experts need to cure, and finally as a diversity of subcultures and fragmentation of identities (Parker, 1999; Murray and Roscoe, 1997; Vicinus, Duberman, and Chauncey, 1989; Nardi and Schneider, 1998). Parker (1999: 28) summarizes this sometimes overlapping process which is also relevant for Turkey: “...[a]s three different dimensions in the evolving history of homosexuality in Brazilian life: (1) the traditional constitution of same-sex relations within the sexual ideology of popular culture; (2) the recent impact of science, medicine, and the media in building up a more rationalized notion of homosexuality as a distinct sexual identity; and (3) the increasingly rapid emergence of distinct cultures or subcultures, organized around understandings of homoerotic desire, within the fabric of contemporary Brazilian life.”³² Parker also underlines

³² From a different view of western transformation, early Plummer (1992: xiv) contributes to this point: “Homosexuality is not what it used to be. In scarcely a

that the use of traditional is not a free-floating conceptualization in the existing sexual order. In Latin America, traditional or not all sexual manifestations strictly depend on the culture of machismo (Lancaster, 1994; Lancaster, 1997; Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1996; Cornwall, 1996; Gutmann, 1996; Cruz-Malavé, 1997; Terto Jr., 2000; Mirande, 2004; Diaz, 2000; Almauger, 2004; Prieur, 1997; Parker, 1999; Kulick, 1998; Melhuus, 1996). In this sexual climate of machismo, and contrary to western divisions of homo and heterosexuality, one cannot be identified with whom one has sex. Instead, it is important to see what he exactly does in terms of sexual performance. As far as he fucks his partner and protect his own body from penetration, he can maintain his real virility vis-à-vis lesser men like homosexuals or women. This macho structure that gives importance to sexual acts rather than the gender of the actors may easily be applied to sexualities in Turkey although it would be more appropriate to look carefully at the great differences between Latin American and Middle-Eastern sexual habits. What I am striving to construct is not a union of these two immensely dissimilar sexual cultures. However, my purpose here is to show that objective, comprehensive, clear-cut western conceptualizations of homo and heterosexuality might possibly not work in non-western geographies like Latin America or Turkey as well as other regions. Therefore, being homosexual or gay here is a matter of self-identification, socialization, and relative position both within the minoritized sexual community and the society at large. In this framework, one does not necessarily identify oneself as gay just because he fucked with another man. Gayness follows a course of (political) circulation that starts from a specific place and ends at another specific place with uncertainties and doubts as Parker (1999: 39) nicely explains: “It [the inception of sexual categories] spread out, it

quarter of a century, same-sex experiences in the Western world have been ruptured from the simplified, unified, distorting, often medical, frequently criminal, always devalued categories of the past. Instead, they have increasingly become a diverse array of relational, gendered, erotic, political, social, and spiritual experiences, difficult to tame and capture with restrictive and divisive labels.”

would seem, from the clinics of medical doctors and psychoanalysts through the offices of epidemiologists, the newsrooms of journalists, the sets and studios of television talk-show hosts, and so on, into the living rooms not only of the educated elite but also of Brazilians from all walks of life.” Roscoe and Murray (1997: 11) claim that the definition of the category of the modern homosexual is not fully comprehensive even in the geography where the definition emerged. Hence, it would be utterly redundant to expect it to be all-inclusive in different contexts.³³ They insist on positioning modern equal-versatile gayness just near age-stratified, gender-stratified, and other status-structured homosexualities, in spite of the fact that gayness is the most visible and even hegemonic one. Roscoe and Murray give the example of the surfacing of modern gay identity and the simultaneous existence of the classical relations between the effeminate youth and his older patron in Bangkok. Therefore, we are not able to draw ubiquitous borders of sexual identities, instead, we can only trace their implications in different parts of homosexually active populations. My young student or professional informants clearly define themselves as gay because they have sex with men and they have a desire to be with men, while my rent boy informants mostly negate this identity even though on occasions they verbalize the same desires and practices. Even more complicating the picture, for participants of another section of homosexual life in Istanbul, such as the people in the gay hamam that I recounted above, it is not a relevant question to ask them whether they are gay or not. This multifocality paves the way for thinking how futile

³³ Murray (1997) cites that the medical discourse of homosexuality in Europe in the nineteenth century was blinding to other possible origins of homosexual acts and identities. He names this “special creationism” and challenges this prioritizing view and pins down it even to Ibn Sina. In this perspective, we cannot segregate the production and circulation of many words in Islamic culture from what Foucault analyzed for Europe (Turkish *ibne* is one of those words, too). Murray finds that there are words in Arabic language to signify men who have versatile, reciprocal sex with other men. Hence, it would be meaningless to persist on the originality of versatility in same sex erotic actions in the western world.

and naïve it is to take for granted sexual identities of a particular construction from the western world, and trying to understand and interpret what is lived here in this geography by employing those terms and categories.

On the other hand, the irrelevance of specific sexual categories to local meanings should not necessarily mean a totally fluid and borderless (homo)sexual repertoire. The dominating (hetero)sexist system, machismo or not, still has its own organization, symbols, mechanisms, and materializations to force people to act accordingly. “If sexual experience is in fact constantly in motion, fluid, flexible, and in the process of being transformed, it is also never endlessly so. On the contrary, sexual experience, and homosexual experience in particular, always take shape (in Brazil as elsewhere) within limits –within a complex field of power and domination, in which the possibilities for transformation, the freedom of movement experienced by individuals or groups, the choices or options opened up by different cultural systems, are simultaneously shaped and molded by relations of force,” (Parker, 1999: 28).³⁴ Roscoe and Murray (1997) underscore that today almost everyone agrees that sexual identities such as gay or straight are modern conceptualizations

³⁴ According to this view, homosexual behaviors are already prearranged and controlled by other social determinants like class and gender. In this understanding, it is possible to classify all sorts of same sex erotic enactments into given analytical rooms as Annick Prieur does for her research with transvestite informants in Mexico City: “As the North American sociologist Stephen Murray (1995) reminds us, although there is intercultural as well as intracultural diversity, conceptions do not vary endlessly, and the patternings of homosexuality that have actually been found somewhere in the world may be grouped into only four categories: age-structured, gender-structured, class- or profession-structured and egalitarian relations. The one I study is basically gender-structured, with relations between one feminine-looking and one masculine-looking part. But aspects of age and class structure interfere...” (Prieur, 1997: 39). Although it is also possible for me to think of the encounter between young, poorer rent boys and their older, wealthier, gay clientele in İstanbul in exactly the same terms of gender attitude, age, and class structured homosexuality, this way of thinking may still be further challenged because it simply pays no attention to issues like the act of selling sex or negotiated power sharing like the ones in s&m relations.

that were imported from the west to the rest of the world, nevertheless, it is totally impossible to disregard their increasing effect on self-definitions, identity constructions, and formation and dissolution of sexual subcultures everywhere. In other words, despite the fact that we do not comprehend completely same sex relations in the non-western world by using western concepts and ways of thinking, we also cannot ignore their compelling visibility and effects which were not acute even twenty years ago.³⁵

As I pointed out above, the two radical constitutive points in homosexual experiences in Turkey are the importance of class background and penetrative sexual role as active/passive. Tapınç (1992) verifies the distinction of active-passive roles in defining same-sex relations in the late 1980s. Increased migration from rural areas to the Istanbul metropolitan area, enhanced urban exclusion, and the increased visibility of distinctions in life-styles with the consumer-boom of the late 1980s and early 1990s that I indicated in the introduction³⁶ added class antagonism to this previously well-organized active-passive opposition.

Gays in Turkey have to navigate a dangerous balance between their moral identities as modest and inexperienced against being *kaşar* (slutty, excessively sexually practiced) figures, in addition to the sexual role and class peculiarities. The relationality in the encounter between two men might appear to be a case of as a

³⁵ For an example, in his research before almost fifteen years ago about the lives of gay men in İstanbul, Hüseyin Tapınç (1992) mentions young, urban, educated, masculine “gays” as just starting to appear. Today, gay people of this definition are hegemonic at the representational level as well as their relative ability to create fashions and norms. This thesis on *varoş* male prostitutes seeks to better comprehend the influence of gayness on “non-gay” men who have sex with men, for money or for desire.

³⁶ Of course, the invention and diffusion of the Internet played another crucial role in terms of equalizing all users and deleting evident social-economic differences.

self-evident gender equality since there are two people of the same gender. However, it simultaneously contains more secret disparities like class, role, and the status and reputation of sexual experience. It is a simple (almost universal) power game; one side tries to be advantageous along one of the possible axes, and in this particular constellation in Turkey some totally local elements and apparently globalized factors are intermeshed in a complicated pattern. In all the contexts of homoerotic behaviors imagined masculinity is always better than effeminacy; the inserter is more valuable than the insertee; the younger one is obviously better than the older just like the richer is superior, etc. Furthermore, a *kaşar* is usually disempowered. For example, the status of *varoş* boys is more situational, because it depends on whom the partner is. If a young university student who looks for a similar young “gay” for a long-term emotional relation, he possibly would not opt for a *varoş* boy. On the contrary, an older guy who searches hook ups in exchange for money or other possible gifts, and has a predilection for the real, authentic, rough manhood that rent boys try to embody, it is unmistakably a *varoş* boy that he hunts for. In other words, same-sex sexual practices in Turkey are troubled with almost stable identities like *varoş* or inserter.³⁷ They are, also entrapped by homo-socially constructed sub-identities as in the case of *kaşar*. Being named or labeled as *kaşar* or not is a matter of self-presentation or the management-construction of one’s own public image.

Being a *kaşar* has also spatial and bodily meanings and implications. A *kaşar* gay is the type of person that is usually present in gay bars and cafés. He always cruises

³⁷ Saying that, I do not try to imply the durable or natural features of the categories, on the contrary, I have witnessed boys who came from a more *varoş* background and transformed themselves into more and more stylish gays over years, or into versatile gays not only discursively but also bodily and sexually. What I endeavour to highlight is instead the social and bodily capital they enact when they first start to enter the web of same-sex relations.

and ready to go. An ideal-type *kaşar* looks cute (as much as he can) in terms of general appearance, concentrating on details like being carefully shaven and having sprayed hair, smooth body, hip clothes, nice footwear, generally exposed designer underwear, using heavily perfume, drinking too much, etc.³⁸ A *kaşar* gay gives the impression that he is as comfortable in a queer space as if he is in his own home. He never seems shy, bored, or isolated; instead, he looks elated, friendly, but undoubtedly cool. If one gay goes to gay bars or cafés too much he comes to be known as *kaşar* without regard for his physical condition. An experienced *kaşar* does not go to specific bars and cafés that he does not find attractive enough. Parks, hamams, and movie theatres do not constitute an alternative for a *kaşar*. In virtual space, it is better if his profiles are continuously online³⁹ –when one visitor enters into the site he can see the profile. This online status for long hours means the *kaşar* is a person busy with the Internet (he has a trendy job like graphic design or advertiser, if not student) or he has cable Internet connection (which indicates an upper social status of preferences about spending money). Another principle for a *kaşar* about virtual space is to close down his profiles for some periods. These periods of without a visible profile on the Internet mean that he has found someone and he is temporarily in a relationship. After these breaks new profiles start with new nicknames and new pictures.

This vivid picture of being a successful *kaşar* (which surely emerges from experience of long years) should not suggest that everyone in the gay scene in

³⁸ Gays name this process of physical preparation for a better look as “çektirmek”. Generally gays conceive the labor they put in front of the mirror, in the gym, and the cosmetics (especially eye creams) they use to look young as crucial elements of *çektirmek*.

³⁹ Except Friday and Saturday evenings after 9:00 pm because this demonstrates that the *kaşar* gay does not stay at home and he goes out. It is not a cool thing to stay at home weekend evenings unless there is an irresistible ‘event’ like a house party, Eurovision finals, or a concert of Sezen Aksu.

İstanbul seeks to find a *kaşar*. On the contrary, gay men in İstanbul frequently praise natural beauty, try to find closeted gays, and sexually unproven, mostly young men. This distaste towards *kaşar* gays reveals itself, for example, in the profiles on the Internet. New members in general, but sometimes *kaşar* ones too, declare that they are not into “bar gülleri” (roses of the bar), gym queens, “ablalar” (elder sisters), “kaşar gullümcüler” (*gullüm* means friendly, joyous chat), “ağır ablalar” (mature sisters), “internet kuşları” (birds of the Internet) or just *kaşar* people. Being a *kaşar* seems unavoidable after a few years of experience in the highly delimited gay scene in İstanbul. On the other hand, most of the gays have to *çektirmek* in order to attract someone because naturally cute ones are really scarce. Therefore, it is a sexual dilemma for gays in İstanbul to be a *kaşar* or not because both conditions have their own difficulties and requirements.

To have a desire for the social, sexual, and bodily features of exaggerated masculinity, which is only available to *varoş* boys (because gays are already oversignified with the femininized signs of self-caring, good-looking, and a polite manner) is a contradiction that poses a challenge for gays. This challenge of desire actively contributes to the production and maintenance of a sexual culture that belittles *varoş* or popular classes, and praises refined cultural markers of the upper-middle classes. It is a constant tension between the desires to have more sex and to be satisfied, and at the same time to reproduce the same subculture that stigmatizes *kaşar* gays and pushes them into long-term relations that are difficult to realize because of the homophobia in society and because of their own ungratified needs and desires. In the delimited gay culture of Turkey, everyone wants to be promiscuous, to be open, and to pass without any problems; nevertheless, there is not sufficient courage, energy, and will to resist, subvert, destabilize, and change the sexual order they are embedded in. This is the socio-sexual context in İstanbul

amongst gay men (exemplified in *varoş* and *kaşar* people, the interest toward and the aversion against them) that engenders the sexual desire for rent boys. Their “natural” cuteness, inexperienced background, and non-gay identification⁴⁰ make them the best alternative for most of the gays who do not imagine a long-term relation.

A great majority of the gays that I talked with desired and imagined a western-type, liberalized, and open gay life with all its different components. One remarkable part of this desire is surely sexual. Although most of the men who have sex with men in Turkey are preoccupied in planning, imagining, or actively seeking sexual chances, they all look fully dissatisfied because they cannot have the people that they are actually attracted to with.

“Bizim var ya şu telefonumuzun tepeden tırnağa kolilerle dolu olması lazımdı şimdi. Bak genciz, güzeliz, paramız var, evimiz var, okulumuz iyi, düzgün tipleriz... Yani hiç boş kalmamamız lazım, ama nerdeee? Benim telefonumda topu topu üç dört tane potansiyel koli var, onların da kaç yatlable sen düşün artık! Sex yapacağım diye harcadığım zamanla ben var ya, şimdiye iki üç kitap çıkartırdım, yemin ederim...”
(Hamdi)

“Benim bir fuckbuddy’im vardı, yani düzenli olarak sex yaptığım ama başka hiç bir sosyal veya duygusal meseleye bulaşmadığım... Şu anda 29 yaşındayım ve hayatım boyunca sadece o olabildi, üstelik de belki on senedir aramama rağmen. Bir yandan bakarsan çok modernler, haklar hukuklar istiyorlar bizim geyler. Ama aslında hepsi inanılmaz muhafazakar. Sadece couple olacaklar başka hiç bir şey bilmezler. Allah aşkına biriyle beraber olmak öyle kolay şey mi, demekle olur mu? O olmayınca sex de yok. E ben ne anladım bu işten, evde koca bekleyen kızlar gibi... En çok da ‘ben kaşar değilim’ lafına bozuluyorum. Sex yapmak istemek niye illa ki kaşarlık olsun ki! Bizimkilerin sadece lafları ve görüntüleri özgür, vücutları değil! Onlar koca bekliyorlar, straight karılar gibi, ancak o zaman cinselliklerini yaşayabilecekler.”
(Abdullah)

“Benim kuşağım yani 78-79-80 doğumlu olanlar daha örümcek kafalıyız. Hiç bir şey görmeden büyüdük biz, Bülent Ersoy, Fatih Ürek falan dışında, onları da görmesek daha iyiydi... Ama şu anda ikinci jenerasyon çıktı, 85-86-87 doğumlular, internetle büyüyen, efendim Queer as Folk’u ve Sex and the City’i seyreden, 18 yaşını bile

⁴⁰ This assumed heterosexuality attracts many gays although most of the gays believe that rent boys are lying about their real sexual identities. Converting a straight man into a homosexually-active one even for a brief time is a great pleasure for gays in İstanbul. I refer to this heterosexual object of gay desire in the next chapter.

beklemeden Boğaz'daki gey kulüplere gidip dünyayı gören, asla ve asla aktivistlik yapmayan çocuklar. Biraz daha açıklar sex anlamında da... Bu 'sen kaşar mısın-ben değilim,' mevzuları o kadar da can sıkıcı değil, belki de kendi toyluklarını halihazırda kabullendiklerinden... Ama çok çok daha açıklar, ve sex yapmaktan bizlerin korktuğu kadar korkmuyorlar... Ne güzel!" (Özkan)⁴¹

2.3. Representations of Same Sex Desire

Turkey is one of the regions in the world where homosexuality or men who have sex with men are almost totally under-documented, both academically and journalistically. The first non-fiction books on homosexuality in the country were published by the late 1980s and early 1990s under the powerful protective mask of science. Two most prominent examples of this genre are freelance economist-journalist Arslan Yüzcün's seminal book, *Türkiye'de Eşcinsellik: Dün, Bugün* (1986), and psychiatrist Pınar Çekirge's *Yalnızlık Adası'nın Erkekleri: Psiko-Sosyal*

⁴¹ "Look at our cell phones. They now should be full of boys to have sex. Look at us. We are young, beautiful, we have money, we have houses, good schools, and we are nice types. So we should not stay alone, but where? I have only three or four potential boys in my cell phone; imagine how many of them are fuckable? I swear I can write more than one book in the time I spend to find a hook-up." (Hamdi)

"I had a fuckbuddy with whom I have regular sex but share nothing in terms of emotions or sociality. I am 29 now and this was my only fuckbuddy in my life even though I had been looking for it for ten years. On the one hand, our gays are very modern, they demand rights and visibility. But, on the other hand, they are really conservative. They only dream about becoming couples. Is it that easy to be together with someone, can it come by saying? When they cannot form couples they do not have sex. What should I understand from this, they are like young girls who expect possible husbands in the home. What I get angry most is the saying that I ma not *kaşar*. Why everyone equalize sex with being *kaşar*? Speeches and appearances of our gays are free not their bodies. They are looking for their husbands like straight women. Only then they can experience their sexuality. (Abdullah)

"We, my generation who were born in 1977-1980, are old-fashioned. We grew up without seeing anything except Bülent Ersoy and Fatih Ürek who are better not to be seen. But now the second generation who born after 1985 emerged. They grew up with connecting to the Internet, watching Queer as Folk and Sex and the City, going to gay clubs in the Bosphorus before 18, and never contributing to the activist groups. They are more open in terms of sex. Issues like "I am not a kaşar, are you a kaşar?" are not boring with them. Maybe because they admitted their burgeoning, inexperienced gayness. They are much more open, and they do not fear to have sex as much as we feared. Very nice!" (Özkan)

Açıdan Eşcinseller (1991). Yüzgün accepts the distinct gay way of life in Istanbul and depicts it in astounding detail. He claims a scientific stance as a result of a very comprehensive survey conducted with more than 160 self-identified gay men he was able to reach through people he knew. On the other hand, Çekirge's book was originally adapted from his master thesis for the Department of Psychology, Boğaziçi University, and his objective, scientific, judgmental, and even distant approach stems from very use of an abnormalizing psychological perspective. Although, it is possible to understand or empathize with the (professional, personal, or even intimate) conditions in which this thesis/book came to existence, the scope and diagnosing attitude of the author is totally unacceptable today. Therefore, I deem it unnecessary to delve into details of this early work here.

On the other hand, it has an importance in demonstrating the transformation from humiliating *ibne* (or *nonoş*) as a reference word to the more scientifically defined *eşcinsel* –generally as a translation for the word homosexual. After a while, these words *eşcinsel* and *homoseksüel* began to be used interchangeably in daily conversations. Although Çekirge's book did not have a strong impact in the media, the academy, or homosexual activism, his language of semi-scientific *eşcinsel-homoseksüel* became hegemonic in the early 1990s mostly through the language used by sexologist Haydar Dümen in the popular press and TV programs. With the late 1990s, homosexually active people commenced to use gay (*gey* in written Turkish) instead of *eşcinsel*. Even though the print media still prefers *eşcinsel*, today *gey* is also broadly accepted in daily use.

Yüzgün starts his book apologetically and constructs a discourse of liberties and human rights in order to legitimize writing a book about homosexuals in a country in which it is still taboo (as it still is today). In the following pages, he seeks to prove

that the history of humankind is full of victorious homosexual/bisexual figures and it is totally justifiable and historically correct to study men who have sex with men in Turkey, too. The most exciting (and hence the most permanent) aspect of the book is Yüzgün's documentation of how gays were living, struggling, and entertaining in the early 1980s. Reading through pages, we can come to be a part of the very lifestyle, struggles, and contradictions of the 1980s, which we have, usually unconsciously, inherited and experienced even in the years 2000. The fear of police raid, the origins of the particular jargon, and the humor still used by queers in Istanbul are some examples. Yüzgün has a clear intention to mainstream homosexuality in the media and to save its public image from the cartel of artists, bohemians, or marginal inhabitants of the Beyoğlu area, epitomized in the marginalized and comical representation of superstar Zeki Müren's (also Bülent Ersoy and Ajda Pekkan) sexually ambiguous life. And yet, this is more difficult to do than say. Unfortunately, as a brave early public figure, Yüzgün himself and the discussions that his book triggered, empowered that funny, stigmatized, and belittled image of homosexuality in Turkey, instead of igniting a positive change towards a more tolerating and diversified atmosphere.

The hostile environment reigned during the early 1990s and three different turning points marked this period of scholarly reticence. The first period is marked by the development of private television channels and radio stations. The liberation of broadcasting came to the country after approximately 40 years of state-governed TV. One significant aspect of this liberalization was the popularization of clearly, if not exaggeratedly, effeminate (male) singers or showmen, first as guests of talk shows and then as hosts of their own TV programs. They simply looked like pre-op transvestites with their embellished way of talking, fully made-up faces, sparkling transparent costumes, and shaved bodies. They constructed and maintained the

highly caricaturized, marginalized, easy-to-spot image of homosexual according which most people of Turkey perceive homosexuality as a precondition of the ultimate sex change operation. Men who have sex with men in Turkey had to struggle to escape from this public image and gender confusion, and it is still not possible to say that they are successful at all (Hocaoğlu, 2002)⁴².

Sensational TV anchorman Reha Muhtar provoked the second peak point by showing ‘megastar’ Tarkan’s naked pictures with other (young and cute) men around him. The popular media agenda of the country radically changed when Tarkan’s already suspected sexual life turned into a matter of serious discussions in the press and daily chats. Indeed, from the very beginning of his career, Tarkan always had to encounter such claims, but all such “condemnations” prudently remained unanswered. After a few heady days of animated discussion, and Tarkan’s declarations of self-pride and refusals to show any regret, the issue was almost totally closed. It was if he ascended to the status of Zeki Müren whose sexual promiscuity was well known but never talked about in public. A directly untouchable yet anxiety-ridden status resulted from the intense popularity the singer enjoys. In subsequent years the issue of his ambiguous sexual role arose again in relation to compulsory military service, and the words of a minister about his sexual identity. However, none of these insinuations could damage his generally accepted safe status.

⁴² While we, the early generation of the 1980s, suffered to experience our early homosexual formation under the fear and treat of “dönme olmak” (being a convert, transsexual) mostly because of the greatest singers and their shocking effect on people around us, the next cohort that was born in the late 1980s, faced with the assaults of those exaggeratedly effeminate Television figures. The public image of homosexuality from Bülent Ersoy, to Fatih Ürek, and ultimately to Tarkan, which we live with today, is a tremendously worthy subject for future research.

The last single event that marked this period was the state-controlled transvestite bashing that occurred in Cihangir, just before the UN Habitat II Conferences in 1996. Ülker Sokak, where most of the transvestite and transsexual (prostitute) people had lived until then, was cleared by force by the cooperation of some local people, the police, and the well organized nationalist youth under the surveillance and approval of the state (which was then experiencing the most proto-nationalist days of prime minister Prof. Tansu Çiller). The mass media was singularly silent. Transvestites were exiled first to Eskişehir and then to outlying districts of Istanbul like Halkalı; the street was suddenly renovated by the municipality, and after a short period, new bohemian tenants moved into this very ‘gay neighborhood’ of the city.

Sociologist Pınar Selek (2001) and Demet Demir one of the transsexuals from the street (2001) recorded this poignant and unfortunately under-documented tale. These publications of this violent eviction marked the beginning of a new period that paved the way for new non-fiction publications, mass media interviews, and TV discussions about homosexuality in the first years of the new millennium. One of the most respectable television speakers of the time, Hulki Cevizoğlu, arranged a special-topic discussion on homosexuality with the participation of a famous sexologist, Haydar Dümen, and another famous theologian from the academy, Zekeriya Beyaz, and a young guy who first disclosed his gay identity during the program. As expected, the young gay could not reciprocate the other two much more experienced (expert) guests and even the moderator Cevizoğlu was not satisfied by the quality of the discussion. Then, for the first time in the history of his program, he arranged a second talk the following week with other speakers, and after long and tiring discussions (for both the audience and the participants themselves), he declared that it was impossible to ‘solve’ the problem by talking. We were not surprised, it was more complicated than what he seemed to imagine.

It was at this time that the first interviews of activist groups appeared in the newspapers and magazines then. As one of the participants and selected spokesmen, even I gave 5-6 interviews to journalists from top national newspapers and weeklies. Those activist-oriented and non-homophobic publications were the most equalizing and even positive ones in the period that I recount here. At that point, two other non-fiction books that consist of interviews with homosexual men and women were published, Hoccoğlu (2002) and Özbay and Soydan (2003). The two books were welcomed both by readers and critics. In addition to many other reviews and interviews about these books, Alper Borali (2003) wrote an article to the respectable weekly, *Radikal İki*, and celebrating all those publications and burgeoning academic research.

It may be mentioned that the political climate that surrounds gay people in Turkey displays symptoms of change. Here, I specifically employ the term political climate as sociologist Thomas Linneman (2003: 4-5) defines the term: “Political climate is a socially constructed manifestation of hostility or hospitableness toward different individuals or groups in society on a variety of levels, ranging from the interpersonal to the global... One’s overall view of political climate is made up of assessments of a number of elements: media representations, the opinions of the general public, practises of government entities, critical events, and the actions of social movement organizations...” The general scene largely created by the first official Gay&Lesbian section of the IF Istanbul film festival, new open gay spaces and parties welcoming all, the first non-effeminate openly gay character in a very popular TV series depicting a heterosexual romance, conferences held by (or in association with) universities and activist groups both in Ankara and Istanbul, are all new

developments. We now experience a much more tolerant and visible political climate which makes us hopeful for positive social change.

2.4. Purloined Social Movements: Gay Politics

As I mentioned above activist groups in Turkey have transformed themselves from the weekly secret meetings of a few brave guys in the rented messy rooftop to the well-organized, open, and enduring gay spaces. This change took place not only in terms of spaces but also in terms of visibility and recognition. To put it simply, no one was aware of gay-lesbian movements 5-6 years ago or before that. Today, even though it is still not possible to claim that everyone knows something about them, at least people can know something if they want to.

I had relations with gay (or “gltb” after its invention) groups in my early years of homosexual socialization, because I believed that the most legitimate and correct way of meeting someone or contributing to the gay minority was through them. After my first passive and silent participation (this mood did not last long) in Lambda-Istanbul, I came to consider it as not suitable for my interests and goals.⁴³ I left it. However, a university-based movement appeared shortly afterwards that originated from the Middle East Technical University, Ankara. After a refreshing tour abroad in which we always talked about how to save gays in the country, I found myself in the Boğaziçi University branch of this new activism. Things happened very fast in the fall of 2000 and we constituted first a powerful virtual group of approximately 50 people from the students and graduates—that was a very

⁴³ The main reason behind my separation from Lambda was my desire to contribute gay activism in university campuses where I was in. On the other hand, the group then seemed too much involved with a narrow population of ongoing gay life in İstanbul. They did not give the impression that they wanted to embrace everybody. I think still this is the situation.

serious number considering the population Lambda-Istanbul had then. We met in person first in Café Cute and then our meetings became regular and open to every gay-lesbian member from other universities. Yet, the threshold was our beautifully designed, comprehensive Internet site –which has been perceived as impossible or very costly until then.⁴⁴

Today the overall picture may be depicted as rich and vibrant. Kaos-GL, which is the oldest of gay groups, is an Ankara-based organization that has a gay cultural center and the only permanent gay publication of the country. Lambda-Istanbul has a more irregular history and changing patterns of recruitment, it is positioned at the center of Istanbul and is mostly into the conferences that were held in universities and with other NGOs. For example, in the past, they organized parties but they stopped it in order to create a more serious public image. Legato, which was established to unite university students on campuses and make them visible to everyone, failed to sustain any attention after considerable attempts, now works as a virtual network of communication between gay students.

I became a socially gay person first through gay groups, then turned into a keen advocate of the existence and visibility of groups, and then grew to be fed up with the unchanging actors and discussions, and gained a more satirical even cynical viewpoint. Of course, I cannot negate here my identity and personal history interconnected with gay life in order to attain an “expert” status or objectivity. The only thing that I can propose is to include my subjective judgments and feelings as Richard Parker (1999: 14-15) does in his long fieldwork period in Brazil: “There is no privileged vantage point from which to offer an objective interpretation free from the biases of my position in a given hermeneutic circle, and the best that I can do in

⁴⁴ It is closed down after two years because nobody paid the fee.

this regard is simply to try to make my own situated reading as explicit as possible and to use this situatedness, in a sense, as an advantage offering me the possibility of at least some insights that would be impossible were it not for my particular perspective.”⁴⁵

What I want to highlight here, on the other hand, is the great disintegration, breakup, and even antagonism that is experienced by activist and non-activist gays in Turkey –especially in Istanbul because Ankara gays are not numerous enough to be stigmatized as activist. It is unquestionably obvious from the interviews I conducted as well as my own experiences both from the inside and outside of the movements.

“Ben asla benim hiç bir sorunuma çare olacaklarına inanmıyorum. Aktivistlik yapıyoruz diye kendileri oturup bir iktidar alanı kuruyorlar, hiç bir şey yapmadan birilerinin gözünde bir yerlere geliyorlar. Benim adıma konuşmalarına da karşıyım. Bara gitmezler, chat’e girmezler, kafelere gitmezler, kapitalist diye, yani ne diyebilirim ki? Uçmuş bence onlar” (Fırat)

“Bırak allahaşkına, bir yığın çirkin lubunya! Kimseyi bulamayınca acaba birini düşürebilirmiyiz buradan diye dökülüyorlar. Ne yapmışlar? Ne yapabilmişler? Benim bu kadar senedir hep duyduğum ancak güzelce bir taşralı çocuk kazayla bunları bir bok sanıp da gittiyse hepsinin üstüne atladığı. Başka da bir numara yok, ben yemem canım...” (Gazi)

“Açıkçası ben imajımızın bozuk olduğu iddialarını doğru veya haklı bulmuyorum, keşke gelip sizler de görseniz biz öyle çok sıkışmış kalmış, ne yapacağını bilemez haldeki gizli geye yardımcı oluyoruz ki... Burada düzenli toplantılar yapıyoruz ortalama 25-30 kişi geliyor her hafta, basın açıklamaları yapıyoruz, Ankara’ya gidiyoruz... Eğer kafelere, barlara karşıysak geylerin oralarda sömürüldüğünü düşündüğümüzden, aynı çay bizim burda bedava orada beş milyon! O parayı buraya bağış yapsa veya bir dergi alsın katkıda bulunacak. Ama zamanla daha çok anlaşılacağıma eminim ben, iyimserliğimi koruyorum yani.. Sonuçta biz kötü bir şey yapmıyoruz ve oturup anlatınca herkes ‘çok haklısınız’ diyor bizlere...” (Ömer)⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Within the limits of this thesis it is not possible to document every distinct state of gay activist history of the country here –for further information and interpretation, see Alper, 2004; Hocaoglu, 2002; Özbay, 2003.

⁴⁶ “I never believe that they will find a solution to one of my problems. They construct a field of power through activism; they are becoming something without doing anything. I am against to their claim as representing me. They do not go to the bars or cafés; connect the Internet, etc. because those are capitalist. What can I say? They are lost.” (Fırat)

“Never mind them, ugly fairies! They are striving to find someone in activist groups when they cannot outside. What did they do? What could they do? I only heard for

This reciprocally shared climate of hostility triggers the position I can name as purloined social movement because the natural target population of the movement does not give approval or permission to it -if not being completely against it. Most of the gays that I know personally and/or I talked with for this chapter disparage gay movements, and the groups simultaneously ignore their addressed potential participants and do not endeavour to alter the image they evidently have. Instead, they seem to have accepted their excluded position within gay subculture and their inability to lead it, and they try to build alliances with other (heterosexual) social groups of human rights. In this way they become a movement that is apart from the broad support, empathy, and participation of queer people of the country. It is very unfortunate that despite our efforts to combine what activist and non-activists say in our book about lesbians and bisexual women, this outsider positionality of gay groups also reveals itself in the interviews in both our (Özbay and Soydan, 2003) and Murat Hoccoğlu's (2002) books.

The last six years in the gay scene in İstanbul during which I was formed as a young gay person, marks a period of rapid change regarding homosexual desire in Turkey. As I documented in this chapter, complex and multiple relations between queer

all those years that when a beautiful young boy comes from Anatolia and wrongly thinks that they are important people, they all jump on him. They do not have any other tactics. I do not buy sweetie.” (Gazi)

“Honestly, I do not find true or right that our public image is wrong. I wish you come and see we help how many closeted gays with serious problems. We arrange regular weekly meetings for 25-30 people. We prepare declarations for the press. We go to Ankara. We are against cafés and bars because we think that gays are exploited there. The same tea is free here and charged for 5 million liras. He can contribute by donating this money or buying a magazine. However I am sure we will be better understood by time. I am saving my optimistic side. We do not do something wrong and when we elaborate everyone says yes you are right.” (Ömer)

spaces, representations of same-sex eroticism, incipient gay movements and internal differences within the gay population came into existence in this period. Gay culture is in a dialogical relation with mainstream cultural codes and meanings. Categories like *varoş* or *kaşar* which originally used to describe non-gay notions entered into homosexual culture and changed it dramatically. But sexual role as active-passive and class backgrounds are still the two basic elements in the organization of homosexual lives in Turkey. These significant roles of sexual performance and class characteristics contribute to the context in which rent boys appear as objects of gay desire with their exaggerated *varoş* masculinity and allegedly heterosexual identities that I present in the next chapter.

3 NOCTURNAL QUEERS OF THE CITY: RENT BOYS

“In Cuba gays were not confined to a specific area of a club or beach. Everybody mingled and there was no division that would place the homosexual on the defensive. This has been lost in more advanced societies, where the homosexual has had to become a sort of sexual recluse and separate himself from the supposedly nonhomosexual society, which undoubtedly excludes him... The interesting aspect of homosexuality that you did not have to be homosexual to have a relationship to a man; a man could have intercourse with another man as an ordinary act.”
Reinaldo Arenas (1994: 108)

“I always lied, and for me this mendacity was the most exhausting aspect of the job”
Rick Whitaker (1999:39)

So far, my focus has been on a specific urban and sexual context in which same-sex erotic encounters take place and the way these encounters structure the positions, meanings, and relations between different actors of this queer scene of the city. I will turn now to look at how those positions and relations establish a framework for understanding rent boys and their “double lives” between their straight milieus and homosexual contacts. I will try to present both the rent boys’ points of view and gay men’s experiences and reflection.

It is clear that male prostitution constitutes a crucial and contested part of sexualities, both clandestinely and explicitly, in the past as today, and in the (post)modern nations or others.⁴⁷ That is why in chapters 1 and 2, I was generally

⁴⁷ Kandiyoti (2002), Yıldırım (2002), and Selek (2001) for Istanbul; Prieur (1997) for Mexico; Parker (1999), Kulick (1999), and Cornwall (1994) for Brazil; McNamara (1994) for New York; Schifter (1998) for Costa Rica; Mujtaba (1997) for Pakistan; Preston-Whyte et al. (2000) for Durban; West (1992, 1998), Weeks(1989), Browne and Minichiello (1995), Minichiello (2000), Kaplan (1999),

preoccupied with contextualizing male prostitution and the gay scene in Istanbul. Yet, it immediately becomes evident that determining gender among male prostitutes and classifying them as male or female is not as easy as it would seem at first sight. Defining the gender of prostitutes (male or female) might be really difficult regarding the existence of transvestites who destabilize conventional gender norms. Thus, as many researchers do⁴⁸, I see the pattern of male prostitution in Turkey as falling in two categories of sexual performance: highly effeminate (or feminine) transvestites of all ages and the exaggeratedly masculine, young rent boys. It is rather hard to distinguish between the two because of their complex relations with each other and the blurred borders in their personal histories –in fact many transvestites count as how started prostitution as sort of rent boys and I have many times heard that they claim that most of the rent boys will eventually end up as transvestites. In this thesis, I try to focus my attention only on rent boys⁴⁹ and their gay clientele in order to better comprehend the dynamics of intimate sexual politics of hegemonic and dissident forms of masculinity among men from different social classes.

When I first entered the gay scene in Istanbul there were a few rent-boys that one could encounter only through great effort. Hence, it is not impossible to state that the short history of rent boys in Istanbul goes back at most to ten years. Unfortunately,

Karras (2002), and Knox (1998) for Britain; Giorgi (2002) for Madrid; Evans (2003) for Berlin; Baker and Stanley (2003) for the seas; Marlowe (1997) for feminist questions on male prostitution; Aggleton (ed. 1999) for the only comparative international volume that looks at male prostitution; and lastly Whitaker (1999) for a memoir of a former male prostitute. In this thesis I do not explore *Jigolos* (gigolos, male prostitutes that sell sex to women).

⁴⁸ For example, see da Silva (1999), and Kulick (1998).

⁴⁹ Masculine-inserter young male prostitutes are commonly named as “hustlers” or “call-boys” in Anglo-Saxon countries, “garçon” in France, “miche” in Brazil, “cachero” in Costa Rica, “flete” in Peru, and again “call boys” in Philippines (Aggleton, 1999). In Turkish there is no equivalent term for “rent boy”. All the people that I have talked with used it in this way, or simply as “rent”.

we do not have detailed historical accounts of male prostitution in Turkey. It is publicly known that late Ottoman and early republican Istanbul housed a sort of organized boy prostitution alongside undercover erotic encounters between foreign recruits and local young men in occupation years.⁵⁰ Yüzgün (1986) also notes the existence of patterns of homosexual escapades with poor young guys during the 1980s. Those interactions took place sporadically in several places where homosexuals were dominant, but they were not recurrent or numerous enough to be fixed in the categories such as rent boy which can I employ today.

For this thesis, I have gone to bars that rent boys frequently visit from December 2004 to April 2005 in addition to my irregular presence at those bars starting from the spring of 2003. Those bars are mainly DejaVu and Tek Yön as well as Prive, Queen, and Neo. Except the first two –which are already known as “rent boy bars”, it is quite difficult to position rent boys spatially because they (at least most of them) can easily be available at all gay bars in Istanbul. I talked with five rent boys for more than twenty minutes (two of them came to my place and I recorded the interviews, the other three talked with me in the basement of DejaVu or Tek Yön,⁵¹) there also are my countless attempts, relative successes (chats starting from saying names and extended to include little details), and almost catastrophic failures, and my participant observation in the bars. Furthermore, I talked to two gays who have

⁵⁰ Zat (1999, 2002), Koçu (2002), Drew and Drake (1969), and Yüzgün (1986: 118-24) with reference to Reşat Ekrem Koçu’s voluminous *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. Karaosmanoğlu (2002) also recounts the promiscuous scene as one detectable features of “degenerated” imperial regime. For example, Mujtaba (1997) scrutinizes the history of male prostitution in Pakistan to before the British colonization with vivid male brothels in Karachi.

⁵¹ I paid those two rent boys for their cooperation and time, also bought drinks in DejaVu and Tek Yön for all the five and others as well. Beverages they chose or I stood were generally beer. Beer is the almost traditional drink in rent boy bars as different from other gay bars where people mostly select vodka and wine and find beer a little cheap. I always drank beer in rent boy bars to be seen as more ordinary and close to rent boys.

been customers of various rent boys for 4-5 years. That is the period when rent boys first began to be seen on the İstanbul gay scene.

In this chapter, I introduce a detailed mapping of rent boy locations dispersed as they are throughout the city. Next, I briefly try to define the politics of the rent boy style, and then present a framework of their relations to each other. After these notes on the culture and representations of rent boys, I give a portrait of negotiations and relations with the gay clientele, and highlight the potential points of change in a rent boy's life through the cross-class relations he has in the course of male prostitution.

3.1. Mapping Rent Boys Out in Istanbul

Since İstanbul is a city divided by the Bosphorus between the two distinct sides of Anatolia and Europe, it is difficult to see it as a geographically integrated whole. In this particular geographical order of two-sidedness, the European side allows the most in terms of anonymous sexual possibilities, nightlife, tourism, and the production and circulation of both high and popular cultures, while the Anatolian side has a reputation of housing silent, happy middle to upper-middle class families. As I pointed out earlier, the city center, Taksim Square located on the northern European side, has a visible and compelling significance in the gay life of the city. Thus, it is not surprising that male prostitution is also concentrated in this area of the city. In addition to Taksim, gays –or any interested person- can physically reach rent boys in Kadıköy, the core of the Anatolian part, in Sultanahmet –where historical and touristy sides concentrate, and in Zeytinburnu –one of the oldest squatter settlements which nowadays is the scene of *varoş* culture mixed with extreme poverty. On the other hand, one of the easiest ways to interconnect with rent boys is always through the Internet, which I will touch upon in the last section.

Place: Taksim. Time: Regular evening hours especially after 23.00 and on weekends. İstiklal Street is crowded regardless of weather conditions. A mass of people from all existing social classes, ages, genders, ethnicities, and cultures intermesh. You can see young people hand in hand shouting, middle-aged couples wandering along the street, rocker and punk youth laughing and drinking beer, elegant groups of women returning to their homes after some ‘crazy’ entertainment, embellished prostitutes, top intelligentsia of the country, cruising gays, etc. An attentive eye can also notice some young guys walking or leaning against a wall. It is obvious that those young people who carefully prepared themselves for the great promenade, also turn attentive and curious gazes on other males who can speak the same language as them. Around midnight, one can barely see those young guys, because they have already disappeared through one of bars in which they are quite relaxed and assertive. This gaze work and the search for contact will continue in bars, too.

Let us move down into DeJaVu, the most famous and much frequented club of rent boys in Istanbul, on an ordinary night. The club is between İstiklal Street and Çukurcuma, near the well-known transsexual tavern Sahra and the only gay saunas of the city. Dejavu consists of two floors. The ground floor is approximately 100 m². The main dance site, dj box, and the bar are there, while the basement houses two sitting areas, toilets, and a closed department. The bar is full with its frequenters after 23.00: gay boys, several middle aged men –probably discreet gays, a few women (probably, at least visually, prostitutes), some mixed groups, several transvestites, and perhaps more than sixty or seventy rent boys. In general, everyone

seems to know each other. The clients⁵², or the non-rent boy population, drink and rest on the walls surrounding the dance floor, while most of the rent boys are dancing in a weird and unique style without drinking unless a client stands one.

The spatial arrangement is not considerably different in the other famous bar, Tek Yön. It is positioned on a street across the British Consulate. In its previous location Tek Yön was the focal meeting point of Turkish bears (hairy, fat, ultra-masculine men who have sex with men like them) and some transvestites that like to have sex with bears. That is why some bears are still visible in Tek Yön contrary to other gay and rent boy bars in which it is almost impossible to see bears. Many of the rent boys that I have talked with said that they generally rotate between the two clubs in one night, sometimes visiting other bars, too, or they might reserve Friday night for one club and Saturday for the other.

In winter after 2.00 and in summertime after 3.00-3.30 rent boys start to gather in front of Ağa Mosque on İstiklal Street, around the Atatürk Statue on Taksim Square and in Taksim Gezi Park. Indeed, Taksim Park is a place for cruising between feminine gays and masculine-looking guys –sometimes for money sometimes not, all time, every day. Before 2002, during which the park was renovated and illuminated by the municipality in order to ‘clean’ it, it was much darker and “proper” people did not like to walk in it. Thus, although still attractive enough, the park in part, lost its magnetism for the gay population in the last few years. In addition to bars, the park, and even İstiklal Street, which is the tourist window of the city, a gay sauna and a gay hamam (which I mentioned in chapter 2) around Taksim are crucial centers when hunting for rent boys.

⁵² Because rent boys do not pay entry fee in bars, clients here means both the clients of the bar as well the clients of rent boys. In June 2005, the entry fee for DejaVu was 10 new Turkish Liras at weekends.

Although Kadıköy and the Anatolian Side in general has a substantial potential population⁵³ that could be mobilized for homosexual encounters, and despite the fact that it is difficult and expensive to commute to the other side especially at nights, it does not have any gay spaces. For a gay person, independent of his age or social status, it is an inevitable necessity to go to the European Side for entertainment or to hang out with other gays. Nevertheless, Kadıköy Park is a highly fertile place to find rent boys who come from *varoş* neighborhoods behind Kadıköy (even as far as Gebze, the border of urban transportation network) and have difficulties in going to and returning from the European Side. Cruising time is more important in Kadıköy than Taksim. At midday it is full of people wandering without any visible sexual aim, and this huge population will suddenly fade away when it starts to get dark. Only after 22.00 can one find rent boys in the park –if he has the necessary courage to go in. Only in Kadıköy, the central public toilet is used as a place of meeting, communicating, and even having sex. On the contrary to international experience (Aggleton, 1999), the rest of the country has no public toilet with a homosexual reputation, and Kadıköy is unique in having a homosexually active toilets in terms of both gay relations and rent boy interactions. I have never visited Kadıköy Park after sunset because I was afraid of being burgled; hence, I have never seen any gay interaction in that park although I grew up in Kadıköy. It is simply not for “good” boys of upper-middle class Bağdat Street families in which I grew up.

Sultanahmet Square lodges the most charming historical places of the city like the Blue Mosque, Saint Sophia, Topkapı Palace, and the Basilica Cistern, as well as

⁵³ I was one of this vibrant population between my ages 10 and 24. We were too many that even we could name ourselves as “Cadde Ligi” (the league of the (Bağdat) street). While two gays interact in virtual space or in person, the number 216 spelled out in order to tell that the speaker is a gay from the Anatolian site.

numerous hotels that welcome most of the tourists that come to İstanbul. Therefore, the first place that a gay tourist looks for good-looking Turkish company is the park surrounding the historical sites and the hamams and cafés around it. I have seen at least two or three times that explicit dealings between tourist guys and rent boys were made easily and openly with body language and hands. Again, as a unique point in the country, the negotiations are open and plainly visible only in Sultanahmet.

The last stop in the attempt at mapping rent boys in İstanbul is a shopping mall, Olivium Center, located in one of the most visible *varoş* areas of the city, Zeytinburnu that was first established by the government to relocate rural-urban emigrants in the late 1950s. Olivium was built several years ago, and it has not received any public attention until a famous gay designer was injured by a young *varoş* boy who claimed that the designer offered him money in order to be fucked by him. He did not hesitate to save his honor by attacking him with a knife. The designer denied the offer and said that he approached the young guy only friendly way. Olivium became very well known for such encounters since then. Today, even though far less numerous than the other spots I have listed above, it has visitors in search for homosexual interactions for money. In my opinion, the fact that such encounters continuously take place there and occur without any other news of attack or damage, demonstrates that the possibility of male prostitution has already settled and become regularized in Olivium, too.

3.2. Playing with Fire: On the Culture of Rent Boys

In this section, I strive to depict the lifestyle that is adopted by rent boys in their physical, social, spatial, and erotic relations with gays. Or, in other words, I try to

indicate the common patterns and reasons that form the framework in which the discontinuous and incoherent identity of the rent boy emerges. After my observations and conversations, I have come to the conclusion that rent boys consciously endeavour to enact a particular mode of manliness. This portrait of manliness is an alluring style that creates its own valuable and popular type, invites others to imitate rent boys as much as they can. The process is similar to modern gay look that was triggered by Calvin Klein in the 1980s and then turned to be hegemonic (Bordo, 1999: 180). In their double location between *varoş* and gay circles highly burdened with the various perceptions of risk taking, there appears a particular style which I call “exaggerated masculinity”. First, I will very briefly note the theoretical context that inspires and leads me to ponder on the bodily styles, and then I will give a fuller account of the components of the style of exaggerated masculinity.⁵⁴

Judith Butler (1999[1990]) argues that gender and sex identities are not natural, pre-existing before the action, or stable, but that a gendered subject is a construction formed in gender performance through repetition and stylization of certain acts and gestures. According to my reading of Butler, male subjectivities of rent boys, thus, are not already present, but are constructed by the acts they perform. Their male identity comes into existence as they move, talk, and act as a result of those enactments. Butler (1999:25) nicely puts it, gender is a “doing” rather than a “being”. Gender is one of the unavoidable social axes in which we live our daily lives just like race, class, and ethnicity (Kimmel and Messner, 2004; Jackson and Scott, 2001). In Butler’s (1999: 25, 33) words, it is problematic to position gender, identity, and performance: “*gender* is not a noun, but it proves to be performative,

⁵⁴ Previous research shows that it is common for male prostitutes to have a distinct system of physical and bodily codes that makes it easier to be marked as hustlers. For a summary of the documentation of studies on the subject, see Knox, 1998.

that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed... Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.” (Emphasis original) Hence, gender is a bodily act of stylization, a series of physical actions, and a space of maneuvering that is limited to a “highly rigid regulatory frame”, the heterosexual matrix. If one cannot act or emulate what s/he has seen according to the norms of this matrix, societal forces will punish her/him. Since gender does not refer to an original, innate core, it is almost completely determined by imitation and the matrix is therefore strictly drawn by the limits of the present social context. The exaggerated masculinity of rent boys in İstanbul has not come about at once, but, is continuously constructed by their acts of repetition and imitation in heterogendered performativity.

As practical and bodily as the Butlerian sense of sustaining gender performativity, the exaggerated yet incipient masculine style of rent boys in İstanbul interconnect with visible and functionally flexible bonds of friendship which dictates them to obey the rules. As Peter Nardi (1999: 2-6) elucidates “...It is reductionist to relegate friendship to the realm of the emotional and psychological. For friendship is also a social process, embedded in a society’s institutions, cultural norms, and structural opportunities. It is a rational decision-making process not solely an uncontrollable act or desire... Friendship is not only important for identity development and maintenance, it also contributes to the strengthening of community and to subculture identity.” Thus, friendship networks among rent boys -which reproduce and delimit their styles that I will explore below- simultaneously constitute their masculine selves in the confrontation of their heterogender perspectives with their illicit interactions with gay men. As Nardi (1999: 7) states for gay men, “friendship has

the potential in this postmodern society of providing multiple narratives for the social reproduction –and not simply the social construction- of gay selves and of political communities in which hegemonic masculinity and gay masculinity blend to produce a new gendered order characterized by new relations of masculinities.”

In terms of putting things into perspective, I also find it necessary to touch upon the consumption/fashion aspect of the particular cultural style that rent boys seem to share and imitate, because the exaggerated masculine self-presentations of rent boys mostly depend on their physical appearance, movements, and sexual performance. “According to [one] theoretical position, our life-chances and view of the world are determined by our fundamental material circumstances. While not all would use the term ‘social class’, there is a strong commitment to an underlying social structure that is determined by property and market relations. Other theorists, while not completely rejecting such a view, put greater emphasis on the cultural aspects of style and consumption... Putative centrality of friends and friendship in contemporary society could be an important ingredient in the understanding of emerging social forms. The styles and symbols of contemporary culture are increasingly mediated through friends.” (Pahl, 2000:2-10).

I find it stimulating to reexamine what we do understand and interpret the free-floating and speculative notions of masculinity, especially when claims regarding men’s contemporary crises of identity are in circulation (Özbay and Baliç, 2004). Anthropologist Matthew Gutmann (1997: 386) brings four distinct definitions of masculinity: a) anything that men think and do, b) anything that men think and do to be men, c) some men are inherently or by ascription considered “more manly” than other men, d) anything that women are not. The first definition may be categorized as highly essentialist that ignores masculinity as a social construction. The fourth, on

the other hand, avoids the feminine aspects of men, and vice versa, thus makes effeminate men and masculine women invisible. We can better grasp and produce further problematizations on which group of men act according to which principles and rules of male bonding with a non-universalizing, contextualizing, denaturalizing perspective as presented in the second and third options. Such an approach would enable us to figure out the changing dynamics of multiple male masculinities.

Now it has been commonly accepted that more than one masculinity might be produced within the same gender-sexuality regime, these masculinities being interconnected with each other as well as different systems of power and institutions, represented in multiple ways and mediums. Furthermore, masculinities cannot be interpreted without considering the effects of other significant social differentiation axes like class, age, ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality, physical conditions, etc. Robert W. Connell (1995) named these “multiple masculinities”. What is striking here, is not to accept that, for example, a 17-year-old *varoş* boy and a middle-aged rich homosexual man simultaneously experience different manhoods in their encounters and interlocutions. The relation between different masculinities ought to be seen through a prism of power. Connell refers to this as the gender politics of masculinity. Thus, there is a hegemonic masculinity in all different gender systems which concurrently bring together complicity, subordination, intimidation, and exploitation. Nevertheless, this hegemonic masculinity is never a character typology of the ever-lasting, universal, and stable super-man. It is a sum of practices that include constant renegotiation and contestation, and surely change. Hegemonic masculinity at a particular place and within a certain cultural system is one (of several) that is socially exalted as the way of performing manhood. Therefore, the study of masculinities –both hegemonic and dissident, is a worthy subject matter of social sciences as much as we can internalize and problematize first the existence of

multiple masculinities and their social construction, and then demonstrate why a particular mode of masculinity becomes hegemonic in a specific cultural setting and time.

Connell (1995: 77) notes that “[T]he concept of ‘hegemony’, deriving from Antonio Gramsci’s analysis of class relations, refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy...” In other words, hegemonic masculinity points to a gendered constellation that brings together the culturally exalted, its imitations, and alternative-marginal versions that juxtapose it and interact with it. Rent boys in part try to emulate and reproduce some forms of hegemonic masculinity in Turkey although they are evidently not conforming to it because of their apparently confusing sexual activities against the unwritten rules of their heteromasculine self image. Gay men, and their increasing non-apologizing visibility, conversely, challenge and undermine hegemonic masculinity by definition. Their encounter and what they say to each other about masculinities confronted and intermeshed, and the potential these encounters have for possible change, forces us to look more closely at their styles of masculinity.

The most crucial features of the lives of rent boys in terms of attitudes and their heteromasculine self images are the admiration of girls that they know or like, rudeness, bluster, and physical violence, bravery and fearlessness, experienced and skilled manners, and lastly, their dominant positions in their protector-dependent relations with younger rent boys.

Beyond their specific attitudes as mature, experienced, and fearless young adults their style consists of specific visual and behavioral codes. Rent boys in İstanbul have athletic or skinny physical outfits. Apart from their fit physical conditions – which are achieved through soccer or running, most of them clearly do not involved in gym and heavy working out sessions, because they believe that customers want them as defined but fatless as if they accurately reflect their young age, and they also believe that too much muscles in the body and the pills they take for sustaining the muscled appearance would eventually decrease the power of the penis and consequently end their virilities.

Rent boys in İstanbul wear only denim jeans. They have a strong opinion that real, tough men should wear pants made of tough fabric. For their upper body rent boys commonly opt for white. They think white is better than other colors because it looks more attractive due to their dark skin and they can be more resplendent in the dark atmosphere of the bar with their white tops. Black tops are also very popular because it is deemed to be more masculine and mature. Some vivid colors like red and blue are also used, but never pink which is seen as effeminate, and brown that inspires old age and worse, poverty. In the taste of rent boys, a shirt is always better than a t-shirt since it might be opened if necessary, and a shirt makes one more attractive and ready to go. This actual fantasy or fetishism of the shirt is also present in the gay culture of İstanbul. The hair of rent boys can never appear in its natural conditions; on the contrary, it ought to be shaped well and stabilized by hair sprays and various jellies. Short straight cuts are preferred, but some rent boys have more complex hair with long curves inspired especially by famous soccer stars who permanently lead the culture of rent boys by their styles and through their secure and acclaimed heterosexual image. Rent boys never use earrings or approve their use. They are more tolerant towards wristbands, chains, and rings, but earrings are

identified with gays and if a rent boy uses earrings he cannot maintain his maleness any more. Although highly popular among gay youngsters, piercing any part of the face or the body is unknown or perplexing for rent boys. They generally choose tight slips as underwear to look sexier, instead of wearing boxer shorts which are deemed more childish and funny –evidently not good to be and reserved for gays. Rent boys in İstanbul insist on wearing sports shoes even on colder days in order not to seem *amele* (literally construction worker, means ignorant, from lower classes, and more animalistic).⁵⁵ They mostly opt for Puma rather than other trendy brands like Nike or Adidas because Puma is supposed to be richer and more masculine –another imprint of famous soccer players.

Using expensive and famous perfumes is a remarkable yet risky act for most rent boys. Rent boys in İstanbul always seek to use nice perfumes which denotes that he recently fucked a guy and was able to take his perfume. At this risky point, the perfume should be masculine because otherwise it cannot contribute to the alleged masculinity of the rent boy. Simultaneously, a masculine fragrance demonstrates that the customer was not so effeminate as to threaten the masculinity of the rent boy. Rent boys like to spread the image that the gay was effeminate and did not use the perfume for himself but was so satisfied that he bought it for the rent boy. Of course, this is a narrative whose veracity can always be questioned. Hence, using a masculine perfume is a risky behavior. Its absence or a more androgynous fragrance

⁵⁵ Wearing brown tops is also associated with the fear of looking *amele*. Indeed, if one constant fear of rent boys is looking gay or effeminate as contaminated males, the other is looking *amele* which is perceived as dirty, dangerous, excluded, uncivilized, and thus unwanted. The real double bind that navigates the exaggerated masculinity of rent boys is between gay and *amele* images, which are equally risky and undesired. Further research is needed to illuminate the differences of *varoş* and *amele* looks as well as endeavours that *varoş* people perform in order to escape humiliation as *amele*.

points to failure. Its presence indicates the dilemma of being bottom and finding a really generous gay.

I reckon this risk framework is useful in my attempt to creatively understand the material universe of rent boys in İstanbul. In addition to perfume use, dance is another risky behavior which is also a socially praised act, if not a required one. The particular motions and vibrations of rent boys' dancing gives the impression of carrying out a predefined script, not reflecting a pleasure to move with the music but the meaning of performing a task, never visibly homoerotic, as if it were not a gay space, with short conversations, mostly jokes without touching... Actually, if a rent boy, consciously or not, finds himself at the back of another, the boy in the front bounces in sudden panic –in anxiety to save his back. This is the body language of rent boys, stemming from a rigid top-bottom code concerning the control and defense of your own back and a constant search to attack the others' backs. This is not always a sexual act but can be done humorously, nevertheless it is always mediated through a specific configuration of male-male sexuality and control over it. If a rent boy oversteps the boundary of touching another's back or locates himself at the back of another, others explicitly disapprove of him, as if he were a "pervert". Pleasure that comes from sodomizing others should originate from gays, and not from real men. Accordingly, this is the main reason behind quarrels amongst rent boys. In other words, bodily humor is also dangerous to play around with, although ignoring it brings social exclusion. A rent boy ought to dance. A standing rent boy would find it difficult to find any clients. Nevertheless, he has to do this without looking feminine. According to these codes, the body should not be curled too much, must repeat the same rough movements, shoulders and arms should be kept wide open, a slight hump is always welcome, the waist should move only back and forth, imitating the sexual act of penetration. This way of dancing which is

controlled by each other's existence and surveillance, guarantees rent boys' masculine identities as well as making them visible centers of attraction.

Rent boys come to the bars or any other *çark* places alone or at most in the company of one other rent boy. They usually know other rent boys personally, have an intimate network of friendship, and spend time together dancing and entertaining but they always wind up alone while working or cruising. Although this may easily seem as a tactic to increase their chance and their customer portfolio, in reality it ensures their freedom from unwanted gossip about their sexual encounters with gays. Because they are not proud of being rent boys, or because they cannot be out to their straight environments, networks of acquaintances and friends serve not only to form and reproduce a particular style of exaggerated masculinity but also keep their secrets against the outside.

In bars, nonalcoholic drinks are not preferred because they imply a sense of juvenile behavior and gentleness. Beer is the alcoholic beverage that rent boys consume mostly because it is the cheapest (except *rakı*) and the most masculine beverage easiest to drink while dancing, and does not make one drunk easily. Drinking alcohol or being drunk is also another risk area. A rent boy can simply be high by for example sharing different drinks or swallowing tequila shots fast. This would mean the loss of rent boys' roughness and male stance. Even worse, they might engage in unwanted passive sexual interaction that afterwards may shame them to death. Regarding the culture of smoking among youngsters, it is not surprising that most of the rent boys smoke a lot. They explain that they start smoking at the age of 12-13 and in their view it is impossible not to smoke because otherwise no one cares what are, they say, or do –a significant step in becoming mature young guys.

Rent boys have strong relationships with transgendered prostitutes. It is very difficult to find a rent boy who after some experience still has not fucked transvestite. Some people in the scene, especially old transvestites and gays, claim that the phenomenon of rent boys in Turkey has emerged just because of transvestite money that is spent on *laços* (young and masculine, fucker men). There are many stories told about rent boys and transvestites in Istanbul that range from finding a drunken rent boy that gets fucked by transvestites, to poignant love stories between the two. What is important for the aims of this thesis is that a great number of first sexual experiences of rent boys are with transvestites who voluntarily teach them sex. Although, at first, it seems unproblematical, since both sides are intentionally into each other, it is still risky for a rent boy to engage sexually with transvestites who can easily ridicule them for not having a sufficiently large penis or if he cannot exhibit a satisfying sexual performance. The sexual abilities and uses of their bodies –which are the sources of their respectability- are very fragile for rent boys and a cynical transvestite might fatally damage it without any difficulty by publicly making fun of him.

Rent boys in Istanbul generally listen to Turkish pop music. They cannot comprehend foreign lyrics and they find it a bit too modern to empathize with this music. On the other hand, they strive to portray their musical taste as limited to Turkish pop music, without including arabesk or other forms that can also be viewed as *amele* music. Sezen Aksu, Ebru Gündeş, Serdar Ortaç, Hande Yener, Rafet el Roman, Mustafa Sandal, and Yıldız Tilbe are the most popular figures in terms of rent boys' musical taste. Tarkan is not liked for the reasons that I have explained in the chapter 2.

The last connecting characteristic among rent boys is their indifference to the world within which they live. Almost all of the rent boys I talked with seemed unconcerned and blasé about their families, their education, health, career, future, country, politics, arts, or any other issue that commonsensical expectations prompted me to investigate. They absolutely believe that the most important, powerful, and effective thing in life is money.⁵⁶ In fact this should not be unexpected because the incoherent and unstable identity of the rent boy is materialized around the issue of money. Rent boys are varoş boys, in need of money; more remarkably, they desire money, engaging in sexual encounters with men for money, renting their virilities for use, and restricting their actions so as not to be passive which is indeed also purchasable for an agreeable price. In fact, rent boys live with the ghost, panic, gossip, and fear of being passive. They claim to be straight boys who are “gay for pay”. Money makes them rent boys, and everyone concerned knows well that money can make them gay as well through making them be passive.

In a weekly television program called “Deşifre” (Decode) on a premium national channel on 02/17/2005, the gay sauna Aquarius was shot by a hidden camera first and then the programmers talked with the manager of the sauna who he denies that he hires rent boys. Meanwhile, the camera shows a young rent boy who works there arguing with another one about the recruitment of new rent boys that whom already knew. He says “mahalleden herkesi toplayıp gelme diyorum ya, bak bana ben sadece kardeşimi getiriyorum, yarın bir gün kavga edersin, gider millete söyler, babana söyler, ateşle oynuyorsun.”⁵⁷ This act of “playing with fire” is neither unique for this

⁵⁶ West (1993) documents that in England, as elsewhere money is the single basic social issue behind male prostitution of so-called straight guys selling sex to other men.

⁵⁷ “I said to you that don’t bring everyone from the neighborhood. Look at me. I only bring my brother. You may have a fight with them in the future and he can go and say everybody, including your father. You are playing with fire.”

rent boy nor restricted within the walls of the sauna. The rent boy is a conditional and fragile identity that surfaces between the contradictory discursive and sexual practices subverting of homo- and hetero-sexuality. It is a shifty space amid *varoş*, *amele*, and *tarz* styles, and it is a compelling interplay between working and upper-middle class meanings and signifiers. In this incessant play of risk taking, a rent boy does not only have to control his bodily acts and behaviors as we see in perfume use, dancing, drinking, or the color they fancy to wear. He also has to navigate a dangerously narrow track which may end by disclosing their hidden homosexual activities and destroying fatally their already existing relations and reputations established on their assumed heteromascularity.

3.3. Representations of Rent Boys by Gays in Public

Below, I present various representations of rent boys by gay men on Internet sites, newspapers, non-fiction books and fiction series. Writers of those reflections use specific discourses and address gay men about different aspects of male prostitution in İstanbul. It is significant to read these representations because they reveal the meanings behind gay men's collective understanding of rent boys. Furthermore, those pieces of writing and interviews helped the construction of a dangerous, politically incorrect⁵⁸, and romanticized public image of rent boys. This public image of rent boys alarmed gay men and made them restructure their sex with rent boys in a more secure way. Homosexuals in the world passed the test of the ability to organize rapidly against a shared danger in the AIDS epidemic (Dowsett, 1996; Vaid, 1995; Weeks, 1990). Partly because there was not a robust and visible gay

⁵⁸ Here, political incorrectness of rent boys for gay men come from picking sexual partners from a non-gay population. That is why most of the gays refuse to pay those gay-for-pay men. Many acquaintances and friends disapproved of this thesis because I did not study a more appropriate gay issue, and gay groups do not to develop projects concerning male prostitution and disregard their homosexual involvements.

population in the country, or, because there was no homosexual panic in the media, Turkish gays could not unite against the epidemic and failed to transform themselves into a well-organized minority group like the ones in the Western world. The danger of being injured or killed by rent boys was perceived as a communal and deadly threat against gays and inevitably empowered gays against rent boys who turned out to be dangerous sex partners. In turn, rent boys lost their relative dominance upon gays because their attractiveness and self-assured non-gay identity externalized as a threat against gay men. Hence, rent boys came to resist this disturbing image which stops the possibility of male prostitution for them, by saying that they were not rent boys but just ordinary *varoş* boys who seek (sexual) pleasure with gays and transvestites without any criminal purpose in their minds.

In the official website of Lambda İstanbul, Neo, one of the favorite gay bars in the city⁵⁹ and its frequenters are defined as “Modern ve genelde genç ve havalı gay'ler takılıyor. En iyi müzik yapılan gay mekan. *Ara sıra 'rent-boy'lara da rastlanıyor*”⁶⁰ (emphasis mine). DejaVu, the main center of the traffic between rent boys and their clientele, is represented as “Uygun fiyat ve iyi müzik. Özellikle *genç, parlak ve paracı tipler ve onlardan hoşlanacaklara* tavsiye edilebilir”⁶¹ (emphasis mine). The warning tone is clear for all readers.⁶² In İstanbul, rent boys or in general *varoş* guys

⁵⁹ The gay bars of the city with other queer spaces were depicted in the chapter 2.

⁶⁰ “Modern, young, and cool gays are frequenting it. The best music. There are also rent boys.”

⁶¹ “Cheap and good music. Recommended especially for young, cute types and the ones into them.”

⁶² In one of the brochures that Lambda published, the warning becomes more explicit: “Özellikle **rentboy** olarak bilinen, genelde para karşılığında erkeklerle beraber olan kişilere karşı çok dikkatli olmak gerekiyor. Şebeke elemanı olarak çalışanları olduğu gibi, çok deneyimsiz ve sadece para kazanmak için birlikte olanlar da bulunmaktadır. Ancak bu tür ilişkilerin çoğunda ya gasp ya kavga ya da benzeri hırsızlık olayları yaşanmaktadır. Bu kişilerle kuracağınız ilişkilerde son derece mesafeli, kontrollü ve dikkatli olunuz. Birden fazla **rentboy**la eve veya otele kesinlikle gitmeyin,” (emphasis original).

who may have sex with gays, constitute “the other” for gays. In this framework, gays should prudently be aware of the existence of those non-gay people with whom they can sleep, but should also keep in mind their limits, adjust their behaviors accordingly, and be vigilant against intimidations from those prurient strangers. Rent boys live within the same city, share exactly the same spaces, and more importantly, voluntarily engage in sexual acts with gay men. However, and they are not gays, they do not live in the same spatial and social milieus, and more importantly they might be fatally dangerous for gay men. This is the general framework used to warn gay men about their contact with rent boys.⁶³ Most of the writers internalize this warning tone and take an oppositional view of rent boys.

Like other corners of the world⁶⁴, gay murders in Turkey have occupied a large place in the media starting from the end of the 1990s. Ahead of tragic stories of crime and violence against gay victims which made us all uneasy and nervous about our possible contacts, now, after the first shocking wave has fortunately been overcome⁶⁵, it is possible to say that gay murders were just the peak of the iceberg

⁶³ Armbrecht (2001) recounts his own story of such a warning. In Neo, he was looking at a straight-looking man who did not seem gay. Armbrecht’s Turkish friend intervened and advised him not to desire with him because it might be problematical: “I had also been sufficiently warned by my Turkish friends to know that occasionally there would be people in bars with less noble intentions than a blow job... Ugur had noticed me cruising him already, and was thinking of warning me.”

⁶⁴ Especially after world famous designer Giovanni Versace’s murder by Andrew Cunanan, see Altman (1999).

⁶⁵ A survey of prominent national newspapers (Hürriyet, Milliyet, Radikal, Zaman) in the country, for Gül Özyeğin’s ongoing research tentatively titled “Gender and Sexualities in 1980’s Generation in Turkey”, demonstrates that news about gay murders peaked around 2001 and nowadays they almost totally disappeared. This can be a methodological fallacy that their value as news might erode, nevertheless, there is no any other opposing information from gay associations. There were 36 gay murders in the years between 1992-2003. 37% of the victims were between the ages of 30-42, while 82% of the murderers were between the ages of 18-30. The numbers come from the police, declared at İstanbul Forensic Science Congress, 09-27-2003.

about relations between gays and *varoş* boys. Except for a few reports of gay murders that castigate the murderer, rather than the victim, we have not seen anything about actual sexual encounters that does not end without a criminal act. On the other hand, even a researcher who looks at the Turkish gay scene superficially can notice that gay bars are filled with *varoş* boys and some of them are explicitly for rent.⁶⁶ More significantly, gays feel now more liberated in expressing their taste for the “real manhood” of *varoş* guys instead of the (supposedly effeminate) homosexual population within already defined borders, as stated in chapter 2. Still, it is worthwhile to see how relations between gays and rent boys, have been depicted.

As an example of the gay-political discourse about rent boys and murders, a former gay activist, Uğur Alper (2001) maps the gay social geography of the city while simultaneously warning gays exactly at the time that the gay murders seemed at their peak: “*Söz konusu cinayetler çoğunlukla Taksim, Beyoğlu, Cihangir, Harbiye civarlarında işleniyor. Eşcinsel yaşamın yoğunlaştığı bu noktalardan yola çıkarak senaryolar oluşturmak mümkün. Parkların, barların ve Taksim'deki bazı alanların eşcinsel erkekler için birer partner bulma mekanı olduğu artık biliniyor. Bu saydığım yerler arasında ise özellikle parklar ve hitap ettiği müşteri kesimi dolayısıyla bazı barlar riski daha yüksek mekanlar arasında. Ayrıca internet ortamındaki sohbet odaları aracılığıyla tanışılan insanlar da var. Galiba eşcinseller heterolara oranla yaşamlarında daha dikkatli olmak zorundalar ve sağlam adımlarla ilerlemeliler.*”⁶⁷

(Emphasis original)

⁶⁶ For a striking example, see Douglas Janoff’s (2003) interview.

⁶⁷ “These murders are committed generally in Taksim, Beyoğlu, Cihangir, and Harbiye. It is possible to write scenarios from these places where homosexual life is condensed. Now it is publicly known that parks, bars, and some places in Taksim are spots to find sex for homosexuals. Among them parks and some bars are more risky than others. Furthermore there are people who met through the Internet. Perhaps homosexuals should be more careful in their lives than heteros.”

Mustafa Konur (2002) shares the same warning tone but employs a more sensitive view and presents three cases, two murders and one deadly injury. He underlines his call to gays and indeed non-gay authorities to be alert about possible perilous encounters between rent boys and gay men. More importantly, his words also provide a portrait of boys in poverty: “Bıçaklananların üçü de erkekti. Kendilerini bıçaklayan erkeklerle internette tanışmışlardı. Amaçları, onlarla sevişmekti. O güne kadar onlarca erkeğin, seks yapmak için buluştukları erkeklerin saldırısına uğradığımı, öldürüldüğünü biliyorlardı. Üçü de buluşacakları erkeklerle yürürken, otururken, kalkarken, sevişirken, öpüşürken, onlara dokunurken, her an tetikte olacaktı. Sonra büyük olasılıkla onları bir daha hiç görmeyeceklerdi. Bıçaklayanların üçü de yoksuldu. Cinayet işlemeye kalkışmalarının nedeni; bir cep telefonu, birkaç milyon para, bir kredi kartı, bir iki ev eşyası, bir kol saati ya da birkaç kontrollük telefon konuşması kadar sıradan şeylerdi. Yoksullukları, küçük bir lokmayla doyabilecekleri kadar büyüktü. Çete kurmuş, cinayet işliyorlardı. Bıçakladıkları ve bıçaklayacakları erkekler, onların ekmek kapısıydı.”⁶⁸

On the other hand, ILGA (International Gay and Lesbian Association) president Kürşad Kahramanoğlu (2002), in his interview on homosexually active populations of the country in poorer sections or in *varoş*, problematizes their sexual standing and ways of expression, and for the first time names them as homosexual rather than

⁶⁸ “All of the three injured were men. They met with the guys who stabbed them through the Internet. Their aim was to make love with them. They knew that until that day tens of men were injured and killed by the men whom they had met. The three of them would be vigilant while they are walking, sitting, standing, eating, kissing, touching. Afterwards, they wont see them again. The stabbers were poor. The reasons behind the murders were ordinary things like a mobile phone, a credit card, a few millions, a watch, or a few contours for their phones. Their poverty was only large enough to be fulfilled by a few pieces. They formed gangs, they were murdering. The men who they will stab are the opportunities for them to earn a living.”

murderer or criminal: “hâlâ Türkiye’de eşcinseller dediğiniz zaman bir kavram kargaşası yaşanıyor. Ben eşcinsel dediğim zaman cinsellikleri şöhret ya da parayla kalkanlanmış 10-15 insandan bahsetmiyorum. Ben fabrikada işçilik yapan, askere giden, işsiz, varoşlarda yaşayan ve sayıları milyonları bulan insanlardan bahsediyorum. Onların durumları çok farklı. Şöhret ya da para gibi kalkanları yok.”⁶⁹

While recounting a terrible case of a gay murder in detail in Samsun, journalist Ahmet Tulgar (2002) vividly depicts the scene of cross-class antagonism and tension that is experienced in gay-rent boy encounters: “Eşcinsel ilişkinin meleği de şeytanı da aynı cennet bahçesinde doğuyor: Farklı sınıf, kültür ve yaşam tarzlarının, önce tanış sonra halvet olduğu; evlilik ve aile gibi kurumların yasalarından arınmış kayıt dışı seksin o özgürlük ütopyasında. Bir modaevinde geceleyen oto tamircisi, yazarın yatağında öykü dinleyen işportacı, ressamın sırtını sabunladığı sokak çocuğu, reklamcı yuppie'nin CD'lerini karıştıran garson. Bu süslü modaevi, bu zevkli yatak odası, bu steril banyo ya da bu pahalı salon bir tensel temasla bütün sosyal ve sınıfsal ayrımların aşıldığı modern bir sırat köprüsü de olabilir; bir tarafta küçümseyici bir kaçamak bakış, diğer tarafta bir anlık bir zengin olma hayaliyle cehenneme de dönebilir.”⁷⁰ Instead of using a bare warning position, both Tulgar

⁶⁹ “There is still a confusion of concepts when you say homosexuals in Turkey. I do not mean the 10 or 15 people whose sexualities are masked by money or reputation. I mean millions of people who is worker, goes to the military service, unemployed, living in *varoş*. Their situation is rather different. They do not have bucklers like money.”

⁷⁰ “The angel and the devil of homosexual relation born in the same haven’s garden: Different classes, cultures and lifestyles first met and then got closer, in the informal sexual utopia that liberated from marriage and family. A car repair in the design studio, a salesperson on the bed of a writer, a homeless in the bathroom of a painter, a waiter with CDs of a advertiser yuppie. This ornamented design studio, this refined bedroom, this sterile bathroom, or this expensive living room can be a modern rite-de-passage in which all social and class differences are transgressed by a little

and Kahramanoğlu try to grasp better and expose the confusion and class envy of *varoş* boys during their interaction with gay men. In their comments *varoş* boys, although still dangerous and different, seem to have personalities, reasons, and difficulties of their own. They are not the bad guys of the script but motivated and embodied symbols of the perilous intersection of class and sexuality.

As a highly visible and sensational poet/novelist, Murathan Mungan never hid his tendencies towards *varoş* boys in public and told in the most sincere words his passionate relations with them. Indeed, he was the first who brought the term *varoş* into the erotic nomenclature of the same sex relations in Turkey and inspired me to look closer at the rent boys. What struck me most was his self-assurance in talking about his admiration for *varoş* boys and the sense of certainty that everyone who read his interviews would understand and comprehend his intergenerational and cross-class homosexual interactions. Furthermore, Mungan never reiterated the warning tone. As Tulgar and Kahramanoğlu did in their pieces, Mungan seems to conceive the sharp difference between the partners and this gap makes him more sensitive, challenging, and even leftist. For example, as an answer to Ahmet Tulgar's witty question, he maintains that even his political consciousness and sensitivity has been fed by his cross-class erotic adventures: “-(AT) Kitabınızda [Erkekler İçin Divan] şöyle diyorsunuz: "Delik değişim/ önceki yıl Fikirtepe, sonra Alibeyköy/ en son, kalbimin adını Okmeydanı'nda oturan bir sokağa verdim". Bu semtler şehrin *varoş*ları. Eşcinsel aşkta toplumsal sınıflar arasında geçişgenlik daha fazla, değil mi? İnsanı solcu yapar bu durum. -(MM) Evet, solculuğu besliyor. Sistemin resmi, kurumsal örgütlerinin dışına adım attığın andan itibaren hayatın diğer yüzüyle, diğer sınıf gerçekleriyle falan karşılıyorsun. İnsanları dil, din, ırk ve

contact. Or, it may turn into hell by a little humiliating look, or a sudden dream of being rich.”

cinsiyet farkı gözetmeden sevmeyeceğin bir toplumda bu farklardan biriyle karşılaştığında politikleşiyorsun,”⁷¹ (Mungan, 2001a). Mungan presents these sexual encounters as constitutive of his artistic, intellectual, and political self, but he does not mention the mutually defining interrelation between himself and the boys. We do not know what those *varoş* boys who -voluntarily or not- win Mungan’s heart do with it. What are the possible consequences of such relations for those boys in a homophobic and socially segregated society? How does that what makes Mungan more leftist and political, affect *varoş* boys? Although they give the impression that they are similar, Tulgar’s and Kahramanoğlu’s anxieties about cross-class relations and their possible outcomes differ. Mungan’s is a self-centered discourse which naturalizes cross-class differences and positions *varoş* boys as gay. In other words, despite the fact that Mungan does not criminalize *varoş* boys, he “homosexualizes” rent boys by his disregard for difference of classes and sexualities, and naturalizes the exaggerated *varoş* masculinity.

In another interview (Mungan 2001b), Mungan further elaborates what he actually seeks in rent boys and points (and romanticizes) to the difference between the assumed hegemonic middle class moralities versus what he constructs as the freer, bolder *varoş* fervor: “-(Şebnem İyınam) İyi eğitilmişler mi, *varoş* çocukları mı? – (MM) Aslında küçük burjuva aile eğitimi insanlardan kalbi, aşkı ve duyguyu büyük ölçüde alan bir eğitim. Küçük burjuva erkeklerin çoğu sevişemez mesela. Çırlıçıplak soyunsalar bile çok giyiniktirler. Gözleri, bakışları bile giyiniktir. Anneleri, babaları, halaları, dayıları, amcaları, okul ve mahalle arkadaşları; bütün toplumla beraber

⁷¹ “-Those are *varoş* of the city. In homosexual love social permeability is higher, isn’t it? This makes one leftist. –Yes, it does. After the moment that you step out of official, institutional organizations, you would encounter the other face of the life, i.e. class realities. In a society within you cannot love people without regarding racial, linguistic, religious, gender differences, when you encounter one of them you become political.”

girerler yatağa. Onlara verecekleri hesabı gözlerinde taşırlar. Soyunamazlar. –(Şİ) Ya varoş çocukları? –(MM) İyi eğitilmiş küçük burjuva çocuklarının dışında kalan, bununla kirlenmemiş insanlar *ham doğalarını yaşamakta daha özgürler*. Gerçekten alt orta sınıf ya da senin dediğin varoş çocukları daha iyi sevişirler. Çünkü *kendilerini tabiatlarının diline daha çabuk bırakırlar*. Yanlış öğrenmenin kirliliğiyle, kendi bedenlerini ve tenlerini eksiltmezler. –(Şİ) Peki ama inkâr mekanizması her kesim için geçerli değil mi? O inkarla nasıl başa çıkıyorsunuz? – (MM) Küçük burjuvaların inkârı da daha kirli. Çünkü onlar iyi-kötü üç sayfa bir şey okuduklarından, dört mürekkep yaladıklarından, güya senin anlayabileceğin bir argüman ve dille gelirler. Ve o inkâr bünyelerine, ruhlarına nüfuz ettiği, sirayet ettiği için de onu söküp alamazsın. Yani onlar da iyi-kötü Freud okumuşlardır diyelim, sana oradan geldikleri anda yapacak bir şey yoktur. Aslında ret ve kabul mekanizması farklı kesimlerin farklı dillerine göre çalışıyor tabii. Varoş insanlarında da geçerli olan şey, şizofrenik bir yarılmadır. İkili bir kimlik halinde yaşarlar onlar da,”⁷² (emphasis mine). Through words like “freedom to experience their raw nature”, Mungan positions *varoş* boys as more animalistic and closer to nature than

⁷² “-Well educated ones, or, *varoş* boys? –Indeed, petit bourgeois family education is an education that steals heart, love, and emotions in a great deal. For example, most of the petit bourgeois men cannot make love. Even when they are nude they are still extremely worn. Even their eyes and their gazes are worn. They enter in the bed with their mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, friends, with all society. They calculate the explanation they will have to give. They cannot undress. –What about *varoş* boys? – People out of this petit bourgeois, well educated boys, I mean uncontaminated with this education, are freer to experience their raw natures. Actually, lower-middle class boys, or *varoş* boys as you said make love better than the others. Because, they let themselves to the language of their nature. They do not decrease their bodies and skins by the dirtiness of wrong education. –But denial is relevant for every group? How do you cope with the denial? –The denial of petit bourgeois is dirtier, too. Because they read a few pages, a little bit educated, they bring with an argument and language assumed that you understand. You cannot take out that denial because it penetrated their personalities, their spirits. They read a bit of Freud, when they argue from that point you have nothing to do. In fact, the mechanism of denial and acceptance work according to the different languages of the different groups. What occurs in *varoş* people is a schizophrenic break. They live as double identities.”

the contaminated middle class boys of İstanbul. In a society in which being from rural areas or any part of Anatolia are equalized with being more naturalistic, purer, more naïve, and (unfortunately) lost, Mungan uses this naturalistic image of to exalt rent boys, sons of migrants. In this framework, *varoş* is not a space belonging to the city, but, a space where middle class morality and societal values have not yet contaminated.⁷³ Therefore, the difference between himself and the *varoş* boys is not something about social classes and unequal backgrounds, but, about essences, about the nature of the two. On one side, there are *varoş* boys, still bearing the natural essence of masculinity, (even though he does not spell it out), and on the other, the rest (including Mungan) who already lost it. In his story, Mungan positions himself as an expert who can discern the type of boys who are closer to their own, raw nature and those who are not.⁷⁴ It is not clear why *varoş* boys should be seen as closer to their true nature instead of locating them in a *varoş* masculine culture, a set of socially configured acts of manhood, a socio-sexual organization that is also learnt, imitated, and repeated just like in other sections of society. As I have underlined in this, thesis there are multiple masculinities produced in a given society at the same time; equalizing one of them with nature is not an innocent or neutral act in terms of the gender politics of masculinity, in Connell's sense.

⁷³ This thesis itself is an endeavour to show how *varoş* are integral parts of the urban culture in circulation, how *varoş* rules entered and amalgamated with mainstream lifestyles like in the case of *delikanlılık*, and how rent boys enable us to see the everyday encounters between *varoş* and upper-middle classes, with regarding mutual challenge, investigation, and change.

⁷⁴ Interestingly enough, rent boys that I have talked with naturalize their sexual interest toward young and cute boys as supplementary to women. What is natural in their talk does not resemble what Mungan intends to hear: to ejaculate! This natural need of rent boys is constructed as an excuse of the pleasure they take from homosex. Of course, Murathan Mungan can claim that they are lying, but then he seems to have to reconfigure the naturalization of *varoş* boys, especially after saying too much on the dirty middle-class denial.

The only attempt to make visible –if not to mainstream, rent boys was undertaken by the weekly news magazine *Tempo*. The rent boy file (presented as “Rent Boy Dosyasını Açıyoruz”) appeared anonymously in 2003 as “Beş Milyona Satılık Erkekler”. I put the whole text in the appendix in order to prevent lengthy quotations. Afterwards, the file and the information provided by the file has been the subject of several editorials and television bulletins. The rent boy file consists of a nocturnal journey of one of the magazine’s contributors into Taksim Square in order to explore the places and the negotiations that take place there. These sentences below summarize the general social topography of rent boy liaisons around the Taksim area: “Anadolu'dan büyük kente artan göçle birlikte hızla evrilen ve artık kelimenin tam anlamıyla 'kayıt dışı ekonomi'de küçük de olsa illegal bir pazar haline dönüşen bu aykırı sektörün lokomotiflerinden biri de barlar. Bu barların başında da İstiklal Caddesi'ndeki Ağa Camii'nin caddeye bakan kapısının tam karşısına düşen sokakta bulunan iki bar geliyor. Bu barlar, tamamen genç 'rentboy'ların piyasası konumunda. Canı isteyen bir eşcinsel, parayı bastırıldığı sürece, buradan istediği jigoloyla hemen çıkıp gidebiliyor.” This text exemplifies the disapproving heterocentric discourse despite vivid details. This jargon is generally borrowed from victimizing discourses of female prostitution, avidly criticized by the feminist literature on prostitution (Marlowe, 1997; Yıldırım 2002). I see this narrative of “miserable, naive boys being hunted” as another homophobic representation. Such an attitude toward rent boys in İstanbul inescapably disregards their willing and active subjectivities which navigates carefully between the various risky positions described above.

Murat Hocaoğlu (2002: 103-4) who wrote a book compiling his interviews with twenty-five homosexual men, presents male prostitution from the perspective of gays’ lived experiences and sexual histories with rent boys. For example, an

experienced gay recounts his opinions about rent boys: “Tiplerinden de ayırt edilebilirler. Kriminal tipler sonuçta... Belirgin özellik kriminal ifade. Çünkü gece hayatı kriminal olaylara gebe. İşin içinde alkol var. Alkolün yanında başka şeyler de var. Hap yoğunlukla kullanılıyor... Her an bir kavga çıkabilir. Kişisel bir zarar verebileceklerini kastetmiyorum, çoğu zaten o tarz çocuklar değil. İçlerinde ciddi, ikinci kez beraber olduğum insanlar da oldu... Tipler genellikle jigolo tipli, aktif olan çocuklar, ama içlerinde sadece pasif olanları da var, hiç bir zaman yüzüne bakınca anlayamıyorsun.”⁷⁵ This gay person articulates a dominant opinion of rent boys, shared by many of the gays I have talked with: rent boys actually desire male bodies, too: “Bir tanesine bunu itiraf ettirdim de, aslında ibnelerle birlikte olmak istiyorlar. Çünkü kendileri de ibne doğal olarak, bir erkekle yattıkları için. Fakat bunu kendilerine itiraf edemiyorlar ve bunu bir şekilde ifade etmek için karşılığında para almak istiyorlar. ‘Evet, ben ibne değilim, ben bu işi para için yaptım,’ diyorlar.”⁷⁶

The last resource in this effort to collect pieces that establish the public image of rent boys is fictional: Mehmet Murat Somer’s well-received series of a skilled, successful amateur transvestite inspector, Burçak Veral. In the fourth book, *Peruklu Cinayetler* (Wigged Murders) Somer gives a picture of *varoş* boys and “girls” in the transvestite bar that his hero/in Veral manages: “Bir birayla bütün geceyi geçiren *varoş* delikanlıları yine kendilerini göstermek üzere can havliyle dans ediyor, figür

⁷⁵ “They can be understood from their appearances. They are criminal types. The differentiating quality is criminality because in the nightlife there are unexpected events. There is alcohol usage, in addition to alcohol, other usages. Generally ecstasy. A fight may start every moment. I do not mean they intend to harm personally, most of them are not that sort of boys. Seriously, I was together with some of them for second times. They are usually gigolo looking, active boys. But some of them are only passive; you never understand when you look at their faces.”

⁷⁶ “I made one of them to confess. In fact, they want to be with *ibnes*. Because they are *ibne*, too, as natural, they make love with another guy. But they cannot reveal it themselves and want to take money. They say I was not gay, I did it because I wanted money.”

üstüne figür döküyorlardı. Öğrenmişlerdi bir kere: Kızları yeterince azdırırlarsa, gecenin sonunda bu işi bedavaya ya da bedava sayılacak kadar ucuza yapabiliyorlardı.” (2004: 65).⁷⁷ He also depicts the transformation of a rent boy over time: “Kurabiye, yani Cem, yıllardır, neredeyse bıyıkları terlediğinden beri bizim kulübe gelir. İlk kimle, nasıl geldi hatırlamıyorum ama kendimi bildim bileli bizim kulübe gelir işte. Düzgün oğlandır. Şimdiye kadar tatsız bir olaya adının karıştığı vaki değildir. Ki bizim camiada gittiği evden yeni ayakkabı yürütmekten evi tümüyle soymaya, tehditle para almaktan, ertesi gün arkadaşlarıyla evi basıp envai çeşit rezilliği yapmaya kadar tatsız olay boldur... Kayda değer bir özelliği yoktur. Kurabiye adı o zamanki çıtırılığından kalmadır. Kim taktı hatırlamıyorum. Yıllarla ne kurabiyeliği kaldı, ne de kızlar için yeni olmasının getirdiği merak. Gel zaman, git zaman, önce üçlüydü, sonra tabloydu derken, resmen parayla işe gider oldu... Yaptıklarından gurur duyduğu söylenemez ama bu konuları kıvırtıp saptırmadan, kısacası savunmaya geçmeden açık açık konuşacak kadar bir rahatlığı vardı.”⁷⁸ (2004: 197-8).

After examining these various representations of rent boys, their origins, class backgrounds, appearances, experiences, and the “real, secret desires”, it is possible to conclude that there is no clear-cut image of rent boys in gay people’s social

⁷⁷ “Spending the whole night with a beer, *varoş* boys are passionately dancing with vivid figures in order to show themselves. They learnt once: if they make the girls hot they can fuck them for free or for very cheap in the morning.”

⁷⁸ “Cookie, or Cem, has been coming to our club for long years, even from his adolescent years. I do not remember how or with whom he came first, but he has been coming. He is a correct guy. He has never been into a unpleasant event. Do not forget in our community there are every sorts of unpleasant events like stealing shoes, or raiding the house the following day with friends. Cem has not a distinguishable feature. Cookie comes from his earlier years. I do not remember who gave the nickname. His cookie status or interest toward him because of his new face lost ober years. Experiencing threesomes and portraits, he turned into for money. Maybe he is not proud of what he does but he has a relaxed manner to talk about those issues without lying.”

imagination. According to the common view (although fragmented and sometimes incongruous), it is obvious that rent boys might be really dangerous to relate with, that they lack socio-economic capital, that they confuse identity categories and sexual desires/acts, and that they live an oppressive heteromascularity nevertheless engage in challenging erotic same-sex encounters. On the other hand, self-identified homosexual people and their lifestyles are represented as rather contaminated with promiscuity, artificialness, effeminacy, and inescapable middle class values. The uncertain, risky masculinities of the rent boys seem to be the cause behind gays' desire for them. At the same time, they are the guns in gays' hands ready to shoot themselves. The self-hatred and self-denying of gays as well as their zealous curiosity towards the straight-looking and the straight-acting deserve further multidimensional research. Yet, it is possible to claim that this gay desire paves the way for this specific sort of male prostitution (look straight, act straight, fuck gays, and then pass straight) in Istanbul and creates a space for *varoş* boys to be active within. Rent boys, in gays' perception and imagination, symbolize natural, uncontaminated, authentic, rough, and most importantly controllable and purchasable manliness. This is what gays demand and a rent boy can provide it to the extent that he denies his gayness, demeans effeminacy, and highlights his difference from the one he is desired by. Even the identity "rent boy" may seem valuable and fascinating, as long as the rent boy himself does not articulate it. Declaring himself a rent boy implies that he is in the scene, complicit, categorically known, and therefore, inevitably out of interest for gays who look for the other, the real masculine, the economically subordinate, "fresh meat".

3.4. What Gay Men Say About Rent Boys

In İstanbul, there is no developed market for male prostitution to accommodate all those rent boys. We gays cannot constitute here a self-confident upper and middle class with disposable high-incomes necessary to secure a boom for male prostitution. Even this simple observation means that we cannot take the interactions between rent boys and their customers for granted within the framework of a pure market economy of bodies. In other words, to save money or to gain material benefits cannot fully explain the complicated relationality of rent boys and gays. The two gay men whom I have conversed with verified this claim.

“Ay, tabi ki de canım, ya ne sandın? Nerde o kadar para Türkiye’deki lubunyalarda, bu kadar renti besleyecek, Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri değiliz ya biz! Ama bak şöyle dersin, belli bir saçma sapan para kazanan bir grup var, veya baba parası yiyen, onlar parasını verip siktirtmiyorlar mı gümbür gümbür laçolara: Evet aynen. Ama sorarım sana, kaç kişi? Bu, şu, o... Sayarım, yani... Bak, bir rent boylar var, barda yanına gidersen para ister, 100 dolar ister 100 avro ister falan filan, onu mesela pazarlıkla bedavaya, hadi olmadı 20 milyona getirirsin en kötüsü... Sabaha doğru... Bir de bak şöyle var, yatıyorsun kalkıyorsun, evden gidecek artık, güle güle, para ister senden, artık 5-10 ne verirsen, ama ver yani, bir şey almış olsun... Ya da internette konuşuyorum mirc’ta, varoş tabi, varoş ama hoş mesela, herşeyi konuşuyoruz işte geyik, neredensin bilmem ne, ev nerde, numaralar falan, işte sadece sikerim, belki öpüşürüm, ondan sonra tam çıkıp gelecek, ama ben para isterim diyor... Yani sikecek aslında ama bir de şansını deniyor.. Ben artık kaşarım tabi, maddi durumumu ele verecek hiç bir şey söylemiyorum, araban var mı: Yok. Ev senin mi: Hayır. Sırf varoşlarla buluşurken kullandığım ikinci bir telefonum var, dökük... Ama rent sorar, soracak tabi, bulursa ne ala, yoksa, o da olur...” (Ata)

“Bak ben 43 yaşındayım, biliyorsun, ama göstermiyorum gerçi.. Ben kendimi artık kabullendim, ben baya baya sübyancıyım. E sen yaştakiler bile bana bakar mı? Değil ki çavolar [15-20 yaş arası]... Peki bana başka yol kaldı mı Cenk? Ben yallah rent boylara, yapacak bir şeyim yok, bu ülkedeki gey kültür beni buna zorluyor. Bilirsin sen de, çok ama çok rent boyla yattım ben, hala da onlarla seks yapıyorum. Bak bu iş böyle çıldırmadan evvel ben hepsini tanırdım isim isim, artık mümkün değil tabi. Esas nokta, hiç bir tanesine bir kuruş lira bile vermedim ben! Yaz bunu bak: Veli bir kuruş vermedi. Kaşım gözüm güzel diye mi? Değil tabi.. Aklını kullanacaksın, bizler akıllı, güngörmüş insanlarız, gey olup da yaşayabilen insanlarız bu ülkede, neler gördük neler geçirdik... Peki rentler kim? Liseyi falan bile doğru dürüst okuyamamış, sikini sallayan, bir marifet becerdi zanneden, varoş çocukları... Bunlara pabuç bırakmamak lazım. Aklını kullanacaksın. Ben mesela bara gider beklerim, bir kere bileceksin zaten raconu, yoksa ava giden avlanır... Kaşara gidip de kaç dersen gecenin başında tabi ki 100 dolar der, ne diyecek? Bekle, al eline içkini, göz süz, incele, ortalık karıştır... Gecenin sonuna gelince zaten dökülürler, yine para derler, hiç orali olmam, en fazla bir içki alırım konuşmaya başlarım, ben çok iyi yemek yaparım biliyorsun, yemek anlatırım, bayılırlar, açlar çünkü bunlar, köylüler... Yemek mi görmüş hayatında, evde et yapmıştım gidiyim de onu yiyeyim

derim mesela, mısır ekmeği yaparım ben günaşırı, onu söylerim, saat 4, düşün o çocuk aç, zaten görgüsüz, dayanabilir mi? %90 gelir, gelmeyip ne yapacak! Ben evde parfümleri, diş macunlarını, şampuanları, böyle bunların alıp götürebileceği ne varsa saklarım, takside eve giderken de mutlaka kardeşim komser emniyette derim... Sonrası malum... Üç kuruşluk çocuklara yedirmek için para kazanmıyorum ki ben!” (Veli)⁷⁹

⁷⁹ “Sure, what did you think? Is it possible to feed all of these rent boys by which money, are we, gays in Turkey, Turkish army? You may say this, there is a limited population who earns and spends too much money, or squanderers who give the money and make rent boys fuck them. Yes, exactly. But shall I ask, how many are they? This, that, etc.. I can count them. Look, on the one side there are rent boys. You go to near them in bars and they ask you money, 100 dollars, and 100 euros. You can negotiate the price with him. You can take him in the morning for free, or worse, for 20 millions. On the other side, there are others, you find, make sex and then he should leave. While he is leaving he asks money from you. It depends on your generosity, 15 or 20, what you can give. The real intention is not to earn money, but to take something. Or, in speaking through chat, MIRC, with a *varoş* boy, everything is talked about, where are you from, the location of the house, numbers, etc. He says I only fuck, I do not kiss, after all these conversation suddenly he says I also want money. Actually, he wants to fuck me but he tries his chance once. Of course I am a *kaşar* now. I never say anything about my material conditions. Do you have a car, no. Is this house yours, no. I have a second, older cellular phone only to talk with *varoş* boys. But a rent boy always asks, if he finds something, nice, if he cannot, it also passes.”

“You know I am 43 now although I do not look like my age. I accepted myself, I am very very pedophile. Imagine even your age group do not look at me. Then do not imagine about teenagers. Cenk, do I have another way? I have nothing to do but going rent boys. Gay culture in this country compels me to do this. You know, I have sex with many rent boys. I still continue. Before this boom of rent boys I knew all of them personally, even their names. Of course, it is not possible anymore. My point is that I have never paid a cent to one of the rent boys. Write this. Veli never paid. I sit because of my beautiful face? Sure, not. One should use his mind. We are smart, experienced people. We are gay people who can still survive in this country. We saw and coped with everything. Who are rent boys? *Varoş* boys who could not complete their education, shaking his dick, thinking he does something good. They should not conquer us. You should use your mind. For example, you ought to know the rules, otherwise, the hunter may be hunted. What would a *kaşar* say if you go to and ask him how much in the beginning of the night? Of course he says 100 dollars. Wait, drink, look at, and trigger the competition. At the end, they will eventually come near you. They again ask me money, I never answer them. The most I can do is standing a beer, and commencing conversation. You know I can cook well. I tell them the dishes I made. They love because they are hungry, peasants. Has he ever seen a dish in his life. For example I say I have cooked meat in home, let me go to home and eat it. I continuously bake corn bread, I always say this. Imagine, at 4 in the morning he is hungry, can he resist? Ninety per cent he comes, what else he can do? I hide perfumes, toothpastes, shampoos, whatever they can bring with them in home. In the taxi to home I always say I have a brother in the police. The rest is known. I do not earn money to spend on cheap boys. (Veli) .

It is clear from what gay men said about their experiences with rent boys that they developed particular tactics to deal with rent boys in a secure way like concealing objects that rent boys may take, using an older mobile phone, or declaring an imagined police brother. Gays also found ways not to give rent boys money like waiting until late hours at the bar or inviting them for a late dinner. These show that the warning tone of gay writers works in the everyday practice of gay men in relation to their sexual encounters with rent boys.

About the “identity matter” of rent boys, my gay informants seem not to agree with the dominant discourse among gay circles. They both recognize the sharp class differences and are not concerned about whether the rent boys call themselves gay or not. It is also interesting to see that they appeared to disagree with Murahtan Mungan’s naturalizing discourse as rent boys “naturally” have the core of real manhood with a striking class emphasis that masculinities are learnt for men of all classes.

“Bence Murathan Mungan doğru söylüyor, rentler tabi ki daha erkekler bizim lubunyalardan. Evet öyle, niye öyle şaşırmış bakıyorsun ki! Adam varoşta yaşıyor, onların kendilerine özgü bir erkek kültürü var orada, kahve var, maç var, kavga var. Geçtim lubunyaları, hadi onlar zaten kafadan sakat biraz, zengin çocukları isteseler bile varoş çocuklar kadar erkek olamazlar ki.. Neticede bir terbiye alıyorlar, görgü, temizlik öğreniyorlar... Kaçamaz ki bundan... Zengin koliler oturup konuşmalık, gezip tozmalık; varoşlar, rentler yatmalık... Benim için biriyle yatmamın kuralı onun gey olması falan değil. Hiç alakası bile yok. Bana ne onun ne olduğundan, beni çekiyorsa, daha iyisi beni tatmin ediyorsa bitmiştir olay. İster geyim desin ister heteroyum desin, bana göre hava hoş, ben kendime geyim diyorum diye illa geylerle yatmak zorunda da değilim” (Ata)

“Bence zaten rentler de geyler, ama tabi ki içinde yaşadıkları eğitimsiz dargörüştü çevrede kendilerine gey falan diyemezler. O çevrelerde eşcinselsen, hele ki de biraz kırksan sonu travestilik biliyorsun, hayatta kalamazsın başka türlü. Bu travestilik belasını atmadan bizim rentler kendilerine gey diyemezler. Ama önemli mi demeleri, değil aslında, ben onun ne olduğunu biliyorum, benle yatıyor, bundan sonra bana ben geyim değilim demiş ne olur ben geyim demiş ne olur... Biz zaten aslında sınıfsal ve eğitimsel farklılıklara mı vuruluyoruz yoksa erkekliğe mi ben tam karar veremedim. Sonuçta sadece varoş çocukları böyle nefes kesecek, heyecan

verecek kadar delikanlı olabiliyorlar, Beyaz İstanbul'dan hayır gelmiyor bize pek. E hepimiz aynı Türk olduğumuza göre, demek ki ortada varoşlukla ilgili bir şey var, alt sınıfların erkekliği üst sınıflardan, zenginlerden farklı oluyor demek ki. Bunda mutabıkız, ama biz niye o sınıftan olmamamıza rağmen onu beğenip onun peşinde koşuyoruz, orası biraz muğlak.”⁸⁰ (Veli)

It is understood from gay men's accounts that they do not see rent boys as victims or passive actors of the male prostitution scene. Instead, they are very confident about the agency of rent boys to actively construct their physical appearance, relations, and the public image towards gay men.

“Belki bu işin bir yerlerinde oturup çok yukarılardan bu işi yöneten birileri varsa, ki bence hiç yok böyle bir konum, kendi ağına birilerini düşürüyordur belki. Ama sonuçta rentler kadın fahişeler gibi değiller ki, batağa düşsünler, kötü yola düşsünler... Adam ibne sikiyor, ne var ki bunda? Sanki parasız siktiği zaman bir şey mi kaybediyor, veya utanıyor mu ki, paralısından utansın, zaten hemen reddeder ne olacak ki? Rentler, benim gördüğüm, ne yaptıklarını, yaptıklarının ne anlama geldiğini, bizim neyi beğendiğimizi, ne istediğimizi gayet iyi biliyorlar. Ona göre hareket edip, nabza şerbet veriyorlar. Mesela şimdi yeni bir moda çıktı, dapdaracık bir üst giyiyorlar, zaten çoğu skinny, çok düşük bel pantolon, body'yi içlerine sokuyorlar, kemersiz, kasıklarına kadar bütün vücutlarını göstermiş oluyorlar. Bu mesela bir-iki haftada çıktı. Önceden geyler gibi içe bir şey sokmuyorlardı amele

⁸⁰ “I think Murathan Mungan says the truth. Rents are clearly more masculine than our gays. Yes they are, why do you look surprised? He lives in *varoş*, they have a distinctive male culture there, coffeehouse, soccer, quarrels. Never mind gays, we know that they are disable, rich boys cannot be as masculine as *varoş* boys even when they want to. As a result, they have an education, refinement, and clearness. He can't escape from this. You can talk with rich boys, or go out. But, you must have sex with *varoş* boys, rent boys. For me it is not important whether he was gay or not. Totally irrelevant. If he attracts me it is not important what is he. If he satisfies me, it is okay. I don't care whether he says himself gay or straight. I do not have to make sex only with gays just because I call myself as gay.” (Ata)

“For me rent are also gays, but of course they cant call themselves as gays in their uneducated, narrow-minded environment. In those environments, if you are homosexual, especially if you are a little bit effeminate, you would turn into transvestite. Otherwise, you can't survive. Without throwing this transvestite trouble, our rent can hardly name them as gay. Is it important? Actually, no. I know what is he, he sleeps with me, who cares whether he says he is gay or not. I could not decide do we fall in love with class and educational differences or masculinity. Only *varoş* boys can be such path-breakingly, excitingly masculine. We cannot benefit from the white İstanbul. Regarding we are all the same Turks, it should be something about being *varoş*. So, the masculinity of lower class are different from upper classes, the rich. We all agree upon this. But it is ambiguous that why we, upper classes, like the other and seeks for it.” (Veli)

durmamak için. Git bak şimdi hepsi böyle, e tesadüf mü şimdi bu yani? Basbaya öğreniyorlar, ve yapıyorlar ne gerekiyorsa, öyle kandırmaca kundurmaca yok” (Ata) “Bir gey için bir rentle cinsel ilişkiye girmek para karşılığı ayıp bir şey. Biz söyleyemeyiz yani uluorta, ben kendimi parayla yaptırtıyorum diye, sana da adımlı değiştireceksin diye anlatıyorum tabi, bilen biliyor ama kendimi rezil etmeyeyim bu yaştan sonra! Bak rezil etmek dedim öyle anlıyoruz biz. Oysa ne var ki masaj gibi düşün ödüyor parasını, yaptırtıyor işte. Mesela o yüzden geylerin niye öldürülmek pahasına bu işe kalkıştıkları hiç bir yerde çıkmıyor, oysa ki bizim bir arzumuz var burada. Gerçek erkek! Ama rentler için bu iş ayıp değil ki yavrucum. O güler geçer, elinin kiridir, bir de ibne siktim, der... Burada kullanılan tabi geyler, ama onun için de pek geçerli değil çünkü biz de onları istiyoruz, güzellik peşinde koşuyoruz. Önceliğimiz eğitim olsa statü olsa bakmayız rentlere.”⁸¹ (Veli)

3.5. Negotiation and Confrontation: Gays and Rent Boys at Stake

Whether rent boys are really for rent, or whether this is just a discursive strategy to mask their homosexual desire was the hottest topic in my conversations with gays – not only with Ata and Veli, but also other gays who learnt that I was studying rent

⁸¹ “If there is someone above who manages this circulation, they may catch some of the rent boys for their own. I think it is not the situation. Rent boys are not like female prostitutes, it is not for them to touch bottom. He fucks faggots, what is wrong with this? As if when he fucks without money he loses something or gets shamed of this. He does not shame to fuck gays, furthermore he always has the possibility to deny. For my opinion, rents are aware what they do, what meanings their actions have, what do we like, what do we want. They act accordingly. For example, there is a new fashion now. They wear stretchy tops on their skinny bodies, pants with really low bellies, the tops in their pants, without belt. They can show their body from top to their groins. This emerged in one or two weeks. Before that they never put their tops into their pants in order not to seem *amele*. Go and look them now, all of them looks like this. Can it be a coincidence? It is obvious that they learn, and what they are supposed to do, they do without any trick.” (Ata)

“It is shameful for a gay to have sex with a rent boy in exchange of money. We cannot say it in public. I am telling you now, because you will change my name. Someone knows of course, but it is not good to be publicly known after this age. I said it is not good, because we comprehend it in this way. What is wrong with it, like buying massage, you are paying and buying a service. It is because this factor, nobody mentions why gays are still continuing to be with rent boys despite the fact that there is a fatal treat against them. We have a particular desire here. Real man! But it is not shameful for rent boys sweetie. He laughs and passes, it is the dirt in his hand, he can wash it. He says I also fucked a faggot. Of course gays are used here, but it is not very relevant to use these terms because we also want them, we are seeking beauty. If we prioritize education or status we would not look after rent boys.” (Veli)

boys and talked with me. Although the discourses about rent boys do not seem to touch issue of identity, and although they generally are about safety, manhood, and class antagonism, most of the gays believe that rent boys have a strong desire to be with men. Their most basic point of departure to maintain this view is the fact that it is very easy to sleep with a rent boy without giving him money: Rent boys are convincible! In other words, for gays, the prostitution of rent boys is not a serious or professional occupation like their female counterparts, it is not a survival strategy, on the contrary, rent boys are homosexually active (at least curious) *varoş* boys who seek same-sex sexual encounters as well as money if they can find it.⁸² One of my rent boy informants, Burak also confirms that sometimes he does not receive money from his customers:

“(CÖ)Eylül’den bu yana kaç kişi oldu peki?
 -(B)(sessizlik) Bir dakika... (sessizlik) beş, sadece para verenler mi?
 -Para vermeyenler de mi var?
 -Tabi canım.
 -Hepsi, hepsi ne varsa,
 -O zaman şöyle, beş kişiden para aldım, dört de parasız...
 -Parasızlar ne için peki?
 -Ya onlar mesela içki ısmarlıyorlar, ya da taksi paranı veririz diyorlar, kimisi para vermem hediyeye veririm diyor.
 -Ne gibi hediyeler mesela,
 -(sessizlik) parfüm, t-shirt, ayakkabı, cd, yabancı içki, öyle şeyler... Ben mesela Cihangir’de birinin evinden gümüş bir şamdan aldım, anneme verdim, çok beğendi, bizim salona koydu, oğlum aldı diyor, herkese gösteriyor falan...”⁸³

⁸² What I conceive from their words and what I actually saw is that rent boys are not destitute or helpless people whose last option is offering sex for money. Instead, they generally navigate their straight lives as well as their businesses alongside male prostitution. As I highlighted before, it is not possible for anyone to survive with the income from male prostitution in İstanbul.

⁸³ “-How many people you have had since september?
 -(pause) One minute.. (pause) five, you are asking for the ones that gave money?
 -Are there any that gave no money?
 -Of course.
 -Okay, all of them, whatever their kind.
 -Then lets count it, I received money from five people, and four without money.
 -Then what are non-moneys for?
 -They can stand drinks, or give my taxi fare. Or some of them says I do not give money but I can give you gifts.
 -What sorts of gifts?

Although Burak accepts that he might get involved in same-sex sexual relations without directly receiving money, he says he ridiculed a gay who offered him bed+breakfast:

“Gençler sadece yatmak istiyorlar.. Mesela bir gün bir çocuk geldi bana, “yatak artı kahvaltı,” dedi, ben de “o ne ya öyle?” dedim, otel gibi. (gülüyor)”⁸⁴

Furthermore, Burak also agrees with the mechanisms of negotiation that Ata describes the night starts at higher prices that fall at the end to almost ridiculous amounts:

“(CÖ) Peki beni normal bir müşteri olarak kabul et, barda yanına gelip kaçta dedim, ne dersin?

-(B) İşte sonuçta senin gibi birisi para vermez yani genelde, bekler sabaha kadar bedava eve götürmek için...

-Hayır canım farz et ben gelip soruyorum,

-80 milyon derim o zaman...

-Bu tabi pazarlıksız, benim genç ve güzel olmam etkili mi fiyatta?

-E yani, tabi... Sik yüze kalkar sonuçta... Ben normalde, yaşlı adamlara, veya böyle çok fazla kırık tiplere direk yüz dolar veya yüz milyon diyorum, onlar genelde biraz indirip mesela 60-70 gibi tapi oluyorlar. Ama işte sen gelsen sen o kadar vermezsin, sen en fazla 20-30'a götürürsün... (dudaklarını büküyor)”⁸⁵

Even the process of negotiation for a recorded interview between Aykut and me in DeJaVu constitutes an example of the flexible and fragile structure it has. At the

-(pause) perfume, t-shirts, sneakers, cd, exported drinks, etc. For example I took a silver candlestick and gave my mother. She liked it too much. She put it in our living room and she shows it everyone and says my son bought it.”

⁸⁴ “Younger ones only want to have sex. For example a boy came near to me and said, it is bed+breakfast. I said what it is, like hotels.”

⁸⁵ “-Okay, accept me as a normal client. I came near to you and asked how much, what would you say?

-In general a boy like you does not give money to have sex. He waits for the morning to catch one for free.

-No, no, imagine that I came and asked?

-Okay, then I would say 80 millions.

-Is it without negotiation, my youngness and beauty is effective in determining the price?

-Of course, penis erects for the face. I normally say 100 dollars or 100 millions fir older ones and fairy ones. Generally they negotiate and we agree on 60-70 millions. But you do not give that much, you would eventually agree with 20-30 at most.”

beginning of the night, and even though I had a negotiator (the waiter) whom he already knows personally, he asked me 50 million Liras plus his taxi fare from my house. I rejected his offer because of the high price. He said, “You know,” and then left. After a pretty unsuccessful night for both of us (he could not find the money he wanted, I could not find a rent boy to speak with for the money I could afford) at the end, he came near me and said he was ok with only 40 million liras and we ought to leave immediately to complete as much as we could. Aykut also describes his price policy and actual earnings:

“(CÖ) Ücret?

-(A) Sıkmeli 100, sıkmesiz 70. Yabancıysa taksi parası da isterim,

-Türkler vermiyor mu?

-Yok vermezler, zaten bizim burda kimse bu kadar para da vermez, bunlar benim istediklerim, biraz da şanımsun diye yani...

-Pazarlık oluyor yani...

-E herhalde burası Türkiye! Hıyar alırken bile pazarlık yapıyorsun, bizim hıyar bedava değil ya!

-Neler etkili pazarlıkta, neye göre belirliyorsun fiyatı?

-(sesizlik) En önemlisi yaş! Yaş arttıkça para da artar, kimse kusura bakmasın! Hem ibnelerde para artıyor hem de tokmakçı bulma ümitleri azalıyor, o yüzden balamoz [yaşlı eşcinsel] geldi mi, paso 100 dolar, ne koparırsan...”⁸⁶

Aykut also points that the negotiation process does not work in a linear way, instead it is a progression in relation to both sides’ various capacities and attitudes according to a specific gendered hierarchy that I endeavored to enlighten in the chapter 2:

“-Peki yaştan başka ne var pazarlıkta?

⁸⁶ -(CÖ) Ücret?

-(A) Sıkmeli 100, sıkmesiz 70. Yabancıysa taksi parası da isterim,

-Türkler vermiyor mu?

-Yok vermezler, zaten bizim burda kimse bu kadar para da vermez, bunlar benim istediklerim, biraz da şanımsun diye yani...

-Pazarlık oluyor yani...

-E herhalde burası Türkiye! Hıyar alırken bile pazarlık yapıyorsun, bizim hıyar bedava değil ya!

-Neler etkili pazarlıkta, neye göre belirliyorsun fiyatı?

-(sesizlik) En önemlisi yaş! Yaş arttıkça para da artar, kimse kusura bakmasın! Hem ibnelerde para artıyor hem de tokmakçı bulma ümitleri azalıyor, o yüzden balamoz [yaşlı eşcinsel] geldi mi, paso 100 dolar, ne koparırsan...”

-Adam gibi adamsa her zaman daha az verir, çünkü onlara geyler de gider bedavaya, icabında herifi de sikerler, tam muamele yani... Eğer daha oynak karı gibi bir şeyse daha çok isterim çünkü geyler onları istemezler, sonuçta kapak kapağa... (gülüyor) Bir de yani daha ağırbaşlı herifler bizi pek de beğenmezler veya sismek isterler, o da olmadığı için... Yani ben digil [versatile] bir rent olmadığım için, ama öyle olsam ona göre de değişiyor fiyat, söylediğim gibi yani... Bir de tabi gelen tipin kalitesi var, rentin yakışıklılığı var fiyatı arttıran, eğer herif çok çirkinse daha çok verecek, alternatif yok yani! Güzelse, manken gibi çocuklar da veriyorlar bazen, turistler felan, e onlara daha ucuza da olur, bazen de yağlayacaksın bizimkini, ödül gibi! Ama genelde turistlerden daha çok alırız 50 dolar, 60-70 dolar verirler...⁸⁷

Rent boys that I have talked with in different settings and at different times declared their sexual desire towards men. They strove to legitimize and naturalize it as an inevitable bodily consequence of their virility, or to desexualize it as innocent play that could not affect their “real” sexual orientation and heterosexual identities. For example, after Burak sneered at me for our imagined sexual encounter for a low price for him, he continues:

“(CÖ) O da senin işine gelmiyor?

-(B) Yani para olarak tabi... Ama sonuçta bir seni yapmak var yani, bir de elli yaşında dedem gibi bir herifi...

-Yani genç, güzel bir çocuktan, onu yapmaktan daha çok zevk alıyorsun,

-E herhalde! Doğal bir şey sonuçta bu...⁸⁸

⁸⁷ “-What else can effects the negotiation?

-Real men always give less. Because they can be with gays for free. If it is needed gays can fuck the man, too, it is full-treat. If he is effeminate, sissy, I want more because gays do not want to have sex with them. What can they do together? Gentlemen do not like us too much, or want to fuck us, and it is not possible. I am not a versatile rent boy, but if I was it would change the prices. The quality of the client, cuteness of the rent boy, all affect the price. If he is ugly he should pay more, there is no alternative. If he is cutey, sometimes handsome boys or tourists demand us, we can give them for less money. Sometimes you should reward you dick. But generally we take more from tourists, they give 50 dollars, or 60-70.”

⁸⁸ “-And, it is not good for you,

-In terms of money, yes, of course. But it is different to fuck you or to fuck a fifty-years old person, like my grandfather.

-That means you take pleasure from fucking a young, cute boy,

-Of course, it is a natural thing.”

Although he verbalizes his “natural” desire toward young and cute boys, he covers this contradictory lust with his sexual imagination reserved for women or heterosexual pornography:

“-Peki istemediğin birisini nasıl yapıyorsun, başkalarını mı düşünüyorsun, genç çocukları falan?
 -(sessizlik) ya tabi düşünmemeye çalışıyorum... Pornoları falan düşünüyorum, karıları düşünüyorum, kadınmış gibi kabul ediyorum, zaten hep önce ağzına veriyorum, gözlerimi kapatıp, öyle oluyor... Onlar da biliyorlar zaten öyle olması gerektiğini... Sonuçta bir denge var yani...”⁸⁹

Aykut also explained his same sex erotic desire as a habit that he gained by repeating the same sexual repertoire and equating the young male body with the female body:

“(CÖ) Gençse,
 -(A) O iş biraz yaş, ben açıkçası pek tercih etmiyorum, çünkü para vermek istemiyorlar, yediremiyorlar kendilerine parayla kışlarını yaptırtmayı, biz hala güzeliz tribi falan var... Bir de yani genç sike sike alışyorsun bu illete, sonra bırakmak daha zor olur...
 -Zevk alıyorsun yani,
 -Niye almayayım ki, ben erkek değil miyim?! Kim olsa almaz mı?
 -Kızlarla yaptın mı?
 -Arada travestileri yapıyoruz bedavaya, tam makara onlar bize bedava biz onlara, kalan herkese parayla! Bazıları hakikaten taş oluyorlar, ben 2-3 defa da orospuya gittim. Biliyorum yani karı yapmanın dümenini de... Ama benim için genç kıvrak bir oğlanla, bir karının farkı yok zevk açısından...
 -Ama sadece sikmek için,
 -Dedim ya başka bir şey olamaz, isterse Erman Toroğlu gelsin...”⁹⁰

⁸⁹ “-How do you fuck a person that you dont desire for, do you think others, like younger boys?

-(pause) Of course, I try not to think. I imagine pornography, women, I imagine as if he was a women. In fact, I always give to their mouths, my eyes closed, that is the way. They also know that it should be like this. There is a balance.”

⁹⁰ “-If he is young,

-That is confusing. I honestly do not prefer to fuck younger ones. Because they do not want to give money. They cant accept that we screw their asses for momey. They think they are still beautiful. And you may get used to by fucking young ones. It will be difficult in the future if it turns out to be a habit.

-That means you take pleasure,

-Why dont I, am I not a man? Whoever else doesnt take pleasure?

-Have you ever fucked girls?

Later in our conversation, he also withdrew the pleasure he expressed above and emphasized that fucking males is just business for him, although it is still understandable as a result of being horny:

“Ben kadınları seviyorum, bu işi sadece parası için yapıyorum, benim ikinci işim bu.. O kadar başka bir boyutu yok, olamaz da.. Benim içim sadece dişiler için.. Erkek para için sikilir hadi bilemedin abazanlıktan sikilir. O da gelir geçer zaten... Gençlikde insana para lazım, tecrübe lazım, ben dört yılda her şeyi gördüm, İstanbul’u ben gördüm, benim anam babam ne görmüş? “İstanbul seni mahvetmiş,” o hesap benimkisi...”⁹¹

Regarding the complex and incoherent circumstances that rent boys have, it is not possible to maintain that all rent boys in Istanbul define themselves as straight, simply reject or legitimize their sexual arousal for men, and even assert unequivocally their status as strictly top, never experiencing a sexually receptive position. Rent boys have to reiterate and try to act according to this dominant discourse, while gays struggle against it. If gays ultimately come to the conclusion that this discourse about the heterosexual identities of rent boys is illusionary, their sexual interest to that particular rent boy fade away, because he “confesses” that he disobeys the rules.

-We sometimes fuck transvestites for free. It is all funny, we are free for them and they are free for us, for the rest we are all for money. Some of them are really beautiful. I also went to women prostitutes for two or three times. I know how to fuck a woman. But for me, to fuck a young, nice boy or to fuck a woman is the same thing in terms of pleasure.

-But only to fuck,

-As I said nothing else could happen, even if Erman Toroğlu would come.”

⁹¹ “Ben kadınları seviyorum, bu işi sadece parası için yapıyorum, benim ikinci işim bu.. O kadar başka bir boyutu yok, olamaz da.. Benim içim sadece dişiler için.. Erkek para için sikilir hadi bilemedin abazanlıktan sikilir. O da gelir geçer zaten... Gençlikde insana para lazım, tecrübe lazım, ben dört yılda her şeyi gördüm, İstanbul’u ben gördüm, benim anam babam ne görmüş? “İstanbul seni mahvetmiş,” o hesap benimkisi...”

It might seem as though rent boys are lying if one listens carefully to what they are saying and checks what they are actually doing. This case between a lived reality and discursive alternative is also existent in Costa Rican male prostitutes. The European sociologist Jacobo Schifter after long periods of ethnography in a male brothel there, came to the conclusion that what he saw and listened to should not be perceived as lies. Instead, he sees them as compartmentalizations. Commercial sex and homosexuality, heterosexuality and queer practices, stigmatization and passing are differentiated only by very thin and sometimes contradictory rules in the double lives of rent boys both in San Jose and in Istanbul. Therefore, male prostitutes have to develop a versatile speech that varies according to these multiple audiences and social and moral environments they deal with. It is a conversational navigation between at least two different worlds they experience. “When the interview transcripts were read, and what the boys said was compared with what they did, it was tempting to conclude that they were lying. There is evidence, for example, that their sexual practices are very different from those dictated by the dominant discourse of *cacherismo*. A substantial number of respondents practiced both insertive and receptive sex. Very few said they enjoyed the latter, but those who were more honest to recognize that only a few who work in the casa ‘do not give their butt’. That is why the statement that *cacheros* are only active is untrue. The need for money, drugs, and even love, leads to all kinds of practices and risks... These, and many other narratives, could be considered ‘lies’... Instead of analyzing these narratives as ‘lies’, it is better to see them as compartmentalizations, that is, different ways of viewing things that are established when there is no possibility of living otherwise with conflicts and contradicting pressures. *Cacheros*... have learned a discourse that protects them, in theory, from being stigmatized as homosexuals. The rules of the game in this discourse are known and supported by them. But social pressures often sabotage these norms. The line that divides sexual

commerce from homosexuality is very thin. That is why, in order to remain perceived as *cacheros*, they have to separate off the contradictions and exceptions to the rules. This is what compartmentalization achieves, a set of mental ‘compartments’ that do not link easily to one another.” (Schifter and Aggleton, 1999: 154).

Some of the rent boys that I was able to converse with, surprisingly, were very clear about the desire they have for men and even for me who they thought as a regular gay looking for a hook up. For an example, this chat took place in Tek Yön, between Murat and me:

- “(CÖ) cidden para için mi yatıyorsun?
 -(M) yeri geliyor parayla, yeri geliyor zevkine...
 - hımmm...
 - ama seninle zevkine yatarım...
 - Ben parayla bir sex ilişkisi aramıyorum ama...
 - Para isteyen kim ki... İstedğim var, istemediğim var... İş başka ibadet başka...”⁹²

Murat’s sudden and unconditional expression of his desire is not the only example that challenges some elements of the hegemonic discourse of rent boys. Murat also said he liked men, and even classified himself as gay or bisexual albeit keeping to the myth that he may marry a girl in the future. Furthermore, he touched the most taboo issue within the unwritten rules of rent boys: being sexually passive. He was certain that despite the designation of the position of bottom in penetration, he sometimes performs the receptive role, and claimed that it can show nothing about one’s real manhood or masculinity. For example, Tolga, another rent boy I talked

⁹² “-Seriously, you have sex for money?
 -Sometimes for money, sometimes for pleasure,
 -hımmm
 -But I sleep with you for pleasure,
 -But I do not seek a relation for money,
 -Who wants money, there the ones I want, there are the ones I do not, Work is something, prayers is different.”

with more than once, is always transparent about his versatility as well as his rent boy status, claiming that he never does anything sexual without money but as soon as he is paid he can do everything. Tolga, like Murat, does not hesitate to reclaim his virility –even arrogantly and claims that being bottom for money is just business for him.

The second aspect of the hegemonic discourse of rent boys is about the cross-class relation that they navigate through their sexual contacts. The initial responses of rent boys when I ask them about their impression on the lifestyle of upper-middle class gays or the possible transforming effects of those sexual encounters on their lives, worldviews, and future expectations are always negative and unpredictably closed. Rent boys opt to behave as if no social interactions take place before or after sexual experience, neither actual nor imaginative. If they tend to accept that they have an opinion about how gays live or what the strange everyday details of upper classes are, usually deride and ridicule it. In general, rent boys negate the possibility of genuine communication between them and gays.

Burak believes that the chance of an honest and mutually enriching dialogue between a gay and a rent boy is very low. He claims that sharing is the most significant aspect of all relations and it is very difficult for gays to empathize with the problems that he faces in his “real” life:

“(B) Anya-Konya hesabı... Onların hepsi zengin, hepsi çalışıyor ya da, dil biliyorlar, eğitilmişler, yabancı içkiler biliyorlar, parfümler falan... Televizyondakilerle arkadaşlar, sonuçta benden, benim ailemden çok farklı hayatları var... Giydikleri, konuşmaları, işte hepsi enteller falan, çok temizler... Farklıyız yani sonuçta, sadece sikmek meselesi değil yani...
 -(CÖ) Bir geyle arkadaş olman pek de mümkün değil o zaman...
 -Çok zor, arkadaşlık nedir? Bir şeyleri paylaşacaksın, dertleşeceksin! Bunların ne derdi var ki? Ya da benim hayatımı nasıl anlansınlar ki... Ben nelerle boğuşuyorum sonuçta, üniversiteyi kazanamadım, iş yok, askere gidecek miyim falan, onlar göt sık derdindeler, Paris’e mi gitsem, ananın amına mı gitsem...

-Bu kadar hazetmediğin tiplerle mahremiyetini paylaşmak da zor olmalı tabi...
 -(gülüyor) O başka, ben işin o taraflarını hiç düşünmüyorum, aldığım zevke bakıyorum, bu ülkenin derdini ben mi çözeceğim... Hem ayrı dünyaların insanları olmak başka işe engel değil sonuçta...”⁹³

Aykut also complains of the sharp difference between gay subculture and the toughness of his world. Moreover, he finds a romantic relation or love impossible not only because it is conceived between two men but it is imagined between two sharp socio-economic classes, an “abyss” in his words:

“(CÖ) Oturup konuşur musun geylerle?

-(A) Ne zaman?

-Seks yapmadan önce, sonra, başka zamanlarda?

-Ne konuşacağım ki... Onlarla ibne muhabbeti yapacak değilim...

-Canım illa ibne muhabbeti mi olur, onların hayatı, senin hayatın?

-(sessizlik) Değişir yani.. Bazen oluyor tabi sonuçta insanız hepimiz, dertleniyorsun açılıyorsun, zaten onlar genelde razı olurlar dinlemeye, ama hep bir uçurum var ya arada, ne desem sana bir iş bulayım derler, oku, okulunu bitir derler.. Oysa benim bir şikayetim yok yani, çok şükür (sessizlik) Yani, tabi ben de isterdim daha iyi bir mahallede evim olsun, daha düzgün bir işim olsun, bir güzel kız arkadaşım olsun... Ama utanmıyorum da bunlardan.. Geyler genelde iyi insanlar, özellikle de turistler, beni çok beğeniyorlar, yaptığım her harekete tapıyorlar.. Tuhaf yani... İnsan erkek olup erkeklikten bu kadar uzaklaşıp, nasıl böyle sırf erkek diye birine bu kadar vurulur ben anlamıyorum harbiden...

-Aşık da oluyorlardır onlar,

-Off hem ne biçim yaa! Benim aklım fikrim almıyor, ya sen bir erkeksin, atıyorum gelmişsin 40 yaşına boğaz gören evin var işin var, ona göre bir çevren var... İşte kitap mitap okumuş, kültür, muhabbet... Her şey kıyak yani.. Ama işte, ibne... Bana para verip kendini yaptırıyor, ondan sonra sabaha kadar ağlıyor beni bırakma ne istersen veririm diye. Sırf ben yakışıklı çocuğum, delikanlı çocuğum ya! Demiyor

⁹³ “-It is totally opposites. All of them are rich, working, speaking in foreign languages, educated, drinking exported beverages, perfumes, etc. They are friends of famous people. They have totally different lives than my family. What they wear, how they talk, they are all intellectuals, clean. So, we are different, it is not only about fucking.

-Then, it is difficult for you to be friends with a gay,

-Very different, what is a friendship? You should share something, you should talk. What problems those gays have? How can they understand my life? I have many problems like I could not enter university, unemployment, military service, etc... They are preoccupied with to be fucked. Or, shall I go to Paris, shall I go to your mother’s.

-I guess it is very difficult to share intimacy with those types that you do not like,

-(laughing) It is different. I don’t think that aspect of it, I concentrate on my pleasure. Can I solve the problems of this country? Indeed being from different worlds does not constitute an obstacle for fucking.”

bunun anası var babası var, cehennemden bir ucunda yaşıyor, milletin arabasının altına yatıyor her gün üç kuruş para için, ben bunun hayatını ne anlarım ne bilirim demiyor. Bundan bana bir şey olmaz benim dengim değil demiyor, yarın bir gün karı kız ister, evlenmek ister demiyor. Koskaca adamlar karı gibi peşimde koşup, mesaj atmalar, aramalar... Gerçi çok şükür akıllandım artık numaramı vermiyorum! (gülüyor)”⁹⁴

The absolute opposition of rent boys toward the notion of a meaningful dialogue with gays is present only initially, they nevertheless clandestinely accept some minor influences of the more comfortable and independent lives of gays that seep into their everyday practices. Expensive, original perfumes have a special place as I pointed out earlier. While Burak mentioned perfumes for four times in our interview and put perfumes on top of the list of gifts that he received from the gays he has slept with, Murat told me that perfumes and dinner are the most crucial gifts he expects and receives from his customers. Aykut also said that he always uses

⁹⁴ “-Do you talk with gays?

-When?

-Before sex, or after, or other times?

-What shall we talk? I would not engage into gay-chat with them...

-Should it be gay-chat, what about their lives, your life?

-(pause) It depends... Of course, sometimes it occurs, we are all humans, you might be worried or in need of talking, they are generally voluntary to listen to me. But, there is always an abyss. They always say finish your school or let me find you a job as an answer to what I said. Thanks God, I do not have any complaints. (pause) Of course, I would want to have a place in a better neighborhood, a better job, or a beautiful girl friend. But, I do not shame because of what I have. Generally gays are good people, especially, tourists, they like me, they adore everything I do. It is strange. I really cannot understand how a man distanced himself from masculinity and then fall in love with someone only because he is masculine.

-They fall in love with you, too...

-You can't guess how much! I can't comprehend; you are a man, almost 40 years old, having a house near Bosphorus, having a good job, a suitable social milieu. Books, chats, culture... Everything is fine. But, he is a faggot. He gives money to fuck him, then he cries until the morning and says please don't leave me I can give you whatever you want. It is only because I am a handsome boy, I am *delikanlı*. He does not think this boy has a mother and father, he lives in far away, he repairs others' cars for a few pennies, he does not say it is not possible for me to comprehend his life. He cannot see that he is not equal with me and thus we have no future. He does not say I may want a girl in the future, or to marry. Mature men call me, send me messages, follow me. Now I grasped that I should not give my phone number.”

perfumes when he goes out at nights. What's more, he recounts his extraordinary relation with perfumes rather than any other objects belonging to gays:

“(CÖ) Başka bir şeyler alır mısın, para yerine veya parayla beraber?”

-(A) Ne gibi?

-Bilmem, parfüm, kıyafet...

-Parfümünü sıkırım sabah ben, hiç kaçmaz yani... Bir kere bir herif bana saatini vermişti, bir turist heriften de ayakkabı almıştım, orijinal Nike. Ama ben bu işi hediye için değil, para için yapıyorum...

-Parfümün önemi ne?

-Bilmem, hep sıkırlar ama... Dönünce Büyüktepe'ye herkes sorar “vaaay, artiz ne kokuyorsun böyle,” falan... Sonuçta benim alamadığım bir şey, benim etrafımdaki hiç kimsenin de...

-Habersiz de alır mısın?

-(sessizlik)

-(kaşlarımı kaldırıyorum)

-(gülüyor) Valla yalan yok! Hiç bir şey almam ibnelerden ama parfümünü alırım bak uygun yakalarsam, bir de gerçekten beğenirsem... Karı gibi de oluyor çünkü onlarınkiler bazen... Bak parasını görsem almam, ama parfümünü affetmem, bir daha alsın ibne!”⁹⁵

When I focused on the cross-class relations experienced by gays and rent boys in addition to sexual ones –which no doubt cannot be considered independently from class relations- I was amazed to see that those interactions become taboo and it is more difficult to learn something about them than the sexual actions between the two. I noticed that both gays and rent boys accept little thefts especially perfumes, or

⁹⁵ “-Do you receive anything else than money, or with money?”

-Like what,

-I don't know, perfume, clothes?

-I use his perfume in the morning, I never pass without using. Once a man gave his watch to me, and a tourist gave original Nike sneakers. But, I don't do this job for gifts but for money.

-What is the importance of perfumes?

-I don't know, but everyone uses them. When I return Büyüktepe everyone asks what is this perfume you are smelling, etc. Neither my acquaintances nor I can buy perfumes.

-Do you take them from gays without informing them?

-(pause)

-(I frown)

-(laughing) No lies! I never take anything from faggots, but I take his perfume if it smells good, because sometimes they may smell like women's. Look, I don't take even his money, but I always take perfume, the faggot may buy another.”

non-feminine cosmetics such as hair conditioners, shampoos, razor blades, shaving gels, etc. Rent boys generally are very open in their desire to take something from gays, and gays generally seem indifferent in order to prevent possible verbal or physical fights. This unconcern can also be read as gays' basic attempt to cope with an otherwise precarious class resentment, in addition to verbally belittling their own principles and possessions as if they are unhappy with the gay lifestyle and material properties. Beyond this reciprocal arrangement of small theft, rent boys are mostly interested in and impressed by the material culture of gay everyday life. For example, they all have learned not to take off their shoes in a gay's apartment. Additionally, they elaborate that they like the general setting of the houses they go to for sex: silence (since there is no crying baby or child playing to make sleep impossible), less furniture-less color (because their own homes are filled with feminine curves and patterns), spaciousness (they live in the same house with their familie in contrast to lonely gays), many books and CDs (usually they are not curious about what is written, but they value these as status signs), many alcoholic beverages (but gays are not alcoholic in the same way they are used to see), many perfumes, cosmetics, clothes, and shoes (there are some ways to be vain but not feminine), the presence a message recorder in telephones (they never have one). I have also heard from Osman that when he spent time with a quite masculine-looking gay man of 30-something last year, he had noticed that the gay man almost never watches television and if it is open it always shows music channels. When Osman noticed this apparent difference between a rich man that he admires⁹⁶ and his and his

⁹⁶ Despite Osman's lively story, I could never hear an expression of the emotionality between a gay hustler and a gay man as in the case of former prostitute Rick Whitaker (1999: 43): "Some of them were also affectionate in a way that I liked. And some of them had an aura of serious money and considerable power, and they smelled good, and they did whatever they wanted to do, and I liked that type of man, too: Rich, intelligent, worldly, fit. When that kind of man eagerly paid me to spend an hour with him at home, I got more from it than just the money,".

family's environment, he started to hate television as a symbol of his inferiority towards the gay man and what he represents to him.

During this study, I have always evaded directly asking or trying to find an answer to the issue of whether rent boys feel contempt about their own lifestyles and social environments when they encounter upper classed gays. Nevertheless, in my judgment, after these cross-class relations experienced through sexuality, rent boys are able to see novel possibilities about different standards of living which they could not imagine before. This makes them change their own routine to greater or lesser extents.

After I completed the informal interview with Murat in Tek Yön, he moved to an apartment in Cihangir with his two other friends who also are rent boys. As far as I can remember, he had been living in Okmeydanı with his family. Cihangir is an extremely expensive neighborhood to live in and I have already underlined its symbolic significance for gay people. He has a job in a security company in addition to income as a rent boy –which is of course only supplementary. When I asked him why they chose Cihangir to settle in instead of a cheaper area, he said that he always yearned to live in Cihangir, the beauty of the streets, the luxury that gays have there, and more importantly its public image as an upper-class bohemian district. He maintained that after they had moved into that apartment as three young rent boys and advertised it through the gossip network and the Internet, they multiplied their dealings in male prostitution. Furthermore, Murat claimed that nobody could see him as *varoş* any more. By moving into the gayest district of the city that he actually knows from his previous visits to gays, he imagined himself to have escaped from the *varoş* stigma.

4 IN PLACE OF A CONCLUSION

“The ideal in any sexual relationship is finding one’s opposite, and therefore the homosexual world is now something sinister and desolate; we almost never get what we most desire.”
Reinaldo Arenas (1994: 108)

Queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985: 26-7) in her early work argues that the distinction between homosociality and homosexuality is rather more vulnerable amongst men than women because the gap between the two same-sex desires of the social and the sexual is more evident and sharp among men. For her, that is why in the patriarchal order, male homophobia is a necessary and functional element alongside heterosexuality and marriage. In her view, the idea of the nation –a fraternity of male citizens- can be possible only if homosociality and the masculine link is separated from homosexuality. Masculinity in this homophobic arrangement is seen to be a proof of heterosexuality and male bonding: “Recent anthropology, as well as historical work by Foucault, Weeks, Bray and others, suggest that among the things that have changed radically in Western culture over the centuries, and vary across cultures, about men’s genital activity with men are its frequency, its exclusivity, its class associations, its relations to the dominant culture, its ethical status, the degree to which it is seen as defining nongenital aspects to the lives of those who practise it, and perhaps most radically, its association with femininity or masculinity in societies where gender is a profound determinant of power. The virility of the homosexual orientation of male desire seemed as self-evident to the ancient Spartans, and perhaps to Whitman, as its effeminacy seems in contemporary

popular culture.” Will Roscoe (1997) extends this argument to male prostitution. Selling sex to men by men, and presenting one’s male body to another for use and satisfaction destabilizes male bonding which paves the way to the concept of citizenship and the nation. In other words, while homosexual practices already undermine national unity by disregarding the equation between a healthy family and a healthy nation, male prostitution objectivies and commercialises the virility that citizens have. Sedgwick claims that the modern order of families, armies, and the state could be possible only by excluding homosexuality from homosociality. Thus, male prostitution, or virilities for rent, damages the order in society more than a relatively innocent homosexual act. Within this perspective, it would be easier to comprehend the tension rent boys experience especially in relation to their compulsory military service. I could not analyse the relations between everyday masculinities and institutions in the context of the queer challenge of male prostitution in this thesis. This topic remains to be researched.

This thesis, on the other hand, can basically be viewed as an attempt to illustrate that *varoş* masculinity, and *varoş* morality in general, which rent boys are dynamic parts of, might be different from that of the dominant middle classes’. The daily use of terminologies of sexual identity (i.e. heterosexual-homosexual) that stems from a neat division and sharp discontinuity between the identity poles marks some people as the only group of same-sex sexual relations and the rest is only interested in heterosex. On the other hand, the existence, sexual activities, and representation of rent boys challenge and blur the neat division, legitimize same-sex erotic desire through cross-class manifestations, and create the social space for rent boys to easily pass in the straight world. This may mean that the visible gay lifestyle or even homoeroticism cannot be reserved to the already stigmatized people of the (pervert) homosexual minority. Rent boys in Istanbul who have sex with other men and still

pass as straight, or the people in the gay hamam that have sex with each other and do not even question or problematize their sexual identity show that in order to better comprehend what is sexually experienced between males in İstanbul, Anglo-Saxon definitions of sexual identity and exclusive binaries of groups of people are not useful. Rather, we should develop a more flexible understanding of sexual roles, expectations, and performances. This would be clearly a more queer understanding that does not try to fix or stabilize dualities like straight-gay or identities which are meaningful only within these dualist thinking.

People in the gay culture in İstanbul produce relevant answers and solutions to the dictates of the globalization of gayness sometimes by directly internalizing what appears to be a new trend and sometimes by creatively engendering unique modalities. For example, gays pretend to lay aside the dichotomy between active and passive roles in penetration in the name of being modern, versatile, cool gay people. On the other hand, this sharp division between active-passive personifications is exaggeratedly enacted in prostitution amongst ultra-feminine transvestites and hyper-masculine rent boys. Those gendered categories of active-passive types are always queered. While transvestites usually fuck their clients (Selek, 2001; Dowsett, 1996; Prieur, 1997), gays have an interest to be active with straight-looking rent boys. However, this play of (dis)appropriate gender work must continue in order to guarantee client interest. Transvestites ought to look extremely feminine, while rent boys are supposed to act as if they are not gay. The queer pleasure of their clients manifests itself in the act of subverting gender-sexual expectations, or in queering gendered looks. One informant of Richard Parker nicely articulates this trouble with visible gender roles about *miches* (rent boys of Brazil): “The *miche* has to maintain his active pose on the street, but lots of them will also agree to be fucked if the price is right. Maybe not all of them, but probably the majority. It’s the whole

active/passive thing... The whole thing becomes a kind of game of appearances. People play with it and manipulate it,” (1999: 47). This is actually queering heterosexuality, or “the heterosexual tradition” as Chauncey (2000) uses the term. A rent boy is attractive for gays because first of all he is not gay, he is straight, and he comes from the *varoş* where there is no known tradition of homosexual practices, only the dominant, tough *delikanlılık*. To be fucked by a rent boy is a great surprise and pleasure because it is purloined from hegemonic heterosexuality, to fuck a rent boy is on the other hand queering heterosexuality, or *delikanlılık*. “Although the *miche* seems to concretely symbolize the intervention of straight masculinity in the homoerotic world of the street, at the same time he also represents the constant possibility of feminizing, bending, or queering straight patterns through the inversion of expected norms.” (Parker, 1999: 70) If an already-fucked rent boy turns out to be gay he loses his attraction for most gay men because he has the potential to be queered only if he is not gay by definition.

Rent boys in İstanbul always have to protect their bodies from being passive in order to sustain their heteromasculine selves as well as their reputation and social relations. This stance of rent boys against being sodomized may be more complex than it first seems. All rent boys that I talked with claimed that most of the rent boys on the scene alongside their inserter roles, take turns in being receivers. And the majority maintained that they never become passive.⁹⁷ Of course, this is a tautology because it is strictly forbidden to declare passivity even when it happens occasionally. Everyone talks about the others and silences his own experience.

⁹⁷ This most-of-us-but-not-me structure is also evident amongst lesbian and bisexual women about being masculine. Most of the women I talked with complained that everybody is masculine in the lesbian culture, but never the ones that spoke with me (Özbay, 2003).

Aykut exemplifies this dilemma by emphasizing the social pressure behind being passive:

“- (CÖ) En çok ne istenirdi?

- (A) Duruma göre, eşcinseller benimkini ağızlarına almak isterlerdi, bir de oğlanı herifler vardır, onlar direk göt ister...

-Sen yaptın mı hiç?

-Yok.. Bana uymaz o işler, ama sauna tayfası çoğunlukla yaptırır yani, çok daha fazla para, adam Mahmud’a verdikten sonra bedavaya, parayla niye vermesin ki?

-Söylüyorlar mıydı peki?

-Yok ya hiç söylerler mi? Hep “siktim lavuğu,” muhabbeti. Yoksa ben biliyorum aslında kim kimi yapıyor... Mesela bana gelip “sadece sikeriz,” diyen adamlar vardı çok paralı, mesela 100 ise o 200 verecek, ben istemezdim, gider başka bir çocukla girerdi odaya. E şimdi ben bilmiyorum mu o herifin o çocuğu siktiğini?

-Niye söylenmiyor ki sonuçta bir erkekle yattıktan sonra ha sıkılmışsin ha siktirmişsin değil mi?

-Yok işte öyle... Sizde öyle de, bizde bozarlar adamı, ortada çevirirler bir güzel...⁹⁸

For Parker, the ghost of being passive among masculine male prostitutes in Rio and Fortazela is also sustained by developing a fake image of the inserter role, and by reproducing it without verbalizing the subversive acts: “This image of exaggerated, active, violent virility that is personified by the *miche* within this system, is belied, however, by the popular wisdom on the streets that suggests that almost all the *miches* may at some point, in private settings, eventually engage (at least occasionally) in passive anal sex or in fellating their clients, and that the stereotype of straight *bofes* engaging in homo-sex only for pay is in reality far more

⁹⁸ “-What was wanted most?

-It depends, homosexuals generally wanted to take mine into their mouths, plus the pedophile guys who always wanted to fuck.

-Have you ever done?

-No. It does not fit with me. But most of the boys in the sauna would do it, lots of money, they gave it Mahmut for free, why don’t they do it for money then?

-Did they admit that they do?

-No, never... They always talked as I fucked the faggot. Indeed I know who fucks whom. For example there were men who said I only fuck, and ready to give more money, for example twice. I did not accept to go with him, then he went with another boy, don’t I know that he fucked that boy?

-Why don’t they say, what differs when you fucked or are fucked?

-No, it does not differ in you, gays. In us this would finish one.”

complicated.” (1999: 69). It is complicated here, too. For example, I did not imagine a sexual interaction between rent boys who claim their active roles –and I could not sufficiently queer what my informants told to me⁹⁹ until I talked with Aykut:

“- (A) Bir kere diğer rentleri döven arkası kuvvetli olan, hafif böyle çeteleşen gruplaşanlar her zaman biraz daha sözünü geçirir, yine aynı şekilde diğer rentleri sikersen de ona göre daha kuvvetli olursun...

- (CÖ) Nasıl yani, rentler diğer rentleri mi sikiyorlar?

-E herhalde! Bu kadar ödev yapıyorsun haberin yok mu? Gerektiğinde dayayıp sikeceksin gerektiğinde ağzını burnunu kıracaksın.. Yoksa neyine adam oldun? Önünde tezgahı olan erkek değil burada!

-Sen hiç yaptın mı?

-Yaptım tabi. Bu kadar senedir nasıl böyle kaldım zannediyorsun, sikemezsen sikerler, e ben de hiç çizdirmediğime göre (gülüyor).

-Nasıl yaptın?

-Yaa mesela bir gece bizim Ahmet Ağabey’ler var Gültepe’de oturan, onların evinde alem vardı, gece öyle yattık herkes bir yerlerde.. Benim yattığım koltukta da Can diye yeni bir çocuk var, küçük benden baya.. İşte öyle çevirdim, böyle çevirdim, yaptım...

-Zorla mı yani?

-Zorla deme sen yine de, güzellikle, kandırdım yani... Sen şimdi bana ver, ben bir bakayım nasıl durum ona göre sana ayarlarım müşteri falan dedim, kardeşim olsun yani benim...

-O ne kardeşliği ya?

-Bana bağlı bir çocuk oldu yani... Bağlı derken benim gözettiğim, ilgilendiğim icabında koruduğum kolladığım falan...

-Anlıyorum, evet... Başka da var mı öyle kardeşin?

-Var bir yığın ama hepsi bu yoldan geçmiyor tabi... Bir keresinde de tehdit edip de yaptım... Cihangir’de bir herife gitti, vermiş tabi, ben zaten tahmin etmişim, sonra öğrendim, dedim ya bana da verirsin, ya da sen düşün, o gece tıptış tıptış verdi...”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ As Prieur (1997: 22) elaborates a methodology that priorities contextualization, understanding, and interpretation of sometimes covered meanings would better deal with what is unspoken as well as what the informants tell about their experiences: “I myself consider the interviews to be of good quality, most of them even very extensive and openhearted. [O]penhearted, yes, but not on everything. It is a positivist naiveté to take what people say as simple truth. What they give me are not facts about themselves and others, but their vision of themselves and of others, or, rather, the vision of themselves and others that they want to give me. The combination of observations and interviews was not only an advantage, but a necessity.”

¹⁰⁰ “-For example, rent boys who beat other rent boys, or form little gangs are always more powerful than others. Furthermore, a rent boy who fucks other rent boys is always more powerful.

-What? Do rent boys fuck other rents?

-Of course, you study this subject and you dont know this! If you have to you should force and fuck or you should break his mouth and nose. Otherwise, is it possible to be a man? It is not enough to have a dick in order to to be a man here!

Therefore, the contradictory dynamics of passivity, money, power, reticence about himself, and surveillance and denunciation of others creates a situation in which rent boys can navigate their double lives and the researcher remains with his confusion of devious information. This is like a labyrinth of what is said and what is done. Having said this, I never had positivistic curiosities and motivations to find the real. Instead, I accepted the contradictory nature of the identity of the rent boy with all its lies, games, delusions, myths, exaggerations, and repetitions. Rent boys are queering heterosexuality and *varoş* masculinity. These tactics are their tools to subvert hegemonic *delikanlılık*. There are no objective realities behind their performance, sexual or discursive. There is homosexual engagement, there is prostitution, and there is heteromascularity. Rent boys have to interconnect and integrate all of these. As we see above Schifter (1998) calls these not lies but compartmentalization of lives of *cacheros* in Costa Rica. Prieur (1997: 199) sees these as a way to keep up masculine selves of *mayates*: "...I am inclined to believe that some of them were not

-Have you ever fucked?

-Of course, what do you think about how I am still untouched for all those years. If you cannot fuck, they fuck you, and you know I have never been fucked!

-How did you do?

-Look, for example, there was a party in Ahmet's house in Gültepe. After the party everyone slept where he was. By chance I shared my couch with a new, younger boy called Can. I spoke with him, I chatted, I did.

-By force?

-Don't say by force, lets say by beauty, that means I convinced him. I said give me now, and then let us check your position and therefore I can find you clients. I said if you give me you would be my brother.

-What type of brotherhood is this?

-Means he became a member of my group. I care him, I control him, I protect him when necessary..

-I see, okay do you have other brothers like this?

-Of course there are a lot of them, but not all of them follow the same path. Once, I did this boy by threading him. He went to this guy from Cihangir, and this guy fucked him, actually, I guessed. When I learnt that he gave this guy, I said to him you better give me tonight or think what can I do, that night he gave me without any problem."

telling the truth. The *jotas* [read gays] had warned me that no *mayate* [as rent boy] would ever admit to having been penetrated –because that is something that cannot be said. This is of course a methodological problem, but I believe it is also a finding, since I came to realize why they cannot admit it: to be passive means to be *homosexual*, and this in turn means not to be a man. It is therefore something should not happen, and if it has happened, it should not become known. My experience of stubborn denial is indeed confirmed by Murray (1995: 64), who says he has “been told by young Latinos with semen inside their rectums that they never get fucked.” He takes it to mean that they are not kind of persons who take women’s roles. Some experiences of actually doing so will not necessarily change their ideas of themselves.”

Through rent boys’ mechanism of lying, covering, passing as straight, their involvement in male prostitution does not detach them from the society or the dominant societal values. Family is still the most important institution in their lives. They find their social positioning through their familial roles and definitions. Rent boys are clearly terrified of disclosing their sexual activity to their families not only for the sake of their own future, but also not to shame their families. On the other hand, this love and commitment to the family is not enough to make rent boys usual members of the next generation in the familial order, nor does it prevent their participation in one of the most challenging subcultures of the city. It becomes apparent from my conversations with rent boys that there are basic motivations to start and continue prostitution. The first and the most remarkable of those reasons is the chance of finding easy money, despite the fact that most rent boys are “working” for really low pay. Rent boys believe that through their enthusiasm, they empower the *varos̄* selves and gain self-esteem which otherwise remain colorless and possibly

subject to the elderly. They are also happy with the social and sexual cross-class experience they have from male prostitution.

Most rent boys take or steal something from gay men. According to other scholars of prostitution this pattern of stealing is common everywhere in the world (Kulick, 1998; Prieur, 1997; Parker, 1999; Aggleton, 1999). This desire is usually expressed as a resistance against the bodily exploitation they are subjected to. Amongst rent boys, I did not encounter any that thinks gay men exploit him. There is class envy, degrading of the effeminate, or even homophobia, but rent boys in İstanbul do not view themselves as exploited because they fuck gay men. This issue of exploitation can be pondered with desire because when there is desire -hidden or explicit, toward having sex the possible meanings of selling it is differentiated and complicated. Prieur (1997) noticed that even when she catches desire of *mayates* to fuck *jotos*, they still want to take money or watches. Consequently, she admits that *mayates* actually have the desire for homosex but they do not volunteer to be burdened with homosexual identity and therefore they need a pretext for homosexual encounter without being homosexual. As I pointed out earlier, this contention of the discovery of the truth about desires is common in Turkish gays, too. In contrast to these approaches of uncovering of truth, I do not see desires as unified and stable, and able to define people's identity, selves, and relations with others. In other words, desires might also be queered as well as the interpretations of them. Instead of collecting what I learnt from rent boys in order to find out what they really are, I strive to portray them and their culture as chaotic, filled with contradictions (lies?), relational, changing, and most importantly subversive against hetero, and yes, homosexuality.

5 APPENDIX RENT BOY FILE IN TEMPO

26 03 2003

BEŞ MİLYONA SATILIK ERKEKLER

Eşcinsel fuhuş, Taksim'i adeta açık bir erkek genelevine dönüştürmüş durumda

Yer: Taksim'i Harbiye'ye, Beşiktaş'a ve Dolapdere'ye bağlayan Divan Oteli'nin karşısındaki dört yol ağzı. Saatler gece yarısını gösteriyor. Otelin tam karşısına düşen kaldırımda yan yana dizilmiş ve yaşları 17 ile 25 arasında değişen modern giyimli, kimi esmer, kimi sarışın, kimi kumral, kimi kirli sakallı, hepsinin de saçları genellikle jöleli bir grup delikanlı. Gecenin bir yarısında, kışın ayazında, kaldırıma dizilmiş, önlerinde duran arabalara eğilip hararetli bir pazarlık yapıyorlar.

Arabadakiler, aykırı cinselliklerini ancak gecenin tüm yasakları, günahları, her şeyi örten koyu karanlığında yaşayabileceklerini bilen, yarım saatlik, bir saatlik bir ilişki kurup maddi-manevi bedelini ödeyecekleri genç rentboy (kiralık erkek) arayan orta yaş ve üstü gizli eşcinseller. Ayaküstü hararetli ama hızlı pazarlık sonucunda anlaşmaya varılırsa rentboy, hemen arabaya biniyor ve araba, oradan kaçarcasına süratle uzaklaşıyor. Kaldırımla cadde arasındaki hareketlilik ise sabahın ilk ışıklarına kadar durmaksızın sürüyor. Kaldırımda 'eşcinsel müşteri avı'na çıkan 'şipşak jigololar', harçlıklarını çıkarabilecekleri, kendilerine âşık ettirebilecekleri veya 'söğüşleyebilecekleri' orta yaşlı veya yaşlı bir eşcinsel sürücünün daha gelmesini umut ve heyecanla beklemeye koyuluyor.

Taksim Meydanı'nda da manzara, buradakinden çok farklı değil. Eşcinsel fuhuş, Taksim Meydanı'nı adeta açık bir erkek genelevine dönüştürmüş durumda; seks pazarlığı, meydanda, alenen yapılıyor hem de sıkı sıkıya!.. Orada eşcinsel avcısı jigololar, Atatürk heykelinin bulunduğu küçük parkı çevreleyen demir parmaklıklara diziliyor ve meydanda jigolo beğenen eşcinsellere kendilerini teşhir ediyor. İstiklal

Caddesi'nin hemen girişindeki ve yine Gezi Parkı'nın hemen altında yer alan kafelerde de onlara sıkça rastlamak mümkün.

Eşcinsel fuhuş, artık öylesine yaygın ve kanıksanmış ki ava çıkmış jigololar, önlerinden geçen veya karşılaştıkları bir eşcinselle bu işi para karşılığı yaptıklarını 'laf atarak', kendi aralarında yüksek sesle yaptıkları konuşmalarla 'dokundurarak' belli ediyorlar. Atılan zarf, eğer 'av' tarafından kabul görür ve alınırsa zaten karşılığı anında geliyor. Eşcinsel, dönüp gülümseyerek iletişime geçiyor ve ayak üstü sıkı pazarlık başlıyor. Oradaki tanışma da -eğer pazarlıkta anlaşmaya varıldıysa!- ya bir otelde, ya bir garsoniyerde ya da eşcinselin evinde sonuçlanıyor. Eşcinsellerin ağırlıklı olarak gittiği ve bu özelliğiyle ünlenmiş otellerin yanı sıra İstiklal Caddesi'nin ara sokaklarında bu iş için hizmet veren, otel gibi çalışan ama hiçbir yasal nitelik taşımayan özel evler bile olduğunu söyleyelim!

Yol parasına seks!

Aslında ortalıkta öyle büyük paralar, dolarlar, Euro'lar uçuşmuyor. Şaşırtıcı belki; ama bu genç çocuklar, bedenlerini, yalnızca 5 milyon TL ile 30 milyon TL arasında değişen paralarla kiralyor. Pazarlık, 50 milyon liradan başlasa da açlık, soğuk, uykusuzluk, yorgunluk, sıcak bir yatağın, sıcak bir çorbanın cazibesine yenik düşüyor ve 'yol parası' veya 'küçük bir harçlık' teklifine ikna olunuyor. Yine de bu dünyanın yazılı olmayan kurallarına, 'racon'una göre kimse, hiçbir zaman düşük ücretle çıktığını söylemiyor, aksine, birkaç milyon aldıysa bile bunu hep "100 dolar aldım" şeklinde ifade ediyor. Bu, hem 'piyasa'nın düşmemesi hem de şanın yürümesi açısından olmazsa olmaz bir kural.

Anadolu'dan büyük kente artan göçle birlikte hızla evrilen ve artık kelimenin tam anlamıyla 'kayıt dışı ekonomi'de küçük de olsa illegal bir pazar haline dönüşen bu aykırı sektörün lokomotiflerinden biri de barlar. Bu barların başında da İstiklal Caddesi'ndeki Ağa Camii'nin caddeye bakan kapısının tam karşısına düşen sokakta

bulunan iki bar geliyor. Bu barlar, tamamen genç 'rentboy'ların piyasası konumunda. Canı isteyen bir eşcinsel, parayı bastırıldığı sürece, buradan istediği jigoloyla hemen çıkıp gidebiliyor. Barlardan biri aslında bir gay bar olarak açılmış olsa da zaman içerisinde tamamen 'eşcinsel seks pazarı'nın işlediği ve ilgili olanlar arasında bu özelliğiyle hızla ünlenen bir 'marka'ya dönüşmüş. Mekânın işletmecisi, buranın bir jigolo mekânı olduğunu kabul ediyor ama "Biz, böyle olması için özel bir çaba göstermedik. Kendiliğinden oluşan bir şey oldu. Kimseye müdahale edemez veya herkesi denetleyemeyiz. Karşılıklı ve gönüllü alışverişe dayanan bir ilişki söz konusu. Biz sadece bar hizmeti veriyoruz" diyor.

Sevgisiz hayatlar

23 yaşındaki O.T., bu barı espriyle karışık 'işyeri' olarak tanımlıyor. Uzun boylu, yakışıklı, esmer bir delikanlı. Baldırlarını sıkıca saran ve belli ki ünlü bir markanın imitasyonu blucini ve yine gövdesini sıkıca saran daracık, incecik, parlak tişörtü, jöyleyle dikleştirilmiş, şekillendirilmiş simsiyah saçları dikkat çekiyor. İç Anadolu kökenli. Ailesi Zeytinburnu'nda yaşıyor ama o, pek görüşmediğini söylüyor onlarla. Ortaokul ikiden terk. Sonrasını okuyamamış. Nedeni ekonomik sıkıntılar. Dört kardeşi daha var. Taksim'le, Beyoğlu'yla, mahalledeki arkadaşları tanıştırmış onu. O gün bugündür de buranın müdavimi. "Her zaman müşteri çıkıyor mu?" sorumuzu, elini saçlarının arasında gezdirerek, sıkıntılı, biraz gergin ama nedense kasılarak şöyle yanıtlıyor: "Valla, o duruma bağlı. Ama turistler iyi para veriyor.

Turistlerin eli Türklerden daha açık. Onlar zevklerine daha düşkün. Ne kadar istesek veriyorlar. Eğer o gece turist varsa işler iyi gidiyor. Yerli müşteriyle sıkı pazarlıklar yapılıyor ama bazen de bir şey bulamazsak fiyatları kırıyoruz." Onlar için ne kadar yüksek fiyatlarla çıktıkları önemli bir ölçüt; çünkü bu, 'hava', 'piyasalarının yükselmesi', 'şanlarının yürümesi' demek. Piyasaya yeni girenler bile bu altın kuralı kısa sürede kavlıyor ve hemen uygulamaya geçiriyor. Sözelimi, bir 'müşteri' gibi 'pazarlık' yaptığımız henüz 18 yaşındaki N.C., loş ışıkların, koyu sigara

dumanlarının, birbirine karışıp giden onlarca ten ve nefes kokularının arasında bize 'onunla geçireceğimiz bir gecenin bedelinin 100 dolar olduğunu" söylüyor. Yüksek volümlü müzik yüzünden birbirimize seslerimizi güç duyuruyoruz ama yine de ısmarladığımız içki karşılığında sohbet etme olanağı buluyoruz. Sinoplu olduğunu, İstanbul'a sekiz ay önce geldiğini, geceliği 7 milyon lira olan bir otelde kaldığını, otel parasını bulamadığında ya parklarda, bankalarda sabahladığını veya geceyi bazı eşcinsellerin, travestilerin evinde cinsel ilişki karşılığı geçirdiğini öğreniyoruz. Ailesini hiç aramadığını, bir gün otobüse atlayıp İstanbul'a geldiğini söylüyor. Altı kardeşin dördüncüsü o. Yalnızca ilkokulu bitirmiş, sonra ailesinin geçimine katkıda bulunmak için orada burada çalışmaya başlamış. Şimdi sürdürdüğü hayat, onu hızla yaşlandırıyor farkında olmasa da; çünkü alkolle, sigarayla, seksle, hatta esrarla harmanlanmış, yıpratıcı, yoğun, ölümcül, aykırı geceler, ondan çok şey alıp götürüyor, pek çok şeyi tüketiyor. Öylesine genç ki neredeyse çocuk izlenimi veriyor. Bu toy ama bıçkın olmaya öykünmüş hali, biraz da şefkat hissi uyandırıyor ve pazarlık olumsuz sonuçlanıyor ama barın kapanış saatlerine doğru birkaç kişiyle daha kuytu bir köşede veya dans ederken, ısmarlanan içkileri yudumlarken pazarlık yapan, arada da bu hayatın kendisine öğrettiği gibi, keskin, kaçamak, cilveli bakışlarla bizi kesen N.C., tekrar bize yanaşıp yüzde elli indirim yapıyor! Bunu da çok bulduğumuzu söyleyince bu kez 100 dolardan başlayan fiyat, 10 dolara kadar iniveriyor! Hayatının baharındaki bu genç, eğitimsiz ve yoksul erkek fahişeden yakamızı türlü çeşit bahaneler uydurarak kurtarıp Taksim Meydanı'na çıktığımızda oradaki hareketliliğin yoğunlaştığını fark ediyoruz. Bunun nedeni, barların kapanmış, eğlence mekânlarında jigoloların müşteri, eşcinsellerin partner bulamamış ve meydana akın etmiş olması... Taksim Meydanı, bu saatlerde tam bir açık hava genelevi görünümünde. Erkek erkeğe seks için yapılan pazarlıklar, meydandan The Marmara'nın karşısındaki parka, oradan da telefon kulübelerinin ve otobüs duraklarının bulunduğu alana kadar uzanıyor. Kıyafetleri, tavırları ve konuşmalarıyla hemen kendilerini belli eden efemine eşcinsellerle onların tam tersi bir erkeksilik sergileyen eşcinsel jigoloları arasında bazen tartışmalı, bazen esprili,

bazen de bakışmaya dayalı bir pazarlık biteviye sürüp gidiyor. Gece, usul usul güne kavuşmaya başladığında pazarlıklar kızışıyor, sonra yerini mahmur, uykusuz, caresiz, her teklife razı, yorgun yüzlere bırakıyor.

Sanal dünyada eşcinsel avı!

Cebinde biraz parası olan erkek rentboy'lar, o saatleri internet kafelerde geçirmeyi tercih ediyor çünkü bu pazarın son zamanlardaki en önemli mecralarından biri de sanal ortam, yani chat!.. İnternet sitelerinin gay sohbet kanallarının genel odalarında, iki dakikada bir statik olarak sürekli verilen şöyle ilanlara sıkça rastlamak mümkün: "Selam ben B... yaşıam 23, 1.78 boy, 70 kilo, esmerim. Jigoloyum. Şu an Taksim'deyim. Resmim var. Saat başına 30 milyon alıyorum. Çok iyi sevişirim. Yeri ve parası olan olgun yaştaki gay'ler, ya özelime gelin ya da beni arayın. Telefonum:...." Bu tür ilanların sayısı, özellikle son iki yılda dikkat çekecek kadar ciddi bir artış gösterdi. Sadece internet yoluyla müşteri arayan eşcinsel avcısı rentboy'ların sayısı hiç de azımsanacak gibi değil. Öyle ki Eyüp'te yaşayan ve yaşları 18 ile 24 arasında değişen bir grup rentboy, fotoğraflarının yer aldığı bir internet sitesi bile kurmuş. Dileyenlere sitelerinin adreslerini veriyor ve orada fotoğrafı bulunan gruptan istediklerini seçme şansı tanıyorlar. Kuşkusuz, bu yöntemle gerçekleşen buluşmaların sonu bazen soygun, dayak ve hatta cinayetle bile sonuçlanabiliyor! Eşcinsellere yönelik cinayetlerin failleri arasında yine eşcinsel rentboy'larının başı çektiğini anımsatmakta yarar var. Eşcinsel avcısı rentboy'ların 'işyerleri'nden biri de yine Dejavu ve Sahra isimli barların bulunduğu sokakta yer alan Akvaryum adlı sauna. 24 saat açık olan bu saunanın, hamam çağrışımı yapıyor olması, ortama buğulu ve gizemli bir hava da katıyor. Burada çalışan rentboy'lar, herhangi bir maaş almıyor; geçimlerini, partner bulmaya gelmiş erkek müşterilerinin verdiği ücretlerle sağlıyorlar. Buranın da kendine özgü bir jargonu var. Sözgelimi, para karşılığı ilişkiye girmek, 'masaja girmek' olarak tanımlanıyor. Müşteri, üstlerinde sadece mayo olan ve ortalıkta sürekli gezinerek bedenlerini teşhir eden 18-26 yaş arasındaki rentboy'lardan beğendiği biriyle 'masaj'a girmek isterse,

mutlaka önce pazarlık yapılıyor. Buradaki kabinler de ekstraya tabi ve kabinin ücretini de yine müşteri ödemek zorunda. Akvaryum, İstanbul'da, rentboy'ların mekân anlamındaki ilk işyerleri olarak da kabul ediliyor. Taksim'le bir biçimde tanışan eşcinsel jigoloları, bir daha bu dünyadan kopamıyor. Taksim, gizemli, karanlık ve çekici bir kuyu gibi onları içine çekip bir süre sonra da yutuyor. Piyasaya yeni giren gençler, önceleri müşteriler tarafından hayli ilgi görüyor hatta paylaşamıyor ama bu ilgi, kısa süre sonra bitiveriyor; çünkü bu piyasada, çark çok acımasız işliyor; arz-talep dengesi, tamamen duygusallıktan ve derinlikten yoksun yapay bir görselliğe dayandığı için müşteri, bir kez tadını aldığı rentboyu hemen defterinden siliyor ve gözleri yenisini arıyor. Piyasanın müşterileri de zaten belli olduğu için yeni rentboy'un cazibesi, yalnızca birkaç ay sürüyor ama bu birkaç ay, Taksim'in onu büyülemesine yetiyor. Öyle güçlü bir büyü ki bu, ona ram olanlar, tesirinden bir daha kurtulamıyor. Bu yüzden Taksim Meydanı ve civarındaki parkları mesken edinen ve özellikle gay turist avı için sürekli tetikte bekleyen öbek öbek hırsızlık çetelerinin tüm üyelerinin, eski rentboy'lardan oluşması bir tesadüf değil. Taksim, göz kamaştırıcı parlak ışıklarının arkasında kimselerin göremediği, bilemediği yüzlerce kayan yıldız saklıyor. Beyoğlu'nun, Taksim'in 15 veya 20 yıl önceki halini iyi bilen ve şimdi kırklı veya ellili yaşlarını süren eşcinseller ise gelinen noktayı iç geçirerek, hayıflanarak değerlendiriyor. Küskün bakışlar ve kırgın bir sesle söyledikleri, aslında şu anki durumu da yalın ve çarpıcı biçimde özetliyor: "Çok ayağa düştü her şey. Bizim zamanımızda bir gizlilik, mahremiyet vardı. Eşcinseller daha da kıymetliydi. Şimdi dünya tersine döndü. Eskiden bize para verirlerdi, şimdi bizden para istiyorlar..."

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VIRILITIES FOR RENT
NAVIGATING MASCULINITY, SEXUALITY,
AND CLASS IN ISTANBUL

GÖRÜŞMELER

BURAK

27 Şubat Pazar Sabahı, 4.00, benim evim, salondayız, onun üzerinde kot pantolon, siyah kazak var, sigara ve çay içiyor, dün gece DejaVu'da tanıştık, ben "bana neler yaptığını anlatır mısın?" dedim, gazeteci olmadığımı ve sadece ödev yapmak için merak ettiğimi öğrenince de "kimse çıkmazsa olur ama yine de karşılıksız olmaz," dedi. Kimse çıkmadı, 40 milyon istedi, ben çok bulunca pazarlık edip 20+taksi'ye (bizim evden Taksim'e, 5 milyon) razı oldu. Önce recorder istemedi, ama görüntü olmadığımı anlayıp, ismini değiştireceğimi söyleyince kabul etti.

-Bana kendini tanıtır mısın Burak?

-Ben Burak XXXX, 19 yaşımdayım, 1985 İstanbul doğumluyum, ailem Niğde'li... Liseyi bitirdim geçen sene, şimdi dinleniyorum biraz, herhalde askere gideceğim bu yaz, ama belki de iş bulup çalışabilirim de, o daha tam belli değil... Üç kardeşiz, annem-babam sağ, hep beraber yaşıyoruz... Bu kadar herhalde...

-Nerde oturuyorsunuz?

-Kasımpaşa.

-Ne kadar zamandır oradasınız?

-Şimdiki eve ben ilkokuldayken taşındık, ondan önce de Halıcıoğlu'ndaydık.

-Durumunuz nasıl?

-Çok şükür yaşıyoruz... Yani... Zengin değiliz sonuçta, babamın işini söylemek zorunda mıyım?

-Hayır hayır, nasıl istersen. Ben sadece nasıl bir aile olduğunuzu anlamaya ve ona göre sizi kafamda bir yere koymaya çalışıyorum..

-Haa tamam o zaman, babam esnaf, orta halli diyeyim ben...

-Nasıl zaman geçiriyorsun, bir günün nasıl geçiyor?

-Öyle özel bir şey yok... Hava güzelse evin ordaki parka takılıyoruz geceleri..

-Kimle?

-Benim mahalleden arkadaşlarla.. Hava soğuksa park için, bilardo salonu var Macit Abi'nin oradayızdır genelde.. Evde de odamda otururum müzik dinlerim, sigara içerim, kola içerim, bira içerim arada... Öyle yaşıyorum yani...

-Spor yapıyor musun?

-Halı sahaya gidiyoruz haftada bir, bir de evde şınav çekerim her gün, iki günde bir, yetiyor zaten bana... Öyle profesyonel bir şey yapmıyorum yani...

-Burak sence sen rent-boy musun?

-(sessizlik) Ya öyle demek gerekir mi illa tam olarak bilmiyorum. Yani, aslında ben normal ve sağlıklı bir gencim. Kızlardan hoşlanıyorum aslında...

-Peki DejaVu...

-Evet aslında, o gözle bakınca tabi yani...

-Ok, benim için kendine rent-boy demen ya da dememen problem değil aslında, peki nasıl dahil oldun DejaVu'da yaşanan eğlenceye?

-Ben sonuçta biliyorum zaten, benim bir eşcinsel tanıdığım var Taksim'de oturan. Benim kuzen onun yanında çalışıyor çok uzun zamandır, tekstil işi yapıyorlar, belki ben de orada çalışacağım, o yüzden de ben her zaman geyleyi ve işte onların yerlerini

falan biliyordum zaten. Ama hiç gitmedim daha önce... Sonra bir gün, kuzen anlattı, işte, dedi, “böyle böyle bir yerler var, gidiyorsun içeri giriş beleş, ibneler var, travestiler var, gidiyorsun işte... İçki falan alıyorlar, bazen de evlerine gidip bunları yapıyorsun,” dedi.. Aslında o hiç yapmamış, çünkü bizimki biraz kısa boylu, ya da o zaman öyle demişti, gerçi sonradan da bir şeyini görmedim de... Ben tırstım önce, unuttum bir zaman. Sonra bir gün, aradı “akşam gelsene, ibnelerin oraya gideceğim,” dedi. Ben de evde otur otur sıkılmışım, “iyi,” dedim. Gidip bir takılayım diye... Akşam Taksim’e çıktık, turladık falan.. Bana “dikkat et, kimseye bedavaya yok, sikinin peşine takılırsan sen de ibne olur çıkarısın, bak güzel çocuksun falan, sakın kendine bir şey yaptırma, sadece erkek olacaksın, yoksa hiç gitmeyelim,” falan dedi. “Bunlar önce kendilerini yaptırırlar, sonra da seni isterler, siktiri çekmesini bileceksin,” dedi...

-Eee...

-Ya ben de dedim, “benim işim olmaz,” falan (gülüyor)... Neyse, girdik biz DevaVu’ya, ben çok şaşırđım ilk önce çünkü en başta hiç eşcinsel kimse yoktu, herkes böyle normal... Sonra baktım Ahmet (kuzen) bana “sen burada dur,” deyip gitti biriyle konuşmaya başladı. Bazen bana bakıp gülüyordu da.. İşte müzik falan, öyle duruyorum ben, garson geldi yanıma, biliyordur, Ömer, ben ilk onu gördüm orada öyle, “bir şey içer misin canım,” dedi. Ben bir bira söyledim, o ara Ahmet gelip “kim aldı birayı?” dedi, benim aldığımı duyunca da kızdı, “çok pahalı oğlum para mı sıcıyorsun sen? Hem bırak alırlar sana elbet,” dedi. Ben tabi kaldım öyle... Neyse, bu arada geyler de geldiler baya, bizim gibi çocuklar da geldiler çok kalabalıklaştı...

-Kim gey kim değil nasıl ayırdın?

-Tiplerine bakarak... belli ki zaten...

Bunlar ne zaman oluyor bu arada?

-İşte geçen eylül falan...

-Eee sonra,

-Ahmet’e “ben ne yapacağım?” dedim, “müziğe göre hafif hafif dans et, ne kazık gibi dikil, ne de öyle karı gibi kıvrır, diğer çocuklara bak, onlar gibi ol,” dedi.

-Diğer çocuklar nasıldı?

-Ya klasik DejaVu tayfası işte... Benim gibi sütler de vardı, daha artizler de vardı. Neyse o gece ben öyle durdum durdum, arada Ahmet yanıma geldi, bir ara kayboldu falan, kimse ne bir şey sordu bana ne içki aldı, ne de başka bir şey...

-Sevdim mi peki ortamı?

-Tabi ya sevdim yani sonuçta güzel bir yer, ama kastım da biraz tabi...

-Bir daha ne zaman gittin?

-Ahmet ben pek sevmedim zannetmiş, tabi bir yandan da haa bak bunu söylemeyi unuttum, bunlar tabi babamlardan gizli gidiyoruz biz. Neyse, yani söylerim falan korkusuna da pek sıkıştıramıyor... Ben sonra, bir-iki hafta sonra “ne oldu, bir daha gitmeyecek miyiz?” falan diye sordum, bu da “oğlum ben her zaman gidiyorum, sen ne zaman istersen takıl bana,” dedi. Meğer beni o gün beğenen bir adam varmış bunların tanıdığı... İsim söyleyebilir miyim?

-Söylemesen daha iyi, ama söylersen de değiştiririm ben...

-Neyse söylemeyeyim o zaman, belki sen de tanıyorsundur falan, ayıp olmasın şimdi... İşte bu beni beğenmiş, ama Ahmet “olmaz, o rent değil,” demiş.

-E rent miydin ki?

-Ya yok değildim ama olay o değil, yani Ahmet beni sevmedim falan zannediyor ya, hiç söylememiş bile, ben de bu kadar anlattı ne gelen var ne giden herhalde beni de bunun gibi beğenmediler diyorum... Neyse o gece gittik hemen, çarşambaydı bu sefer,

giderken bana anlattı, işte bu herif seni çok beğenmiş diye... “Aklın yattı mı artık?” dedi bu, ben de “olur, bir bakalım,” dedim.

-Sen görmüş müydün ki adamı?

-Yok hayır..

-E peki nasıl oldu?

-İşte, ondan sonrası Ahmet, bir şekilde ulaştı ona... Zaten o çarşamba O yoktu barda. Ama başka bir şey oldu, bir tane turist geldi yanıma.. Elini belime attı, benden daha uzun böyle 1,85 falan... (Burak 1.78-1.79 civarı en çok) Ben tabi ittim elini, ama öyle sertçe değil de, hafifçe... Neyse bu içki ister misin diye sordu, ben de olur dedim...

-Sen İngilizce mi konuşuyorsun?

-Yani biraz, liseden...

-Haa, ok,

-İşte bu aldı geldi falan... Öyle yanımda durup gülümsüyor arada, ben de tuvalatee gidiyorum dedim, tamam dedi, gidip tabi Ahmet’i buldum. Anlattım, “çok ballısın, her zaman turist düşmez, sakın kaçıрма, en temiz para onlarda, sert dur, git, sik, gel,” dedi. Dedi de, ben ne konuşacağımı, ne yapacağımı bilmiyorum ki...

-Eee nasıl yaptın?

-İşte kaç para vereceğini sordum dilim döndüğünce, bana benim ne istediğimi sordu, ben de 100 dolar dedim. Güldü, “çok, o kadar vermem,” dedi. “50 dolar,” dedi, ben de kabul ettim. Sonra sadece aktif olduğumu söyledim, o da kabul etti. “Bekle,” deyip Ahmet’in yanına gittim, anlattım o da “tamam,” dedi, “cebini açık tut,” dedi, “iş bittikten sonra taksi parası da iste, verir,” dedi. Haa, bir de “sakın herifinkini tutma, kendi kıçını da elletme,” dedi. Ondan sonra çıkıp gittik. Sultanahmet’te kalıyordu, böyle iyi görünüşlü bir otelde. Odaya girince bu, duş almamızı söyledi, aldık, beni öpmeye çalıştı, izin vermedim, boynumu falan öptürdüm. Sonra... Utandım şimdi ya... (susuyor)

-Utanma utanma, hepimiz biliyoruz ne olduğunu...

-İşte bu benimkini ağzına aldı, biraz şey yaptı falan, sonra ben orada geldim... Önce utandım, hemen geldim falan diye, ama bu hiç bozulmadı, “no problem,” falan dedi. Ben de rahatladım biraz... Çıktık, viski ikram etti, içtim biraz, o arada biraz konuştuk, hocaymış İngiltere’de, bana yaşımı sordu, muhakkak okula git dedi falan, sonra tekrar ağzına aldı, ondan sonra da prezervatif takıp üzerime oturdu. Bir daha geldim ama bu sefer daha geç oldu. Öylece uyuduk artık bundan sonra...

-Gece orada kaldın yani, para?

-İşte ben daha o zaman başta alacağımı bilmiyordum daha... Neyse sabah ben gözümü açtığımda bu tekrar yumulmuştu bana... (gülüyor) Bitince, “ben gideyim,” dedim, o da çıkarıp 50 dolar verdi. Benim aklıma o anda geldi para! Adam vermese çıkıp gideceğim yani.. (gülüyor)

-Ne hissettin, hoşuna gitti mi, utandın mı?

-Ya başta utandım tabi de... Bir de işte o da erkek falan... Sonuçta bu fiziksel bir zevk, keyif yani, vücudun aldığı bir zevk sonuçta, onu da inkar edemezsin yani... Ama parayı alınca bunu niye yaptığımı hatırlayıp daha mutlu oldum doğrusu... 50 dolar büyük para sonuçta, bir daha hiç o kadar para almadım kimseden hala...

-Bu ilk cinsel ilişkin miydi?

-(Susuyor) Bir kere Yüksek Kaldırım’a gitmiştik, karı sikmeye, ama beğenmemiştim ben, çok pisti..

-Kimle, Ahmet’le mi yine?

-Haa yok ya, hayır, benim lise tayfasıyla...

-E o zaman, bu İngiliz hayatındaki ilk seks yani?

-Evet evet, erkek olarak ilk, zaten kadınla da olmadı daha... Ama aslında ben kadınları daha güzel buluyorum.. (sessizlik) Yani şimdi sana bu kadar şey anlattım tutup da erkek yapmaktan zevk almıyorum sırf para için yapıyorum dersen, harcarım seni yani... Bence bu vücutla ilgili bir şey yani.. Ben erkeğim, normal bir erkeğim, ne yaptığının çok da önemi yok, sonuçta amaç aynı şey...

-Nedir?

-Vücudunu rahatlatmak yani... boşalmak...

-Eylül'den bu yana kaç kişi oldu peki?

-(sessizlik) Bir dakika... (sessizlik) beş, sadece para verenler mi?

-Para vermeyenler de mi var?

-Tabi canım.

-Hepsi, hepsi ne varsa,

-O zaman şöyle, beş kişiden para aldım, dört de parasız...

-Parasızlar ne için peki?

-Ya onlar mesela içki ısmarlıyorlar, ya da taksi paranı veririz diyorlar, kimisi para vermem hediye veririm diyor.

-Ne gibi hediyeler mesela,

-(sessizlik) parfüm, t-shirt, ayakkabı, cd, yabancı içki, öyle şeyler... Ben mesela Cihangir'de birinin evinden gümüş bir şamdan aldım, anneme verdim, çok beğendi, bizim salona koydu, oğlum aldı diyor, herkese gösteriyor falan...

-Bunlar kullanılmış şeyler mi, yoksa yeni mi?

-Değişiyor işte... Mesela parfüm biraz kullanılmış olabilir, veya iyi durumda bir ayakkabı, ama kıyafetse yeni olur, zaten genelde bedenler uymaz...

-Ben pazarlık mekanizmasını merak ediyorum, mesela senin belli bir fiyatın var mı, yoksa gelen tipe göre değişiyor mu, ya da gelen tipe göre değişen başka şeyler de var mı?

-Ya tabi sonuçta herkesten aynı şeyi isteyemezsin... Her zaman daha yaşlılar daha iyi oluyor, çünkü onlar teslim olmuş sonuçta, ne istersen verirler, veya çok çirkin adamlar, kim siker ki yani onları? (gülüyor) Biraz daha gençse veya eli yüzü düzgünse çatır çatır pazarlık ediyor yani... Ama aslında bu zenginlikle de ilgili. Mesela benimkilerden biri gayet düzgün bir çocuktü, gey yani, ailesiyle Amerika'da yaşıyor, ama Türk, o mesela 50 milyon verdi, sonra beni sevdiğini söyleyip bir de parfüm verdi çıkarken, One... The Marmara'da kalıyordu, yani, çok zengin sonuçta.... Normalde onun tipinde olan birisi para falan vermez yani, tipi düzgünse adam niye bir de para versin üzerine, ama işte gerçi bu turist sayılır aslında, turistler sonuçta hep öyle.

-Yaşlıysa ve çirkinse daha çok para verebiliyor yani, başka?

-Evet... Gençler sadece yatmak istiyorlar.. Mesela bir gün bir çocuk geldi bana, "yatak artı kahvaltı," dedi, ben de "o ne ya öyle?" dedim, otel gibi. (gülüyor)

-Peki beni normal bir müşteri olarak kabul et, barda yanına gelip kaç dedim, ne dersin?

-İşte sonuçta senin gibi birisi para vermez yani genelde, bekler sabaha kadar bedava eve götürmek için...

-Hayır canım farz et ben gelip soruyorum,

-80 milyon derim o zaman...

-Bu tabi pazarlıksız, benim genç ve güzel olmam etkili mi fiyatta?

-E yani, tabi... Sik yüze kalkar sonuçta... Ben normalde, yaşlı adamlara, veya böyle çok fazla kırık tiplere direk yüz dolar veya yüz milyon diyorum, onlar genelde biraz indirip mesela 60-70 gibi tapi oluyorlar. Ama işte sen gelsen sen o kadar vermezsin, sen en fazla 20-30'a götürürsün... (dudaklarını büküyor)

-O da senin işine gelmiyor?

-Yani para olarak tabi... Ama sonuçta bir seni yapmak var yani, bir de elli yaşında dedem gibi bir herifi...

-Yani genç, güzel bir çocuktan, onu yapmaktan daha çok zevk alıyorsun,

-E herhalde! Doğal bir şey sonuçta bu...

-Peki istemediğin birisini nasıl yapıyorsun, başkalarını mı düşünüyorsun, genç çocukları falan?

-(sessizlik) ya tabi düşünmemeye çalışıyorum... Pornoları falan düşünüyorum, karıları düşünüyorum, kadınmış gibi kabul ediyorum, zaten hep önce ağzına veriyorum, gözlerimi kapatıp, öyle oluyor... Onlar da biliyorlar zaten öyle olması gerektiğini... Sonuçta bir denge var yani...

-Aktiflik-pasiflik meselesi nasıl oluyor...

-Ben olmuyorum hiç... (sessizlik) olanlar da var biliyorum ama bana uygun değil sonuçta...

-Ne anlamda,

-Yani pasif olup, götünü verip hala erkek olman mümkün değil ki! Olmaz yani! (sessizlik)

-Bozar yani,

-Evet bozar sonuçta! Yani bir ibneler, homoseksüeller var, onlar ağzına da alır, her yola da gelir, bir de erkekler var aslında kadınlardan zevk alıyorlar ama ya abazalıktan ya da para için arada bunları da sikiyorlar.. Eğer kendileri de bunu sevmeye başlarsa, gidiş kötüdür bence, bilmiyorum yani... (gülüyor) Zaten bence bu zamanla alışkanlık yapıyor, eğer bir kere yaptırırsan, bırakamayabilirsin bir daha...

-E sismekten zevk alan başka türüsünden de alır belki, yattığın erkek değil mi sonuçta!

-Ya orası öyle ama sonuçta kimle yattığın değil, yatıp da ne yaptığın işidir bu! Sen bir erkekle yatıp, gene de erkekliğine hanel getirmeden kalkabilirsin yanından, onu halledip...

-Nedir bunun tam kuralları, ne yaparsan bozulur erkeklik?

-(sessizlik) İşte.. Vermeyeceksin, ellemeyeceksin adaminkini, kendi götünü ellettirme, hatta donunu hiç indirme mümkünse, en iyisi o, öpüşme... (sessizlik)

-Sen hiç öpüşmüyor musun Burak?

-(sessizlik) Arada sırada çok beğenirsem falan, veya biraz içtiysem...

-Yani ben şimdi şöyle bir şey anlıyorum, bir sadece kurallar ve para için olanlar var bir de biraz daha beğendiklerin veya zevk aldıkların var, ama ikisi aynı şey değil tam olarak...

-E tabi değil yani...

-Peki o zaman sınır ne? Yani zevk alacağına inansan, veya çok beğensen falan pasif de olur musun?

-Yok olmam... Bununla yaşayamam, sınır dediğin sevişmedir sonuçta, öpersin falan, ama onun da bir tarzı var, her zaman erkekliğini koruyacaksın... Neticede sen erkeksin öteki kadın... Bir biçimde oraya gitmek zorunda... Eğer o da sismek istiyorsa o zaman gey bulsun kendine...

-E hani biri erkek biri kadındı! Geyler ne öyleyse...

-Hayır, bak sen anlamadın.. Rentlerle geyler arasındaki sikişte, biri kadın olmak zorunda... Ama al takke ver küllah durumları oldu mu o zaman ikisi de gey olur...

-Peki söyle desem, bir kere heterolar var onlar sadece karı siker, sonra rentler var, seni de katıyorum buna, onlar karı sismek isterler, ama para veya başka şeyler için arada geyleri de sikerler, geyler gençse falan zevk de alıp sevişebilirler

de, ama asla siktirmezler, bir de geyler var, onlar sadece erkeklerle olurlar ama her şeyi yapabilirler... Oldu mu şimdi?

-Evet böyle de denebilir hakikaten... Sonuçta rentler de günün birinde bırakıp ibnelere takılmayı evlenirler yani... Bir dönem olur öyle.. Ama geylerin ki daimi, onlar hep erkekçi! (gülüyor)

-Peki rentler arasındaki ilişkiler nasıl, tanıyor musunuz birbirinizi, görüşüyor musunuz?

-Bazılarını evet ama hepsini değil tabi. Bir kısmını mahalleden falan biliyorum, benim liseden bir çocuk var mesela, Kemal... Ama sonuçta çok insan var hepsini birden bilmek mümkün değil...

-Hepiniz aynı mısınız peki, hiç farkınız yok mu birbirinizden?

-Hayır ya hiç olur mu... Bir kere bizim gibi daha düzgün tipler bir grup, sonuçta daha aile hayatı yaşayan yeri belli yurdu belli tipler... Biz aç değiliz sonuçta, ben bu işi eğlence için yapıyorum, az çok para gelirse ne iyi, gelmezse dert değil, belki de bir daha hiç gitmem DejaVu'ya hayatta falan, öyle... Bir de itlik için yapanlar var, işte Gültepe tayfası, Maltepeliler falan.. Bunlar daha aç, her yola da geliyorlar para için. Tek derdin para oldu mu, götünü de verirsin, adamı da soyarsın, döversin de... Başka şeyler de... Hem pis boktan bi durum hem de tehlikeli... Bunların çoğunda zaten hap da var...

-Ne gibi mesela,

-Mesela gruplar oluyormuş bazen, oralara falan gidiyorlar, Etiler'e, Boğaz'a, kadın-erkek herkes birbirini... Kim kimi tutarsa hesabı, arada bunları da yapıyorlarmış zengin adamlar falan... Ex alıyorlarmış, hap, içki, alkol... Artık ne varsa, parası çok iyi değil ama, sırf karı var diye...

-E peki erkeklikleri bozulmuyor mu o zaman?

-Bence bozuluyor tabi, ama bir yandan da karı yaptıkları için bir taraftan da artıyor sonuçta... En iyi şey karı yapmak yani sonuçta, onu yapan 1-0 önde daima!

-Aklıma takılan son bir iki şey kaldı... Sence senin veya genelde bütün rentlerin ne özelliği var da geyler sizi beğeniyorlar, sizi çekici kılan nedir?

-(sessizlik) Yani biz erkekiz sonuçta.. Genciz, sertiz onlardan.. Sonuçta onlar karı gibiler, birbirleriyle olamazlar, gerçek erkek arıyorlar kendilerini yaptırtmak için, e biz de burdayız! Daha ne bulsunlar zaten...

-Bu kadar farklı mı dünyalarınız?

-E yani! Anya-Konya hesabı... Onların hepsi zengin, hepsi çalışıyor ya da, dil biliyorlar, eğitilmişler, yabancı içkiler biliyorlar, parfümler falan... Televizyondakilerle arkadaşlar, sonuçta benden, benim ailemden çok farklı hayatları var... Giydikleri, konuşmaları, işte hepsi enteller falan, çok temizler... Farklıyız yani sonuçta, sadece sikkemek meselesi değil yani...

-Bir geyle arkadaş olman pek de mümkün değil o zaman...

-Çok zor, arkadaşlık nedir? Bir şeyleri paylaşacaksın, dertleşeceksin! Bunların ne derdi var ki? Ya da benim hayatımı nasıl anlasınlar ki... Ben nelerle boğuşuyorum sonuçta, üniversiteyi kazanamadım, iş yok, askere gidecek miyim falan, onlar göt sik derdindeler, Paris'e mi gitsem, ananın amına mı gitsem...

-Bu kadar hazetmediğin tiplerle mahremiyetini paylaşmak da zor olmalı tabi...

-(gülüyor) O başka, ben işin o taraflarını hiç düşünmüyorum, aldığım zevke bakıyorum, bu ülkenin derdini ben mi çözeceğim... Hem ayrı dünyaların insanları olmak başka işe engel değil sonuçta...

-Peki senin bu işlerle haşır neşir olduğunu kimler biliyor Ahmet haricinde,

-Kimse... Hiç kimse bilmiyor, zaten Ahmet'in de ağzı çok sıkıdır, o da yusuf yusuf sonuçta, duyulursa ona da bok... (gülüyor)

-Şüphelenen de mi yok?

-Ya babam falan soruyor bazen sana para nereden geliyor diye... Ufak tefek işler yapıyoruz, erkek adam işsiz kalmaz falan diyorum..

-Anlasalar?

-Ya bunu kabul etmeleri imkansız sonuçta, beni de ibne yapacaklar falan diye ya da esrara alıştırlar sonra da sikerler diye çok korkarlar...

-Peki hiç mi tipi düzgün arkadaşın yok tavsiye edebileceğin,

-Ben söylemiyorum kimseye, sonra duyulur ya, tutamazsın, ağız sonuçta bu!

-Arkadaşların nasıl görüyorlar geyleri,

-Herkes biliyorlar sonuçta, biz Kasımpaşa çocuğuyuz, herkes ilkokuldan beri Taksim'de... Böyle bir muhabbet olmaz zaten, arada birisi ibneleri ya da travestileri falan sikse de konuşulmaz bu uluorta...

-Niye övünmez misiniz işte şöyle yaptım falan diye...

-Ya yok bu işlere bulaşana iyi gözle bakmazlar burada, bugün yaparsan yarın da yaptırırın derler yani.. Anlatamazsın ben sadece sikiyorum falan diye, zaten biliyorlar sonuçta mahallede falan delikanlı olduğumuzu, ama bunu kabul etmez kimse, onun için sırdır bu, zaten geberene kadar da ibne yapacak değilim, bir işe gireyim, gider ben... (gülüyor)

AYKUT

13 Mart Pazar sabahı, 3.30. Benim evim, salondayız, siyah kot ve dar beyaz body içinde, bira içmek istedi, yok dedim, mecburen içtiği bir kahveden, ve yediği tosttan sonra, çay içiyor, sigara içiyor... *DejaVu*'da tanıştık, daha doğrusu ben yine konuşacak biri için bakınırken garson Ömer'e sordum, o da hem en güvenilir, hem en konuşkan hem de en tecrübelilerden biri olarak Aykut'u önerdi, ama ikna etmemin güç olabileceğini söyledi. Ömer bizi tanıştırap, ödev yaptığımı söyledi, Aykut pek de ilgilenmiş gözükmedi.. Ben bana yaşadıklarını anlatmasının mümkün olup olmadığını söyleyip hafta içi gündüz Taksim'de buluşmamızı önerdiğimde, reddetti, ancak bu gece istersem gelebileceğini ama bunun da ücretli olduğunu söyledi. Ne kadar istediğini sorduğumda 50 milyon+taksi dedi. Ben de bunu vermemin mümkün olmadığını, basit bir öğrenci olduğumu söyledim. "Sen bilirsin," deyip gitti. Bir saat kadar sonra ben pek de ümit vaatetmeyen bir yığın çcoukla konuşmaya çalışıp yorgun düşmüşken, yanıma geldi ve "40 olsun, hemen gidelim, çabucak halledelim," dedi.

-Aykut bana kim olduğunu anlatır mısın?

-Nereden başlayayım?

-Nereden istersen,

-(sessizlik) 23 yaşındayım, Rize'liyim aslen. Türküm, müslümanım, erkeğim, lise 1'den terkim. Boyum 1.80, kilom 69-70. Anam var, babam var, iki de bacım var. Otomobil tamircisinde çalışıyorum altı senedir... Dört senedir rentlik yapıyorum, ama aslında normalim, evlenmeyi düşünüyorum bu sene, para biriktiriyorum, bir tane araba almak istiyorum... Budur olayım benim!

-Rize'de mi, burada mı doğdun?

-Rize, ben üç yaşındayken Gebze'ye gelmişler babamlar, baya bir zamandır da Büyüktepe'de, şimdiki evdeyiz.

-Büyüktepe neresi oluyor tam olarak?

-(gülüyor) Sen şimdi Büyükdere'yi bilirsin değil mi?

-Evet biliyorum tabi canım,

-İşte onun tepesi, arkaları yani, ama baya uzak aslında...

-Hımmm anladım, yazın Sarıyer kapalıyken Kilyos yoluna oralardan çıkmıştık,

-Aynen...

-Tamirhane nerede?

-Sarıyer'de..

-Ne kadar çalışıyorsun, günde kaç saat,

-Sabah dokuz, akşam altı genelde, ama iş fazla olursa daha da kalabiliyoruz...

-Hafta içi mi sadece,

-Yok cumartesileri de gidiyorum ben on iki falan gibi gidip beş-altı gibi çıkıyorum duruma göre...

-Pazar?

-Yok, sadece özel bir iş varsa ustam gelir, biz gitmeyiz, pazarları kapalı normalde...

-Ne kadar alıyorsun?

-Özel bir durum yoksa beş yüz...

-Sigortalı mısın?

-Yok bea... (gülüyor) yok ortağım bir de dükkana...

-Gündüzleri dükkandasın, akşamları ne yapıyorsun nasıl geçer bir gecen...

-Zaten çok yorgun oluyorum, yıkıyorum eve gelince, yemek yiyorum, televizyon falan, uyurum bir de ben bol bol...

-Güzelliğın ordan demek ki (ben de gülüyorum artık!)

-(gülüyor) Yok yaa! Allah vergisi, bir de lazız, afedersin!

-Her hengı bir şey yapıyor musun daha iyi gözükme için?

-Tıraş olurum düzenli, asla aynı kıyafeti giymem iki gün üst üste.. Akşamları çıkarken muhakkak parfüm sıkırım.. Göğsümde kıl yok, karnımdakileri makasla inceltiyorum, daha alta da hep jilet... (eliyle kesme işareti yapıyor)

-Bacaklarını da mı?

-(Gülüyor) Evet evet hatta ağdaya da gidiyorum mahalledeki karırlarla.. Olur mu lan, kime ne bacağımdakilerden...

-E karnını niye yapıyorsun o zaman?

-Temizlik yaa.. Bunun siki var, teri var... Tümnden almıyorum zaten, inceltiyorum sadece haftada bir...

-Göğsünde de olsaydı,

-Alırdım o zaman jiletle...

-O da mı temizlik?

-Hem öyle, hem de zaten tüsüz her zaman daha iyi, sonuçta futbolcular bile alıyorlar yani...

-Ağda daha iyi değil mi, hem geciktirir,

-Erkeğe ağda olmaz, kitabımızda yok!

-Erkeklik kitabı mı? (ben yine gülüyorum galiba ☹)

-Evet delikanlılık kitabı tabi (gülüyor)

-Spor falan yapıyor musun?

-Evet, her gün bizim dükkanda yapıyorum, kaldır indir...

-Cidden ondan mı düzgün vücudun? (Aykut gayet worked-out duruyor)

-Tabi ya, haa bir de ben her gün yürürüm Tepe'den Sarıyer'e... O da acayip kasıyor...

-Peki arkadaşlarınla falan nerelere takılıyorsunuz?

-(sessizlik) Açıkçası öyle pek takılacak zamanım yok benim ya işteyim, ya evde uyuyorum, veya televizyon seyrediyorum ya da, başka işler peşindeyim (göz kırpyor) Ama onu da takılma sayarsan söyleyeyim, genelde DejaVu, bazen Tek Yön, yazın park (Taksim Parkı), bazen pazarları Sultanahmet... (gülüyor)

-Bütün piyasa bu kadar mı?

-Ayıp ettin.. Ben bir yıl kadar saunaya da gittim mesela ilk başladığımda...

-Aquarius mu?

-Tabi tabi...

-Neden bıraktın?

-Çok pis bir iş o yaa, (sessizlik) mesela ben şimdi keyfim için yapıyorum, orada köle gibisin, sadece cumartesi-pazar giderdim ben, önce hep beraber bütün saunayı yıkartık, öküz gibi çalışmışım zaten bütün hafta, bir de beleşe oraları temizlerdim, sonra gelen tipler hep çok kötü, pis pis herifler, habire seni sikmeye kalkarlar, bir taraftan Mahmud yapışır her dakika götüne, ondan koru arkanı.. Biz mayoyla çalışalım derdik kabul etmezdi, sikim kadar bir peştemal verirdi, o da paso düşer, dal taşak meydana her dakika...

-Hep saunadakiler önce Mahmud'a verir derler...

-Doğru demişler de kimse bir şey verdiğinden değil de, o yapar yani zorla.. Sen şimdi beni de yaptı zannedersin.. (gülüyor) Oğlum bak bir şey söyleyeyim mi, bu alemde Mahmud kadar oğlancı, götçü puşt yoktur, ama onun elinden çıkanlar da işte bu kadardır (elini açıp kapatıyor). Kaç defa ağzını burnunu kırdılar onun, 14-15 yaşında çocukların ağabeyleri falan... Ama bana elini bile süremedi, bir kere sıkıştırdı bir vurduğum iki seksen uzadı lavuk!

-Şimdi kapanmış galiba son polis olayından sonra, gerçi ben bile biliyorum kaçınıcı bu...

-(gülüyor) Sanki sokağın ucundaki karakol da Aquarius'u Star'dan öğrendi ha... Mahmud komseri aylığa bağladıydı bir ara... Sonbahara açılır yine, o zaten memnundur, bu sayede bilmeyen bir kaç salak da duymuş oldu!

-Saunada nasıldı işler, anlatsana biraz...

-(sessizlik) Ya çocuklar on iki gibi gelmek zorundalar, işte temizlik falan her yer parlatılır, iki-üç gibi müşteriye açılır ama esas gece tabii... Bir büyük hol var, çocukların durduğu, müşterilerin de gelince ilk girdikleri yer, seçmece mekanı yani... İşte orda mesela ben şimdi gittim, eğer hemen birini beğenirsem gider yanına otururum, yok bir bakayım önce ne var ne yok dersem, gider bir yere otururum, zaten en hevesli olanlar yavaş yavaş gelirler yanıma...

-Ne yapılacağına nasıl karar veriliyor,

-Sen işte soracaksın aktif misin, pasif misin, ona göre... Ben epeydir gitmedim ama haberim var tabii nedir piyasası diye, işte herhalde ağıza vermek 30, sikmek 50-60, ağzına almak 75-80, götünü siktirmek de 100'den aşağı değildir...

-Tipten tipe fark etmiyor mu, hep sabit mi ücretler...

-Genelde evet, güzellik yarışması değil ki bu... (gülüyor)

-En çok ne istenirdi?

-Duruma göre, eşcinseller benimkini ağızlarına almak isterlerdi, bir de oğlancı herifler vardır, onlar direk göt ister...

-Sen yaptın mı hiç?

-Yok.. Bana uymaz o işler, ama sauna tayfası çoğunlukla yaptırır yani, çok daha fazla para, adam Mahmud'a verdikten sonra bedavaya, parayla niye vermesin ki?

-Söylüyorlar mıydı peki?

-Yok ya hiç söylerler mi? Hep "siktim lavuğu," muhabbeti. Yoksa ben biliyorum aslında kim kimi yapıyor... Mesela bana gelip "sadece sikeriz," diyen adamlar vardı çok paralı, mesela 100 ise o 200 verecek, ben istemezdim, gider başka bir çocukla girerdi odaya. E şimdi ben bilmiyorum mu o herifin o çocuğu siktiğini?

-Niye söylenmiyor ki sonuçta bir erkekle yattıktan sonra ha sikmişsin ha siktirmişsin değil mi?

-Yok işte öyle... Sizde öyle de, bizde bozarlar adamı, ortada çevirirler bir güzel...

-Kaç kişi olur bir günde?

-Hiç belli olmaz, mevsime göre, aybaşına göre, senin tipine göre, yaşına göre, ne yapıp ne yapmadığına göre bazen hiç bazen üç hatta dört.. Hiç belli olmaz...

-Sen şimdi saunada değilsin, nasıl yapıyorsun peki?

-İşte barlardan çıkıyor, veya yazın Sultanahmet'te turistlerden, arada internetten...

-Sen ne yapıyorsun, nedir kurallar ücret falan, beni müşteri kabul et...

-Ediyorum zaten.. Valla benim ki temiz iş, öpüşme sevişme yok, ağza veririm veya sikerim, kimsenin sikini tutmam, kimseye de arkamı elletmem, sado-mazoya girmem, gruba girmem, sevmem öyle şeyler... Ama karı da olursa ona olur bak (gülüyor)

-Ücret?

-Sikmeli 100, sikmesiz 70. Yabancıysa taksi parası da isterim,

-Türkler vermiyor mu?

-Yok vermezler, zaten bizim burda kimse bu kadar para da vermez, bunlar benim istediklerim, biraz da şanım olsun diye yani...

-Pazarlık oluyor yani...

-E herhalde burası Türkiye! Hıyar alırken bile pazarlık yapıyorsun, bizim hıyar bedava değil ya!

-Neler etkili pazarlıkta, neye göre belirliyorsun fiyatı?

-(sesizlik) En önemlisi yaş! Yaş arttıkça para da artar, kimse kusura bakmasın! Hem ibnelerde para artıyor hem de tokmakçı bulma ümitleri azalıyor, o yüzden balamoz [yaşlı eşcinsel] geldi mi, paso 100 dolar, ne koparırsan...

-Gençse,

-O iş biraz yaş, ben açıkçası pek tercih etmiyorum, çünkü para vermek istemiyorlar, yediremiyorlar kendilerine parayla kıçlarını yaptırtmayı, biz hala güzeliz tribi falan var... Bir de yani genç sike sike alışıyorsun bu illete, sonra bırakmak daha zor olur...

-Zevk alıyorsun yani,

-Niye almayayım ki, ben erkek değil miyim?! Kim olsa almaz mı?

-Kızlarla yaptın mı?

-Arada travestileri yapıyoruz bedavaya, tam makara onlar bize bedava biz onlara, kalan herkese parayla! Bazıları hakikaten taş oluyorlar, ben 2-3 defa da orospuya gittim. Biliyorum yani karı yapmanın dümenini de...

-Nasıl iyi miydi?

-Vallaha ya benim siktiklerim orospuluktan folloş olmuşlar, ya da amcık sonuçta yumuşak yani, göt gibi dar değil... Ama onda da meme var, biliyor musun? O herşeye bedel! Ama benim için genç kıvrak bir oğlanla, bir karının farkı yok zevk açısından...

-Ama sadece sikmek için,

-Dedim ya başka bir şey olamaz, isterse Erman Toroğlu gelsin...

-Peki yaştan başka ne var pazarlıkta?

-Adam gibi adamsa her zaman daha az verir, çünkü onlara geyler de gider bedavaya, icabında herifi de sikerler, tam muamele yani... Eğer daha oynak karı gibi bir şeyse daha çok isterim çünkü geyler onları istemezler, sonuçta kapak kapağa... (gülüyor) Bir de yani daha ağırbaşlı herifler bizi pek de beğenmezler veya sikmek isterler, o da olmadığı için... Yani ben digil [versatile] bir rent olmadığım için, ama öyle olsam ona göre de değişiyor fiyat, söylediğim gibi yani... Bir de tabi gelen tipin kalitesi var, rentin yakışıklılığı var fiyatı arttıran, eğer herif çok çirkinse daha çok verecek, alternatifini yok yani! Güzelse, manken gibi çocuklar da veriyorlar bazen, turistler felan, e onlara daha ucuza da olur, bazen de yağlayacaksın bizimkini, ödül gibi! Ama genelde turistlerden daha çok alırız 50 dolar, 60-70 dolar verirler...

-Başka bir şeyler alır mısın, para yerine veya parayla beraber?

-Ne gibi?

-Bilmem, parfüm, kıyafet...

-Parfümünü sıkardım sabah ben, hiç kaçmaz yani... Bir kere bir herif bana saatini vermişti, bir turist heriften de ayakkabı almıştım, orijinal Nike. Ama ben bu işi hediye için değil, para için yapıyorum...

-Parfümün önemi ne?

-Bilmem, hep sıkarlar ama... Dönünce Büyüktepe'ye herkes sorar "vaaay, artiz ne kokuyorsun böyle," falan... Sonuçta benim alamadığım bir şey, benim etrafımdaki hiç kimsenin de...

-Habersiz de alır mısın?

-(sessizlik)

-(kaşlarımı kaldırıyorum)

-(gülüyor) Valla yalan yok! Hiç bir şey almam ibnelerden ama parfümünü alırım bak uygun yakalarsam, bir de gerçekten beğenirsem... Karı gibi de oluyor çünkü onlarınkiler bazen... Bak parasını görsem almam, ama parfümünü affetmem, bir daha alsın ibne!

-Diğer rentleri tanıyor musun, sonuçta bu kadar zamandır içindesin?

-E yani bildiklerim var tabi ama öyle muhtar gibi herkesin kaydını da tutmuyorum...

-Nasıl aranız genelde,

-(sessizlik) Bir piramid gibi, en tepesinde ben varım bir de bir iki tip daha var.. En eskiler olarak, hala bu işlerin içinde olan...

-Diğerlerine ne oldu?

-Ya evlenince bir süre sonra bırakırsın, veya doğru düzgün bir işe falan girersen.. Ama mesela Yakup vardı Hollanda'lı bir ibne buna aşık oldu oraya aldırdı, herif öyle yaşıyor şimdi orada evlendi falan galiba... Değişik yani milletin hayatı...

-Tecrübeden başka ne belirliyor piramidin hiyerarşisini?

-Yaş... Karılarla olan tecrübelerin, yani hiç karı siktin mi sikmedin mi, veya devamlı takıldığın bir kız var mı, nişanlın falan, çünkü o zaman sen gerçek erkek oluyorsun, aferdersin siktirisen bile, belli para için yaptığın, kimse bu ibne mi acaba demez yani, sonra (sessizlik) işte... kaç kişiyle oldun, kaç para aldın, veya nasıl bilinirsin bu piyasada, aletin büyük mü, iyi siker misin, geç boşalıyorsan süper, veya hem emmeye hem gömmeye gelir misin, o mesela genelde dandik bir şöret, sonra... Uyuşturucu ile hapla aran var mı? Kullanıyorsan kaçış yok, bir adım geridesin, kullanmadan kaldıysan helal olsun, istediğin gibi tafra atabilirsin herkese... Bar sahibi ile, sonra garsonlarla aran nasıl, ona da bakar biraz bu işler, sonuçta bize işlerin büyük çoğunluğunu garson oğlanlar bulur... İşte bu akşam Ömer yaptı mesela seni bana... Haa, ama bence en önemlisi bu işte gözün kara olacak biraz.. Korkaklığa geldi mi, erkeklik olmaz. Bu işin kitabı gözü karalık, ne kadar ibne de olursa olsun sonuçta, erkek sikmek, kitabın yazmadığı iş yani... Bir kere diğer rentleri döven arkası kuvvetli olan, hafif böyle çeteleşen gruplaşanlar her zaman biraz daha sözünü geçirir, yine aynı şekilde diğer rentleri sikersen de ona göre daha kuvvetli olursun...

-Nasıl yani, rentler diğer rentleri mi sikiyorlar?

-E herhalde! Bu kadar ödev yapıyorsun haberin yok mu? Gerektiğinde dayayıp sikeceksin gerektiğinde ağzını burnunu kıracaksın.. Yoksa neyine adam oldun? Önünde tezgahı olan erkek değil burada!

-Sen hiç yaptın mı?

-Yaptım tabi. Bu kadar senedir nasıl böyle kaldım zannediyorsun, sikemezsen sikerler, e ben de hiç çizdirmediğime göre (gülüyor)

-Nasıl yaptın?

-Yaa mesela bir gece bizim Ahmet Ağabey'ler var Gültepe'de oturan, onların evinde alem vardı, gece öyle yattık herkes bir yerlerde.. Benim yattığım koltukta da Can diye yeni bir çocuk var, küçük benden baya.. İşte öyle çevirdim, böyle çevirdim, yaptım...

-Zorla mı yani?

-Zorla deme sen yine de, güzellikle, kandırdım yani... Sen şimdi bana ver, ben bir bakayım nasıl durum ona göre sana ayarlarım müşteri falan dedim, kardeşim olsun yani benim...

-O ne kardeşliği ya?

-Bana bağlı bir çocuk oldu yani... Bağlı derken benim gözettiğim, ilgilendiğim icabında koruduğum kolladığım falan...

-Anlıyorum, evet... Başka da var mı öyle kardeşin?

-Var bir yığın ama hepsi bu yoldan geçmiyor tabi... Bir keresinde de tehdit edip de yaptım... Cihangir'de bir herife gitti, vermiş tabi, ben zaten tahmin etmiştim, sonra öğrendim, dedim ya bana da veririsin, ya da sen düşün, o gece tıpış tıpış verdi...

-Peki böyle bir ilişki mi var aranızda rentlerin, yani kim kimi yaparsa üzerinden...

-E yani tabi var, sadece sikmek değil ama dövmek de var, bir çocuk mesela senin bir kardeşini tehdit ediyor veya hakkında iftira çıkartıyor, o zaman bar çıkışında döversin yani, mesela bana kimsenin uzanamaması biraz da manyak kavga etmemle de bağlı.. Göze alamaz kimse...

-Geylere hiç uyguladın mı böyle şeyler, fiziksel kuvvet falan,

-Yok bak asla, bu kadar senedir parayla adam sikiyorum en ufak bir vukuatım olmamıştır, zaten herkes de bilir beni.. İyi sikersin daha çok para alırsın icabında, ama soygun, gasp, hiç tasvip etmediğim şeyler benim, yakışmaz da erkek adama zaten karşıdaki erkek sayılmaz ki, ondan güçlüsün o belli bir şey...

-Oturup konuşur musun geylerle?

-Ne zaaman?

-Seks yapmadan önce, sonra, başka zamanlarda?

-Ne konuşacağım ki... Onlarla ibne muhabbeti yapacak değilim...

-Canım illa ibne muhabbeti mi olur, onların hayatı, senin hayatın?

-(sessizlik) Değişir yani.. Bazen oluyor tabi sonuçta insanız hepimiz, dertleniyorsun açılıyorsun, zaten onlar genelde razı olurlar dinlemeye, ama hep bir uçurum var ya arada, ne desem sana bir iş bulayım derler, oku okulunu bitir derler.. Oysa benim bir şikayetim yok yani, çok şükür (sessizlik) Yani tabi ben de isterdim daha iyi bir mahallede evim olsun, daha düzgün bir işim olsun, bir güzel kız arkadaşım olsun... Ama utanmıyorum da bunlardan.. Geyler genelde iyi insanlar, özellikle de turistler, beni çok beğeniyorlar, yaptığım her harekete tapıyorlar.. Tuhaf yani... İnsan erkek olup erkeklikten bu kadar uzaklaşıp, nasıl böyle sırf erkek diye birine bu kadar vurulur ben anlamıyorum harbiden...

-Aşık da oluyorlardır onlar,

-Off hem ne biçim yaa! Benim aklım fikrim almıyor, ya sen bir erkeksin, atıyorum gelmişsin 40 yaşına boğaz gören evin var işin var, ona göre bir çevren var... İşte kitap mitap okumuş, kültür, muhabbet... Her şey kıyak yani.. Ama işte, ibne... Bana para verip kendini yaptırıyor, ondan sonra sabaha kadar ağlıyor beni bırakma ne istersen veririm diye. Sırf ben yakışıklı çocuğum, delikanlı çocuğum ya! Demiyor bunun anası var babası var, cehennemnin bir ucunda yaşıyor, milletinin arabasının altına yatıyor her gün üç kuruş para için, ben bunun hayatını ne anlarım ne bilirim demiyor. Bundan bana bir şey olmaz benim dengim değil demiyor, yarın bir gün karı kız ister, evlenmek ister demiyor. Koskaca adamlar karı gibi peşimde koşup, mesaj atmalar, aramalar... Gerçi çok şükür akıllandım artık numaramı vermiyorum! (gülüyor)

-Peki sen hiç bir şey hissettin mi?

-(sessizlik) Yok hayır... Ben kadınları seviyorum, bu işi sadece parası için yapıyorum, benim ikinci işim bu.. O kadar başka bir boyutu yok, olamaz da.. Benim içim sadece dişiler için.. Erkek para için sikilir hadi bilemedin abazanlıktan sikilir. O da gelir geçer zaten... Gençlikde insana para lazım, tecrübe lazım, ben dört yılda her şeyi gördüm, İstanbul'u ben gördüm, benim anam babam ne görmüş? "İstanbul seni mahvetmiş," o hesap benimkisi...

-Kimler biliyor bu ikinci işini?

-Dışardaki Aykut'u bilen tanıyan hiç kimse bilmiyor. Rent Aykut'u tanıyanlar da esas normal Aykut'u hiç bilmiyorlar. Arada sınır var yani.. Kimse aşamaz o sınırı, ben çizdim ben bile aşamam!

-Farzedelim ki ailen veya işyerindekiler öğrendiler, nasıl olur tepkileri?

-Ailem kahrolur tabi.. (sessizlik) Ne diyeceksin ben ibneleri sikip onların evlerine gidip paralarını mı alıyorum diyeceksin... Olmaz öyle şey, büyük utanç kaynağı olurum, bütün sülalemize... İşten de hemen atarlar beni.. Zaten en büyük korkum siktiğim bir ibnenin arabasını falan getirmesi dükkana, gerçi onların pek arabası olmaz taksiye binerler daha çok ama... (sessizlik)

-Son bir şey sorucam Aykut, biliyorum yoruldun konuşmaktan ama bunu kaçırdım galiba ben, sen nasıl başladın bu işe...

-(gölüyor) Evet ya anlatmadım deęil mi, ya aslında çok da anlatacak bir şey yok, Dört sene önce ben bir gün Kavak'ta denize giriyordum, ibne kılıklı bir herif gelip, ateş istedi verdim, gittim baktı, denize girdim çıktım baktı baktı, ben de süper abazayım ya her daim, sonunda kabinlerde yanıma gelip avuçladı... Orada ben yaptım bunu.. Sonra bana dedi ki, Taksim'de Neo var, oraya git para da alırsın bunun için, işte öyle...

-Sen Neo'ya da gittin yani,

-Tabi gittim ben mesela saunaya ordan öğrenip de başladım...

-Peki son olarak evlenmeyi planlıyorum demiştin, belli mi kız?

-Kız memleketten, zaten ben de dönmeyi düşünüyorum, nasılsa mesleğim var elimde, hiç bir yerde aç kalmam çok şükür, orada her şey ucuz, yaşar gideriz.. Bu işler de sıkı artık zaten...

sparrow:

[slmss](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine kişisini web kamerası gönderiliyor uygulamasını başlatmaya davet ettiniz. Lütfen bir yanıt bekleyin veya beklemedeki davete İptal (Alt+Q) uygulayın.

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine sizi web kamerası gönderiliyor uygulamasını başlamak için davet ediyor. Daveti Kabul Et (Alt+C) veya Reddet (Alt+D) istiyor musunuz?

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
merhaba

Kişinizin web kamerasını görüntüleme isteğiniz reddedildi çünkü aynı anda AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine sizi web kamerasını görüntülemeye davet etmişti. Lütfen bekleyen tüm web kamerası davetlerini iptal edin ve kişinizden size yeniden davet göndermesini isteyin.

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine, web kamerası gönderiliyor uygulamasını başlatma davetinizi reddetti.

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine sizinle web kamerası görüntülemeyi durdurdu.

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine sizi web kamerası görüntüleniyor uygulamasını başlamak için davet ediyor. Daveti Kabul Et (Alt+C) veya Reddet (Alt+D) istiyor musunuz?

web kamerası görüntüleniyor uygulamasını başlatma davetini kabul ettiniz.

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
sende açarmısın camı

web kamerası gönderiliyor uygulamasını başlatma davetini kabul ettiniz.

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
gördüm seni

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
çok şekersin

sparrow:

[saol](#)

sparrow:

[cidden para için mi yatıyorsun birileriyle?](#)
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
yeri geliyor parayla
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
yeri geliyor zevkine
sparrow:
[hımm](#)
sparrow:
[buları sormam rahatsız etmiyor umarım seni](#)
sparrow:
[merak ediyorum](#)
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
ama seninle zevkine yatarım
sparrow:
[nerde yaşıyorsun](#)
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
hayır
sparrow:
[saol](#)
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
arkadaşlarla ev tuttuk cihangirde
sparrow:
[hımm](#)
sparrow:
[nie ki](#)
sparrow:
[ailen burda değil mi?](#)
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
hayır değil
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
ailem sakaryada
sparrow:
[çalışıyor musun burda peki](#)
sparrow:
[hani başka iş var mı?](#)
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet
sparrow:
[ben okuyorum](#)
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
özel bir güvenlik firmasıdayım
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
security
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
sparrow:
[beni de korur musun](#)
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
neden olmasın
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
korurum tabiki
sparrow:
[internetten mi buluyorsun beraber oldukalrını](#)
sparrow:
[saol](#)
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
genelde barlardan
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
internetten çok nadir
sparrow:
[hangi bar](#)

sparrow:

[bar mı var öle gidip birilerinin para evrdiği?](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
queen barbahçe prive

sparrow:

[bu arada ismini sormadım haal](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
serdar

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
u

sparrow:

[alp](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
memnun oldum alp

sparrow:

[yanlış anlama da](#)

sparrow:

[bend e](#)

sparrow:

[birileri gelip sana tanışalım mı diyor sen nasıl olayı paraya çeviriyorsun?](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
zaten nicimde yazıyor

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
geliyorlar özelime

sparrow:

[yok barda?](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
ücretimi soruyorlar

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
barda

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
yanlarına çağırırlar

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
veya anımıza gelirler

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
ateş isteme bahanesiyle

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
sohbete başlanıre

sparrow:

[yani biliyorlar mı senin rent olduğunu bardakiler](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
tabiki

sparrow:

[yanınız..kalabalıksınız yani](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
bilirler

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet

sparrow:

[garsonlar felan mı?](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
kalabalığız

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
tabi

sparrow:

[ev arkadaşların da mı](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
garsonlarda bilir

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:

onlarda rent
sparrow:
hjadi ya
sparrow:
en ne safım
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
yok ya
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
ne diyorsun
sparrow:
sen de şirinsin
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
tşk ederim
sparrow:
nasıl başladı peki para olayı
sparrow:
yani erkeklerden hoşlanıyor musun?
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
canımcım
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
fazla
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
hoşlanıyorum
sparrow:
bunları konuşmak seni rahatsız etmiyor umarım
sparrow:
seni tanımaya çalışıyorum
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
hayır
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
etmiyor
sparrow:
ne kadar alıyorsun peki ücret?
sparrow:
bende para yok da
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
yerine ve kişisine göre değişiyor
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
en az 45 den başıyor
sparrow:
yaşına göre?
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
yaşına göre almıyorum
sparrow:
bu rakam yaşlandıkça müşteri artıyor sanırım?
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:

sparrow:
ybenden ne kadar isticen
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
senden hiç istemicem
sparrow:
nie ki
sparrow:
ben de müşteriyim

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
çok vermek istiyorsan

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
bi 20 ytl alırım

sparrow:

çok ayıp

sparrow:

şeyi merak ediyorum

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
sen söyledin ama

sparrow:

nasıl para almaya başladın

sparrow:

yani biri gelip para mı teklif etti yoksa sen benim tipim iyi bu işi parayla mı yapayım dedin?

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:

ilk işimde parayla çıkmıyordum işe gittik birisiyle yattık kalktık para verdi bana buda
hoşuma gitti bende parayla çıkmaya başladım

sparrow:

nası yaa

sparrow:

al çok hoşum gittin para mı vereyim dedi?

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet şekere

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
aynen

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
öyle oldu

sparrow:

kaç yaşındaydı?

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
32

sparrow:

sen?

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
21

sparrow:

para yerine hediye felan da oluyor mu..sana pasta yapsam

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
olur

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
neden olmasın

sparrow:

başkari hediye felanla oluyor mu..ne bileyim güzel bi rest.da akşam yemeği..ya da parfüm?

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
alıyor tabiki

sparrow:

ama bu parayla geçinmiyorsun di mi..yani kendi işin var sonuçta?

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
tabiki

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
kendi işim var

sparrow:

bu parayı biriktiriyor musun

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet

sparrow:

hımm

sparrow:

oki

sparrow:

ilersi için sanırım

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
tabiki

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
ilerisi için

sparrow:

[evlenmek felan gibi düşünceler var mı](#)

sparrow:

[yoksa kızlardan hoşlanmıyor musun](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
hayır yok

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
bekarlık sultanlık

sparrow:

[ben mesela hayatt bi kıza yüz vermem..senin gibişirin çocuklar varken](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
kızlarla işim yok olsaydı gay kanllarında olmazdım

sparrow:

[haa gaysin sen de yani](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
teşekkür ederim

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
aynen öleyim

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:

sparrow:

[ailen..bilmiyor?](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
biliyor

sparrow:

[iş arkadaşların..yani güvenlik](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
hayır

sparrow:

[gay olduğunu biliyor mu?](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
onlar bilmezler

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
iş arkadaşlarım bilmezler

sparrow:

[ailen para için sex yaptığını bilse üzülmez mi?](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
üzülür tabiki

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
üzülmez olurlarmı

sparrow:

[ne seversin sexte?](#)

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
canım xim

sparrow:

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
sınır tanımam

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
herşeyi yaparım

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
öpüşmeyi

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
yalamay

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
herşeyi

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:

aklına gelebilecek herşeyi
sparrow:
pasif de oluyor musun peki?
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
hayır
sparrow:
parasını versem
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
olmuyorum
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
hayır
sparrow:
yaa nieee...olan yok mu
sparrow:
yani 100 milyon versem 2 dakikalık acıya ne olacak
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
bilmiyorum
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
vardır ama ben olmam
sparrow:
etrafındaki rentler hep aktif mi?
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
hani paran yoktu senin?
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet hep aktifler
sparrow:
yaa sanki aktif olucam
sparrow:
lafın gelişi
sparrow:
merak ettim
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:

sparrow:
ben pasif olmayı seviyorum
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
anlaım
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
oke
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
o zaman sorun yok
sparrow:
yani istesen pasif de olurdu ama di mi
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
tabiki olurdu
sparrow:
ii
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet ne diyorsun
sparrow:
ne zamanları müsaitsin
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:

sparrow:
yatalım mı
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
olur neden olmasın
sparrow:
hafta içi çalışıyor musun
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:

evet
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
çalışıyorum
sparrow:
senin ev arkadaşların da rent mi
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet canım
sparrow:
yoksa eve gitmemin mahsuru olur mu
sparrow:
onlar da güzel mi senin gibi
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
hangi eve
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
benim evemi
sparrow:
siz nasıl arkadaş olup ev tuttunuz ki
sparrow:
daha önceden tanışıyor muydunuz?
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
2 senedir tanışıyorduk
sparrow:
barlarda felan mı?
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet
sparrow:
yani rentlik muhabbetine mi tanıştınız
sparrow:
hımm
sparrow:
ee ii
sparrow:
size gelsem de herkesi bi elden geçirsem
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
canımcım bizim prensibim,iz var eve kesinlikle kimseyi getirmiyoruz
sparrow:
aa öle mi
sparrow:
hımmm
sparrow:
ii tabi
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
evet
sparrow:
o zaman bana gelirsin?
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
nerdesin sen peki
sparrow:
beşiktaş
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
neresinde

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine ile web kamerası görüntülemeyi durdurdunuz.

AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
neresinde
AKşam oldu hüzünlendim Ben yine Hasret kaldım gözlerinin Rengine:
bjk nin

[1] Some of the powerful elite wants to transform İstanbul, which they designated as a chic world city as appropriate to its reputation, from struggles of benefit, sharp inequality, and its *varoş* to a city like a diamond that all of its stones are painted and all of its streets flowered. This elite is bored by the dumb of the *varoş* who are out of circulation, hides themselves looking at the city from its corners, and reproducing disregarding the reactions. Having many unreachable hills and unconquerable castles, and reveals itself to *varoş* people only in *bayram* days, İstanbul presents its compatriot status only for fame or money. Kinky kids, thief youngsters, and their crowded families that cannot fit into *varoş* and become frequently visible do not have an anxiety to prove their İstanbulite identities. They know that they will not fit with this city even if they are ameliorated.

[2] Metrosexuality transformed even the notion of *delikanlılık* in *varoş*. A new type of *delikanlılık* emerged: Neo-*delikanlı*. This type differs itself from the former *delikanlıs* by appearance. Hair is too much sprayed, sleeves of the pant put into Adidas Tygun to show the sneakers, preferring to faulty jeans of famous trademarks, buying second-hand cellular phones with cameras, setting musical taste with copied CDs. The transformation is complete with one missing thing: Earrings. *Delikanlıs* put fake earrings without piercing their ears because it is shameful in *varoş* culture. It is an ambition to be cool and it does not matter this coolness is balding, second-hand, fake, faulty, or copied... What does matter is breaking the chains of *kıroluk* and be approved as MTV-child. An alternative style of *delikanlılık* emerged from cheap hair sprays, faulty jeans, second-hand cell phones, empowered automobile stereos, and Beckham posters.

[3] “The best aspect of BB is its humble and warm character. You may fancy or even contact with someone in other places, but to find someone is a really low possibility. People are more easy-going in BB. The general atmosphere is not cool but that we all know who we are. That is why I have been going to it for years.” (Ömer)

“I like BB because it is old and it has a homogenous group of patrons regarding to other places. In Barbahçe, you can see only upper-middle class, educated gays, as well as tourists. It is not a suitable place for lesbians, transvestites, rent boys, activist gays, or others. It has never been.” (Nedim)

“Indeed, it is strange, even shameful that we do not know the owner of it where we have been going to for years. We only know that managers continuously change. In fact, Barbahçe is a highly kitsch place. I think they did wrong to change its decoration and made it more minimalistic last year, because we always need somewhere like it. Because such a colorful, funny, old-looking place makes people relaxed and liberated.” (Abdullah)

[4] “Douche is a different thing. I think we hadnot seen gay life before it. Everyone, straight or gay, whom I brought to Douche is enchanted and says if Turkey houses such a gay bar, everything is possible in this country. Douche is the only bar that I am not shameful to be within it, or where I do not try to find excuses. Other gay bars are places that I would never frequent if they are not gay.” (Berkan)

“Of course, its ambiance, atmosphere, public image, are very beautiful, but I think more importantly, it is certain that you will find someone in Douche while you go to other places and cannot find anyone. I do not exactly know the reason, because it is

near Bosphorus, it is later in the morning, or it is summer. Everyone is much more relaxed, and a sex boom is experienced amongst gays. Douche did this.” (Fırat)

“On the one hand, I think it is very nice to have a diversity in bars, on the other hand, I in part resist its expensiveness and voluptuousness. Imagine going to Eminönü on 12-12:30 am, entering the bar, and drinking at least 2 or 3 beverages, and then return. This costs my weekly pocket money. But sometimes we take the first bus in the morning, at 6:30 am. It is very funny, is not it? We are coming from a gay bar, not an ordinary one, Laila of gays, in that hour of the morning...” [Ömer]

[5] “How do we meet? It is not good to go directly and talk. It might be with strangers, but not with us because everyone knows the other. Otherwise, what everybody would tell about us, in addition to everyone feels himself cooler. They would start saying this wanted me, that wanted me, I did not accept them. Afterwards, he goes to his house and sleeps alone. Then, why do you come to the bar, spending all those time and money?” (Arda)

“If I like someone, I check with whom he is together. Actually, I can understand what type of person he is by looking his friends and acquaintances. If I find the link I send him a hello. It may not be for that night, but after that night. Lesbians do this negotiation better than us because they are strangers to us in a way. Nevertheless, it is always very difficult to find someone from the bar. If you look very easy-going, you have a reputation as *kaşar* or slut. If you look cool, you cannot find anybody. There is a gridlock because there is a few people around and everyone knows each other.” (Koray)

“I am attending a university, I have no physical disabilities, maybe I am not Brad Pitt, but I am not ugly at all. I went to Douche at least 10-12 times last summer. Do you know how many boys that I slept with? Only 2. Gays that know each other do not want to have sex, actually everyone knows each other. Who remains? Tourists, gays from other cities, and new recruitments. How many people can be recruited in a year?” (Atıl)

[6] “To find someone is a problem, to find someone suitable for you is almost impossible. First of all I do not have an interest for *varoş* boys. This means excluding a serious group at the beginning. They always say I would be the active part, I am not a gay, etc. Like a nightmare! I am a bottom-versatile, but, I do not ask it directly, nor I answer such a question. I mean do all of us gays?” (Abdullah)

“I am a little bit relaxed because I am versatile. I can be active or passive according top situation. As far as I like him. However I cannot have sex with a dirty guy with muddy shoes just because he is cute. He should dance properly, what he is drinking is also important. This is not buying a body, we are being together with a total guy.” (Deniz)

“I cannot stand with gays. Of course I call myself gays in terms of politics, or I was totally out even to my teachers in the university, and I told some people in my workplace. I am reading, writing, etc. Everything will be okay! What about the femininity of our gays? I do not have sex with gays in the bar who went to a coiffeur before bar, using heavy perfumes, exposing his designer t-shirt or sneakers. This is not gayness. Being active or being passive is rather different, but first of all you should be a man.” (Kaya)

[7] “Then we were 16 years old and we read Cute from the newspaper, “Gays opened a Café”. We lived in Kartal in that time. I and Songül, my buddy, decided and came to Taksim. It was ten in the morning and we thought it was very early to go to the café. We went to a movie, had a lunch, however we did not understand anything neither from the movie nor the lunch. We were pondering how the place looks like, are there transvestites, or worse the police, what will we do if our families discover that, etc. At last, we dared to knock the door at 2:00 pm. A smiling girl opened the door and said hello. We entered and sat down a table. There were 7 or 8 tables and half were occupied although it looks empty. We relaxed after some time, stayed more than 3 hours, but could not talk with anyone. We listened to talks around us and learnt too much. After that day we went there every week.” (Kaya)

[8] “First of all, I ought to say that I do not connect to the Internet for chat but to find someone for sex. At the beginning, I think something from where he lives in. I look for more masculine, tough guys because I am a more feminine homosexual. Of course, finding more masculine types in *varoş* districts is easier. I sometimes have hook-ups from Beşiktaş or Kadıköy, but they are exceptional, straights! In fact, there is no danger of femininity or more importantly, passivity in a boy from *varoş*. The second point is about whether he calls himself as gay or not. If he says to me that he was gay, I closed the window immediately. I do not search for one of us, if it was the situation I would go to the bar like everyone. Like a women’s club! Anyway, he must reply my question as “what does it mean, be careful about your questions” or in a cooler way, “I am a man”. If he passes this test, I ask whether he only wants to fuck me or he engages into lovemaking. Sure it is also about the educational level, but my taste is the ones who declare only to fuck. If he says “sometimes I make love” I refuse him by saying that “is it possible for a man to make love?”. This is the rule of the game, if he wants to be with me, coming from *varoş* to my house in Erenköy to fuck me, he should be a real man. Otherwise, why do I belittle myself, endeavour to find a real man, I would better stay at home and sleep!” [Zeki]

[9] “Look at our cell phones. They now should be full of boys to have sex. Look at us. We are young, beautiful, we have money, we have houses, good schools, and we are nice types. So we should not stay alone, but where? I have only three or four potential boys in my cell phone; imagine how many of them are fuckable? I swear I can write more than one book in the time I spend to find a hook-up.” (Hamdi)

“I had a fuckbuddy with whom I have regular sex but share nothing in terms of emotions or sociality. I am 29 now and this was my only fuckbuddy in my life even though I had been looking for it for ten years. On the one hand, our gays are very modern, they demand rights and visibility. But, on the other hand, they are really conservative. They only dream about becoming couples. Is it that easy to be together with someone, can it come by saying? When they cannot form couples they do not have sex. What should I understand from this, they are like young girls who expect possible husbands in the home. What I get angry most is the saying that I ma not *kaşar*. Why everyone equalize sex with being *kaşar*? Speeches and appearances of our gays are free not their bodies. They are looking for their husbands like straight women. Only then they can experience their sexuality. (Abdullah)

“We, my generation who were born in 1977-1980, are old-fashioned. We grew up without seeing anything except Bülent Ersoy and Fatih Ürek who are better not to be

seen. But now the second generation who born after 1985 emerged. They grew up with connecting to the Internet, watching Queer as Folk and Sex and the City, going to gay clubs in the Bosphorus before 18, and never contributing to the activist groups. They are more open in terms of sex. Issues like “I am not a kaşar, are you a kaşar?” are not boring with them. Maybe because they admitted their burgeoning, inexperienced gayness. They are much more open, and they do not fear to have sex as much as we feared. Very nice!” (Özkan)

[10] “I never believe that they will find a solution to one of my problems. They construct a field of power through activism; they are becoming something without doing anything. I am against to their claim as representing me. They do not go to the bars or cafés; connect the Internet, etc. because those are capitalist. What can I say? They are lost.” (Fırat)

“Never mind them, ugly fairies! They are striving to find someone in activist groups when they cannot outside. What did they do? What could they do? I only heard for all those years that when a beautiful young boy comes from Anatolia and wrongly thinks that they are important people, they all jump on him. They do not have any other tactics. I do not buy sweetie.” (Gazi)

“Honestly, I do not find true or right that our public image is wrong. I wish you come and see we help how many closeted gays with serious problems. We arrange regular weekly meetings for 25-30 people. We prepare declarations for the press. We go to Ankara. We are against cafés and bars because we think that gays are exploited there. The same tea is free here and charged for 5 million liras. He can contribute by donating this money or buying a magazine. However I am sure we will be better understood by time. I am saving my optimistic side. We do not do something wrong and when we elaborate everyone says yes you are right.” (Ömer)

“-Well educated ones, or, *varoş* boys? –Indeed, petit bourgeois family education is an education that steals heart, love, and emotions in a great deal. For example, most of the petit bourgeois men cannot make love. Even when they are nude they are still extremely worn. Even their eyes and their gazes are worn. They enter in the bed with their mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, friends, with all society. They calculate the explanation they will have to give. They cannot undress. –What about *varoş* boys? – People out of this petit bourgeois, well educated boys, I mean uncontaminated with this education, are freer to experience their raw natures. Actually, lower-middle class boys, or *varoş* boys as you said make love better than the others. Because, they let themselves to the language of their nature. They do not decrease their bodies and skins by the dirtiness of wrong education. –But denial is relevant for every group? How do you cope with the denial? –The denial of petit bourgeois are dirtier, too. Because they read a few pages, a little bit educated, they bring with an argument and language assumed that you understand. You cannot take out that denial because it penetrated their personalities, their spirits. They read a bit of Freud, when they argue from that point you have nothing to do. In fact, the mechanism of denial and acceptance work according to the different languages of the different groups. What occurs in *varoş* people is a schizophrenic break. They live as double identities.”

Yani onlar da iyi-kötü Freud okumuşlardır diyelim, sana oradan geldikleri anda yapacak bir şey yoktur. Aslında ret ve kabul mekanizması farklı kesimlerin farklı dillerine göre çalışıyor tabii. Varoş insanların da geçerli olan şey, şizofrenik bir yapılmadır. İkili bir kimlik halinde yaşarlar onlar da,”

“Cookie, or Cem, has been coming to our club for long years, even from his adolescent years. I do not remember how or with whom he came first, but he has been coming. He is a correct guy. He has never been into a unpleasant event. Do not forget in our community there are every sorts of unpleasant events like stealing shoes, or raiding the house the following day with friends. Cem has not a distinguishable feature. Cookie comes from his earlier years. I do not remember who gave the nickname. His cookie status or interest toward him because of his new face lost ober years. Experiencing threesomes and portraits, he turned into for money. Maybe he is not proud of what he does but he has a relaxed manner to talk about those issues without lying.”

“Sure, what did you think? Is it possible to feed all of these rent boys by which money, are we, gays in Turkey, Turkish army? You may say this, there is a limited population who earns and spends too much money, or squanderers who give the money and make rent boys fuck them. Yes, exactly. But shall I ask, how many are they? This, that, etc.. I can count them. Look, on the one side there are rent boys. You go to near them in bars and they ask you money, 100 dollars, and 100 euros. You can negotiate the price with him. You can take him in the morning for free, or worse, for 20 millions. On the other side, there are others, you find, make sex and then he should leave. While he is leaving he asks money from you. It depends on your generosity, 15 or 20, what you can give. The real intention is not to earn money, but to take something. Or, in speaking through chat, MIRC, with a *varoş* boy, everything is talked about, where are you from, the location of the house, numbers, etc. He says I only fuck, I do not kiss, after all these conversation suddenly he says I also want money. Actually, he wants to fuck me but he tries his chance once. Of course I am a *kaşar* now. I never say anything about my material conditions. Do you have a car, no. Is this house yours, no. I have a second, older cellular phone only to talk with *varoş* boys. But a rent boy always asks, if he finds something, nice, if he cannot, it also passes.”

“You know I am 43 now although I do not look like my age. I accepted myself, I am very very pedophile. Imagine even your age group do not look at me. Then do not imagine about teenagers. Cenk, do I have another way? I have nothing to do but going rent boys. Gay culture in this country compels me to do this. You know, I have sex with many rent boys. I still continue. Before this boom of rent boys I knew all of them personally, even their names. Of course, it is not possible anymore. My point is that I have never paid a cent to one of the rent boys. Write this. Veli never paid. I sit because of my beautiful face? Sure, not. One should use his mind. We are smart, experienced people. We are gay people who can still survive in this country. We saw

and coped with everything. Who are rent boys? *Varoş* boys who could not complete their education, shaking his dick, thinking he does something good. They should not conquer us. You should use your mind. For example, you ought to know the rules, otherwise, the hunter may be hunted. What would a kaşar say if you go to and ask him how much in the beginning of the night? Of course he says 100 dollars. Wait, drink, look at, and trigger the competition. At the end, they will eventually come near you. They again ask me money, I never answer them. The most I can do is standing a beer, and commencing conversation. You know I can cook well. I tell them the dishes I made. They love because they are hungry, peasants. Has he ever seen a dish in his life. For example I say I have cooked meat in home, let me go to home and eat it. I continuously bake corn bread, I always say this. Imagine, at 4 in the morning he is hungry, can he resist? Ninety per cent he comes, what else he can do? I hide perfumes, toothpastes, shampoos, whatever they can bring with them in home. In the taxi to home I always say I have a brother in the police. The rest is known. I do not earn money to spend on cheap boys. (Veli) .

%90 gelir, gelmeyip ne yapacak! Ben evde parfümleri, diş macunlarını, şampuanları, böyle bunların alıp götürbileceği ne varsa saklarım, takside eve giderken de mutlaka kardeşim komser emniyette derim... Sonrası malum... Üç kuruşluk çocuklara yedirmek için para kazanmıyorum ki ben!” (Veli)

“I think Murathan Mungan says the truth. Rents are clearly more masculine than our gays. Yes they are, why do you look surprised? He lives in *varoş*, they have a distinctive male culture there, coffeehouse, soccer, quarrels. Never mind gays, we know that they are disable, rich boys cannot be as masculine as *varoş* boys even when they want to. As a result, they have an education, refinement, and clearness. He can't escape from this. You can talk with rich boys, or go out. But, you must have sex with *varoş* boys, rent boys. For me it is not important whether he was gay or not. Totally irrelevant. If he attracts me it is not important what is he. If he satisfies me, it is okay. I don't care whether he says himself gay or straight. I do not have to make sex only with gays just because I call myself as gay.” (Ata)

“For me rent are also gays, but of course they cant call themselves as gays in their uneducated, narrow-minded environment. In those environments, if you are homosexual, especially if you are a little bit effeminate, you would turn into transvestite. Otherwise, you can't survive. Without throwing this transvestite trouble, our rent can hardly name them as gay. Is it important? Actually, no. I know what is he, he sleeps with me, who cares whether he says he is gay or not. I could not decide do we fall in love with class and educational differences or masculinity. Only *varoş* boys can be such path-breakingly, excitingly masculine. We cannot benefit from the white İstanbul. Regarding we are all the same Turks, it should be something about being *varoş*. So, the masculinity of lower class are different from upper classes, the rich. We all agree upon this. But it is ambiguous that why we, upper classes, like the other and seeks for it.” (Veli)

“If there is someone above who manages this circulation, they may catch some of the rent boys for their own. I think it is not the situation. Rent boys are not like female prostitutes, it is not for them to touch bottom. He fucks faggots, what is wrong with this? As if when he fucks without money he loses something or gets shamed of this. He does not shame to fuck gays, furthermore he always has the possibility to deny. For my opinion, rents are aware what they do, what meanings their actions have, what do we like, what do we want. They act accordingly. For example, there is a new fashion now. They wear stretchy tops on their skinny bodies, pants with really low bellies, the tops in their pants, without belt. They can show their body from top to their groins. This emerged in one or two weeks. Before that they never put their tops into their pants in order not to seem *amele*. Go and look them now, all of them looks like this. Can it be a coincidence? It is obvious that they learn, and what they are supposed to do, they do without any trick.” (Ata)

“It is shameful for a gay to have sex with a rent boy in exchange of money. We cannot say it in public. I am telling you now, because you will change my name. Someone knows of course, but it is not good to be publicly known after this age. I said it is not good, because we comprehend it in this way. What is wrong with it, like buying massage, you are paying and buying a service. It is because this factor, nobody mentions why gays are still continuing to be with rent boys despite the fact that there is a fatal treat against them. We have a particular desire here. Real man! But it is not shameful for rent boys sweetie. He laughs and passes, it is the dirt in his hand, he can wash it. He says I also fucked a faggot. Of course gays are used here, but it is not very relevant to use these terms because we also want them, we are seeking beauty. If we prioritize education or status we would not look after rent boys.” (Veli)

“-How many people you have had since september?”

-(pause) One minute.. (pause) five, you are asking for the ones that gave money?

-Are there any that gave no money?

-Of course.

-Okay, all of them, whatever their kind.

-Then lets count it, I received money from five people, and four without money.

-Then what are non-moneys for?

-They can stand drinks, or give my taxi fare. Or some of them says I do not give money but I can give you gifts.

-What sorts of gifts?

-(pause) perfume, t-shirts, sneakers, cd, exported drinks, etc. For example I took a silver candlestick and gave my mother. She liked it too much. She put it in our living room and she shows it everyone and says my son bought it.”

-Ne gibi hediyeler mesela,

-(sessizlik) parfüm, t-shirt, ayakkabı, cd, yabancı içki, öyle şeyler... Ben mesela Cihangir’de birinin evinden gümüş bir şamdan aldım, anneme verdim, çok beğendi, bizim salona koydu, oğlum aldı diyor, herkese gösteriyor falan...”

“-Okay, accept me as a normal client. I came near to you and asked how much, what would you say?

-In general a boy like you does not give money to have sex. He waits for the morning to catch one for free.

-No, no, imagine that I came and asked?

-Okay, then I would say 80 millions.

-Is it without negotiation, my youngness and beauty is effective in determining the price?

-Of course, penis erects for the face. I normally say 100 dollars or 100 millions for older ones and fairy ones. Generally they negotiate and we agree on 60-70 millions. But you do not give that much, you would eventually agree with 20-30 at most.”

“-What about the price?

-100 for fucking, 70 for without fucking. If he is a foreigner I would want the taxi fare.

-Do not Turks give it?

-No they don't. Actually no one from here gives that amount to us. Those are my demands, it is for my reputation.

-So, there is negotiation,

-Of course, it is Turkey. You negotiate even buying cucumber, thus our cucumber is not for free.

-What are the criteria for negotiation and price?

-(pause) The most important thing is age. Nobody should mind, but if his ages

“-What else can effects the negotiation?

-Real men always give less. Because they can be with gays for free. If it is needed gays can fuck the man, too, it is full-treat. If he is effeminate, sissy, I want more because gays do not want to have sex with them. What can they do together? Gentlemen do not like us too much, or want to fuck us, and it is not possible. I am not a versatile rent boy, but if I was it would change the prices. The quality of the client, cuteness of the rent boy, all affect the price. If he is ugly he should pay more, there is no alternative. If he is cutey, sometimes handsome boys or tourists demand us, we can give them for less money. Sometimes you should reward you dick. But generally we take more from tourists, they give 50 dollars, or 60-70.”

alternatifi yok yani! Güzelse, manken gibi çocuklar da veriyorlar bazen, turistler felan, e onlara daha ucuza da olur, bazen de yağlayacaksın bizimkini, ödül gibi! Ama genelde turistlerden daha çok alırız 50 dolar, 60-70 dolar verirler... “

“-How do you fuck a person that you dont desire for, do you think others, like younger boys?

-(pause) Of course, I try not to think. I imagine pornography, women, I imagine as if he was a women. In fact, I always give to their mouths, my eyes closed, that is the way. They also know that it should be like this. There is a balance.”

-(sessizlik) ya tabi düşünmemeye çalışıyorum... Pornoları falan düşünüyorum, karıları düşünüyorum, kadınmış gibi kabul ediyorum, zaten hep önce ağzına veriyorum, gözlerimi kapatıp, öyle oluyor... Onlar da biliyorlar zaten öyle olması gerektiğini... Sonuçta bir denge var yani...”

“-If he is young,

-That is confusing. I honestly do not prefer to fuck younger ones. Because they do not want to give money. They cant accept that we screw their asses for momey. They think they are still beautiful. And you may get used to by fucking young ones. It will be difficult in the future if it turns out to be a habit.

-That means you take pleasure,

-Why dont I, am I not a man? Whoever else doesnot take pleasure?

-Have you ever fucked girls?

-We soemtimes fuck transvestites for free. It is all funny, we are free for them and they are free for us, for the rest we are all for money. Some of them are really beautiful. I also went to women prostitutes for two or three times. I know how to fuck a woman. But for me, to fuck a young, nice boy or to fuck a woman is the same thing in terms of pleasure.

-But only to fuck,

-As I said nothing else could happen, even if Erman Toroğlu would come.”

Ama benim için genç kıvrak bir oğlanla, bir karının farkı yok zevk açısından...

-Ama sadece sikmek için,

-Dedim ya başka bir şey olamaz, isterse Erman Toroğlu gelsin...”

“I love women. I am doing this job only for its money. This is my second job. That is all. There is no other dimension. My inner self is reserved only for females. Men can be fucked only for money, or for satisfying the sexual urge, and this is temporary. One needs money and experience in his young days. I saw everything in the last four years. I saw İstanbul. What did my father and my mother see? “İstanbul destroyed you” that is my case..”

“Ben kadınları seviyorum, bu işi sadece parası için yapıyorum, benim ikinci işim bu.. O kadar başka bir boyutu yok, olamaz da.. Benim içim sadece dişiler için.. Erkek para için sikilir hadi bilemedin abazanlıktan sikilir. O da gelir geçer zaten... Gençlikde insana para lazım, tecrübe lazım, ben dört yılda her şeyi gördüm, İstanbul’u ben gördüm, benim anam babam ne görmüş? “İstanbul seni mahvetmiş,” o hesap benimkisi...”

“(CÖ) cidden para için mi yatıyorsun?
-(M) yeri geliyor parayla, yeri geliyor zevkine...
- hımmm...
- ama seninle zevkine yatarım...
- Ben parayla bir sex ilişkisi aramıyorum ama...
- Para isteyen kim ki... İstedğim var, istemedğim var... İş başka ibadet başka...”

“-Seriously, you have sex for money?
-Sometimes for money, somestimes for pleasure,
-hımmm
-But I sleep with you for pleasure,
-But I do not seek a relation for money,
-Who wants money, there the ones I want, there are the ones I do not, Work is something, prayers is different.”

“- It is totally opposites. All of them are rich, working, speaking in foreign languages, educated, drinking exported beverages, perfumes, etc. They are friends of famous people. They have totally different lives than my family. What they wear, how they talk, they are all intellectuals, clean. So, we are different, it is not only about fucking.
-Then, it is difficult for you to be friends with a gay,
-Very different, what is a friendship? You should share something, you should talk. What problems those gays have? How can they understand my life? I have many problems like I could not enter university, unemployment, military service, etc... They are preoccupied with to be fucked. Or, shall I go to Paris, shall I go to your mother’s.
-I guess it is very difficult to share intimacy with those types that you do not like,
-(laughing) It is different. I don’t think that aspect of it, I concentrate on my pleasure. Can I solve the problems of this country? Indeed being from different worlds does not constitute an obstacle for fucking.”

-Bu kadar hazetmediğin tiplerle mahremiyetini paylaşmak da zor olmalı tabi...
-(gülüyor) O başka, ben işin o taraflarını hiç düşünmüyorum, aldığım zevke bakıyorum, bu ülkenin derdini ben mi çözeceğim... Hem ayrı dünyaların insanları olmak başka işe engel değil sonuçta

“-Do you talk with gays?

-When?

-Before sex, or after, or other times?

-What shall we talk? I would not engage into gay-chat with them...

-Should it be gay-chat, what about their lives, your life?

-(pause) It depends... Of course, sometimes it occurs, we are all humans, you might be worried or in need of talking, they are generally voluntary to listen to me. But, there is always an abyss. They always say finish your school or let me find you a job as an answer to what I said. Thanks God, I do not have any complaints. (pause) Of course, I would want to have a place in a better neighborhood, a better job, or a beautiful girl friend. But, I do not shame because of what I have. Generally gays are good people, especially, tourists, they like me, they adore everything I do. It is strange. I really cannot understand how a man distanced himself from masculinity and then fall in love with someone only because he is masculine.

-They fall in love with you, too...

-You can't guess how much! I can't comprehend; you are a man, almost 40 years old, having a house near Bosphorus, having a good job, a suitable social milieu. Books, chats, culture... Everything is fine. But, he is a faggot. He gives money to fuck him, then he cries until the morning and says please don't leave me I can give you whatever you want. It is only because I am a handsome boy, I am *delikanlı*. He does not think this boy has a mother and father, he lives in far away, he repairs others' cars for a few pennies, he does not say it is not possible for me to comprehend his life. He cannot see that he is not equal with me and thus we have no future. He does not say I may want a girl in the future, or to marry. Mature men call me, send me messages, follow me. Now I grasped that I should not give my phone number.”

“-Do you receive anything else than money, or with money?

-Like what,

-I don't know, perfume, clothes?

-I use his perfume in the morning, I never pass without using. Once a man gave his watch to me, and a tourist gave original Nike sneakers. But, I don't do this job for gifts but for money.

-What is the importance of perfumes?

-I don't know, but everyone uses them. When I return *Büyüktepe* everyone asks what is this perfume you are smelling, etc. Neither my acquaintances nor I can buy perfumes.

-Do you take them from gays without informing them?

-(pause)

-(I frown)

-(laughing) No lies! I never take anything from faggots, but I take his perfume if it smells good, because sometimes they may smell like women's. Look, I don't take even his money, but I always take perfume, the faggot may buy another.”

-(gülüyor) Valla yalan yok! Hiç bir şey almam ibnelerden ama parfümünü alırım bak uygun yakalarsam, bir de gerçekten beğenirsem... Karı gibi de oluyor çünkü

onlarınkiler bazen... Bak parasını görsem almam, ama parfümünü affetmem, bir daha alsın ibne!”

“-For example, rent boys who beat other rent boys, or form little gangs are always more powerful than others. Furthermore, a rent boy who fucks other rent boys is always more powerful.

-What? Do rent boys fuck other rents?

-Of course, you study this subject and you dont know this! If you have to you should force and fuck or you should break his mouth and nose. Otherwise, is it possible to be a man? It is not enough to have a dick in order to to be a man here!

-Have you ever fucked?

-Of course, what do you think about how I am still untouched for all those years. If you cannot fuck, they fuck you, and you know I have never been fucked!

-How did you do?

-Look, for example, there was a party in Ahmet’s house in Gültepe. After the party everyone slept where he was. By chance I shared my couch with a new, younger boy called Can. I spoke with him, I chatted, I did.

-By force?

-Don’t say by force, lets say by beauty, that means I convinced him. I said give me now, and then let us check your position and therefore I can find you clients. I said if you give me you would be my brother.

-What type of brotherhood is this?

-Means he became a member of my group. I care him, I control him, I protect him when necessary..

-I see, okay do you have other brothers like this?

-Of course there are a lot of them, but not all of them follow the same path. Once, I did this boy by threading him. He went to this guy from Cihangir, and this guy fucked him, actually, I guessed. When I learnt that he gave this guy, I said to him you better give me tonight or think what can I co, that night he gave me without any problem.”

-O ne kardeşliği ya?

-Bana bağlı bir çocuk oldu yani... Bağlı derken benim gözettiğim, ilgilendiğim icabında koruduğum kolladığım falan...

-Anlıyorum, evet... Başka da var mı öyle kardeşin?

-Var bir yığın ama hepsi bu yoldan geçmiyor tabi... Bir keresinde de tehdit edip de yaptım... Cihangir’de bir herife gitti, vermiş tabi, ben zaten tahmin etmiştim, sonra öğrendim, dedim ya bana da veririsin, ya da sen düşün, o gece tıpış tıpış verdi...”

performance in the nineties.” (2003: 346). Those and other similar criticisms motivated me to design this research as an outcome of cross-class relations and urban segregation manifested here in sexual encounters of different parties as well as representations of homosexuality and relations through queer spaces of the city.

Keeping the queer challenge in mind, now I sketchily introduce three different queer qualitative research tactics that Gamson (2000) underlines and I aimed to use through the thesis. First is the preoccupation with unstable, multiple, fragmented processes of identity formation and to put “the process of identification *with*” (Kirsch, 2000) into queer studies. This means not to concentrate on a particular identity but to hear voices about a specific experience or a set of interrelated experiences in order to specify and externalize the “identity work” (Gamson, 2000) that people perform in their everyday lives. Such a perspective enables one to see clearly the queer aspects of this identity work and to gain insights about the tenuous and illusory borders of identity and community. That is why I do not define rent boys as heterosexual (as they claim), bisexual (as some of them actually seem to be), or gay (as most gays believe). Instead, I opt to talk with them without fixing their sexual identity as a pre-condition of their sexual selves. What they do under which circumstances, what they say to whom, what are the little nuances they negotiate with, and where the possible vulnerable points are that challenge and change claims of identity were the topics of conversations, inviting them (and of course myself) to question the categories they verbalize.

A second point in queering the research is about escaping the authority of the writing experience. This possibility is highly limited in a master thesis where the time for both researching and writing “multivocally” is very short and the stress of completing

it by the time is acute. Still, I tried to position myself as one of the gays that speaks here in a shared fashion. This was quite difficult sometimes because I am neither a rent boy nor a client. Although mostly dominant, my voice is positioned between other people's and reveals itself in the language I employ differently according to whom I talk. Nevertheless, I wanted to mix my voice, the reflections of informants, and our shared expectations of the readers in a more transparent mood of