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IMAGINING EUROPE AS A REALM OF TRANSFIGURATION[1]

Abstract:
This essay considers Bilge Karasu's novel *The Garden of Departed Cats* (*Göçmüş kediler bahçesi*, 1979) as a dynamic text reconceptualizing Europe through the transfiguration of humans and animals, porous borders, East-West dichotomies, inside-outside structurations, local-foreign designations, and questions of translatability. Göktürk, a film and media scholar and translator of Karasu into German, examines both the virtual location of Europe and the function of cinema within the novel, arenas through which Karasu refigures geographic positionings and identities. Because of its evocative mobile depictions, Karasu's text operates for Göktürk as a cinematic text, one in implicit conversation with Walerian Browczyk's *Blanche* (1972) and Werner Herzog's *Gesualdo: Death for Five Voices* (1995).

Keywords:
Translation ◆ Europe ◆ visual media ◆ Turkish literature ◆ Orientalism ◆ borders ◆ film

When I first met Bilge Karasu in Berlin, in the summer of 1991, I was a doctoral student who had just begun experimenting with translation. Together with Zafer Şenocak, I had organized a series of literary evenings at the Literarisches Colloquium, with the goal of introducing contemporary Turkish authors to a German-speaking audience. In an effort to let their voices be heard, we invited from Turkey Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca, Tomris Uyar, Pınar Kür, Murathan Mungan, and Orhan Pamuk, among others, and arranged for them to meet with Berlin authors. At that time, German publishing houses showed little interest in Turkey and Turkish literature. The handful of translated books that had been published in Germany up to that point each featured a picture of a

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mosque or a hamam (Turkish bathhouse) on the cover. Eager to update this imagery and present Turkey as a space of contingent modernity, we prepared a collection of contemporary Turkish writing that was published as the first book of the newly founded Babel Verlag publishing house. We commissioned an abstract blue cover design by graphic artist Dagmar von Wilcken, and chose a title inspired by Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca: *Jedem Wort Gehört ein Himmel* (*Her sözün bir gökyüzü vardır* / *A Sky Belongs to Every Word*, 1991).

I began translating *Göçmüş Kediler Bahçesi* (orig. 1979, trans. by Aron Aji as *The Garden of Departed Cats*, 2004, hereafter referred to as *Garden*) for our collection, which ultimately featured an excerpt from Karasu's novel. Bilge Karasu belonged to my father's generation. They had been friends from the Turkish Language Society (Türk Dil Kurumu). I had heard his name, but I had never met him. Akşit Göktürk had written a preface to Karasu's novel *Gece* (*Night*, 1985), where he suggested that Karasu's text resists the expectations of lazy readers who are looking for linear causality in a story (Göktürk, Akşit, 1985). Karasu was said to be a difficult and mysterious author. Finding him necessary to read and even more necessary to understand, I became gradually more acquainted with his work, thoroughly enjoyed it, and then explored it anew through translation. Translating was also a way for me to keep up my Turkish in Berlin, to keep it alive. Karasu's language is as bare as a crystal, both logical and creative, without a trace of excess or heaviness. My goal was to create a text as equally bare and fluid in German. When translating the title of the book's first fairy tale, for example, I employed a method of translation that reflected Karasu's style, rather than producing a one-to-one correspondence on the level of individual words. The story of a fisherman whose arm is snatched by a fish, for example, is titled "Avından El Alan", meaning 'taking permission from the prey.' As the phrase el almak,' literally 'taking a hand,' connotes bidding permission or learning from a master, the title of this story figures the prey as master. I chose to translate this as "Der Beute aufs Maul geschaut," meaning 'staring the prey in the mouth,' which figurally connotes learning something from the prey through close observation. For its part, the phrase 'aufs maul schauen' ('to look in the mouth') was Martin Luther's coinage—a primary criterion guiding his translation of the Bible. 'Dem Volk aufs Maul schauen,' or 'to look the people in the mouth' indicated Luther's desire to create in translation a vernacular German that synthesized the various regional dialects of the language. This naturally required close observation of the Volk while speaking, hence the corporeal aspect of the phrase with reference to

the mouth. My goal was to capture the connotation of 'learning something from a figure of authority,' as well as the corporeality of the joint, mutually devouring life experience between fish and man.

Bilge Karasu's reading at the Literarisches Colloquium on the Wannsee in June 1991 coincided with the annual literary contest in Klagenfurt, where Emine Sevgi Özdamar was awarded the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize that year. Watching the live broadcast of the reading and discussions in Klagenfurt in the foyer of the Literarisches Colloquium in Berlin once again reminded us how unaware the German-speaking literary establishment was about literary production in Turkey. The tentative breakthrough occurring at that time, namley of migrants writing in German in folkloristic terms, seemed disjointed from the long overdue reception of Turkish modernism. Meanwhile, we engaged Karasu in pleasing conversations about Kafka, Calvino, Borges and Cortázar, about Siena and other Italian cities, about sweets, cats, the cinema, the opera, minorities and multicultural societies.

I finished translating *Garden* in Istanbul in 1993. We met again in Ankara to go over my translation. Bilge Karasu was an unforgettable person. Murathan Mungan, in his talk at the conference "Bilge Karasu'yu Okumak" ("Reading Bilge Karasu"), beautifully brought back to life his fine sense of humor, his erudite enthusiasm, and his meticulousness in all realms of work—while he was plucking parsley leaves or editing a translation. We gave a bilingual reading at the German consulate in Istanbul together and made plans to meet again in Berlin. We arranged for a DAAD fellowship for him. Inspired by the second tale in *Garden*, "The Man Who Missed His Ride Night after Night," Karasu wrote the libretto "Gidememek" ("Not Being Able to Go") for a joint opera project with the composer Rolf Baumgart (published in Karasu, *Lağımlaranası ya da Beyoğlu*, 163-188). Unfortunately, Karasu was never able to return to Berlin to realize a production of this project. He passed away in the summer of 1995.

Established publishers in Germany did not want to take on my translation of *Garden*, claiming that there was no readership for it, that Turkish authors were writing as if they still lived in the 19th century. Such efforts to introduce *to Europe* writers who imagine the essence of Europe regularly ended in impasse, as we grappled with the challenge of presenting a new image of Turkey via literature and other arts. My conversations with the publisher Müge Gürsoy at the Metis publishing house evolved in this context. In the end, a small Frankfurt

publishing house named Literaturca published the German book as *Der Garten entschwundener Katzen* in 2002. The word 'göçmüş', which most closely translates to 'migrate,' was difficult to render in the title, and I chose instead 'entschwunden' or 'vanished.'

In the intervening years I migrated first to Southampton, England, and then to Berkeley, California. Experiencing continued obstacles to the German reception of this particular translation helped me to hone my interest in questions of representation and circulation on the cultural market. Global interest in Turkey and Turkish literature has since grown immensely; Orhan Pamuk's 2006 Nobel Prize win, as well as the 2008 Frankfurt Book Fair's decision to host Turkey as its guest country of honor are just two important indicators of this shift in recent years. Bilge Karasu's books have been translated into English by Güneli Gün and Aron Aji, and his Anglophone readership is growing steadily.

Upon reading *Garden* again I was struck by the text's formal propensity to shift and change with every reading, allowing new figures to come to the fore. 'Bidding permission' from the text, so to speak, I focused on two interconnected questions regarding its framing:

- *Where is Europe?* How does the text weigh in on this question? If we read from a cosmopolitan standpoint that goes beyond presumptions about localized identity and the framing of national literature, where does *Garden* take us within the context of world literature, translation, and circulation?

- *What is the function of the cinema, as depicted in* Garden? What kinds of moving images and other forms of transformations do we find in the text? How does the cinematic text address today's multimedia reader? What does it evoke? And what kinds of reading strategies does it require?

In my opinion, the need to read *Garden* anew given the book's persistent timeliness rests on these dimensions. Today, the books that Bilge Karasu has left behind spark interest in and gain new meaning through debates about Europe and urban imagery, translation and circulation, and the endeavor to read in the era of multimedia. In this essay, I analyze several allusions that I discovered

while rereading *Garden*. The book's main themes are travel, encounter, and transformation, yet these variations do not emerge within a stable frame. The traveler could be assumed to be an 'Eastern' Turk who meets an urban 'Western' Italian, yet these designations quickly come unhinged.

While at times the text does indeed evoke such geographic positioning and territorially grounded identities, places nevertheless constantly intertwine and overlap. Keeping this flexibility and versatility in mind, it is possible to analyze the text as a tableau that elaborates on the concepts of 'Westernizing' and 'becoming European.' As a primary arena for virtual space, cinema has played an important role in shaping twentieth-century literature, particularly through its production of imaginative geographies through techniques of mise-en-scène, montage, superimposition, and projection. By focusing on cinema, I aim to emphasize the importance of the visual realm for the structure of *Garden*, and to both uncover and set into motion the imaginative power of Karasu's text to interrogate 'imagined communities.'

Which Way to Europe? Translation and Circulation

We generally assume that short stories and novels belonging to Turkish literature are set within the realm of Turkey. Scholarship on Karasu's novel *Night*, for example, including scholarship written inside and outside of Turkey, tends to read it as a social allegory of the military coup of 12 March 1971 (see Akman 2012, for example). In contrast, *The Garden of Departed Cats*—like *A Long Day's Evening*, first published in 1970—takes us to an imaginary Europe that is not limited to Turkish territory, but expands into the surrounding Mediterranean geography. The frame story in *Garden* takes place in a small medieval city where a mysterious game is being performed. About 500 residents of the town, dressed in traditional 15th-century costumes, take part in this pageant re-enacting a legend from around 1454, in which two noblemen in love with the eldest daughter of the Lord of the Castle have been ordered by the Lord to settle their differences by way of a game of chess, instead of the traditional duel.

This game can be read as a reference to the city of Marostica in the region of Veneto. Once every two years, a game of chess with live figures is played in this city in the field in front of a medieval palace. This famous show attracts a large number of tourists to the city. Despite this similarity, the stage emulated in *Garden* never references any specific city, and it bears traces of other cities in the

region as well. *Garden* also evokes Siena's famous horse race, the Palio, and its rich traditional wheel-shaped fruitcake panforte, for instance. The novel opens with the following text, translated here into English by Aron Aji:

> I arrived one afternoon in the medieval city located in the center of this narrow peninsula that stretches like an arm into the Mediterranean. For forty days, I had been shuttling east and west, north and south, in an area barely two hundred miles square. I had visited about twenty cities, big and small, cities still bearing the pride of the sovereign states they'd once been. (2004, 1)
>
> Akdeniz'in iki kolu arasındaki ensizce kara parçasının ortalarına rastlayan bu ortaçağ kentine bir akşam üstü vardım. Bir uçtan bir uca üç yüz kilometreyi bile bulmayan bir bölgede kırk gündür kuzeyle güney, doğu ile batı arasında mekik dokuyordum. Yüzlerce yıl önce handiyse bağımsız devletler olmanın gururlu anısını hala taşıyan yirmi kadar küçüklü büyüklü kent gezmiştim. (1979, 9)

Strong city-states in northern and central Italy such as Siena, Pisa, Padua, Bologna, Verona, Milan, and Venice played a leading role in overcoming the feudal system. Their independence from Rome set the stage for citizens rising to wealth and power. Unlike the absolute monarchies of France and Spain, the administrative systems of these city-states more closely resembled a Republic, in which commerce, trade, and the arts flourished early on, laying the basis for the Renaissance period. These historical Italian cities formed the core of urbanized life and blazed the trail for a European demos based on encounter and performance. The city as a public stage for bread and games, travel and spectacle models democratic life to this day. In this respect, we take a journey to the heartland of Europe while reading *Garden*. By reading history anew, *Garden* compels us to analyze the essence of Europe. Karasu's texts open up an expansive horizon of imaginative travel, which sets him apart from most other authors of modern Turkish literature.

The book is comprised of twelve fairy tales, which are nested within a thirteenth tale, namely the framing story titled "The Garden of Departed Cats." Füsun Akatlı describes the structure of the book as follows: "From the beginning to the end, the thirteenth tale 'The Garden of Departed Cats' is carefully placed [yerleştirilmiş] (not strewn, not distributed) within the other tales, piece by piece" (1982, 277). The twelfth "midnight" tale in *Garden* reiterates the book's

structure in brief: "One of the traditional eastern narrative forms (stories within stories, frames within frames)" (*Garden* 2004, 252). The lineage to "Eastern narrative forms" that Karasu claims here could be read as an allusion to the first collection of fable-like short stories in world literature, *Kalila and Dimna.* Originally written in Sanskrit, this collection was translated early on into Arabic and Persian. The technique of interruption, where the stories and fragments of stories illuminate each other in dynamic ways, suggests a sense of temporality based on simultaneity rather than linear sequence and progression. Nonetheless, I would underscore the framing role of the thirteenth tale, since this travelogue provides a unifying flow to the other tales in the book.

All of the fairy tales in *Garden* both enforce and question the boundaries that separate individual identities from one another. In addition to human-animal unions such as a fish-man, or a medieval monk who has girded his body with a half-jerboa-half-mongoose, the stories set into motion a series of contradictions between Self and Other, local and foreigner, near and far, modern and traditional, light and darkness, life and death. The transformations or metamorphoses repeatedly emphasize the proximity of loving and eating; man/fish, human/animal, shore/ocean are constantly in a state of transformation, disappearing or becoming. None of the figures are stable, and the text itself is also constantly subject to change through the act of reading.

The homosexual desire that animates the framing story and the displacement of "I" and "him" at the end of the game relationship leaves the reader in a state of ambiguity about which character exactly is telling the story. As the characters change places, so do writer and reader:

> To what extent was I successful in describing what I knew through his eyes? In transcribing reality, what we took as our reality, though his words, in his manner?
>
> He was the tall, dark one. I am a historian, it's a fact. The rest of the story I mostly made up while he was writing by the large window overlooking this hillside town, sleeping in the bed to my left, or reading in the armchair between the table and the bed, turned away from the window. (2004, 256)
>
> Bildiklerimi onun gözüyle anlatmakta ne ölçüde başarılı olabildim? Gerçekliği, gerçeklik bellediğimizi, onun sözü, onun yoldamıyla yazıya ne ölçüde aktarabildim?

> Uzun boylu olan, kumral saçlı olan, oydu. Benim tarihçi olduğum gerçek. Gerisinin çoğunu, şu bozkır şehrine tepeden bakan bir geniş pencerenin önünde yazı yazarken, solumdaki yatakta uyurken, ya da masa ile yatak arasında sırtını pencereye vermiş koltukta kitap okurken düzdüm. (1979, 228-229)

As becomes clear here, the geography of "I" and "him" is blurred. The "hillside town" (literally, "steppe city," or "bozkır kenti") evokes—more than central Italy—imagery of Ankara, which rapidly transformed itself from a provincial town amidst the Anatolian plain into the capital of the young Turkish Republic in the 1930s. The text does not reflect local geography that takes shape on maps; it is rather a fictitious, literary construction that dissolves places we remember as real ("gerçek bellediğimiz"). In this respect, we could argue that *Garden*, first published in 1979, set the stage for Orhan Pamuk's novel *The White Castle* (*Beyaz Kale*) published in 1985. In *The White Castle*, too, the narrative is framed by a historian's tale. At the end of the novel the master and the Italian slave change places. As they become indistinguishable from one another, the reader is left in a state of suspense about who has narrated whose story, and who has deceived whom. Looking out a window in Gebze, the narrator allegedly reproduces perfectly an image presented earlier in the book as the Venetian's memory of his homeland:

> Then he looked again at the view from that window overlooking the garden behind my house. I knew exactly what he saw. Peaches and cherries lay on a tray inlaid with mother-of-pearl upon a table, behind the table was a divan upholstered with straw matting, strewn with feather cushions the same colour as the green window frame. I was sitting there, nearly seventy now. Further back, he saw a sparrow perched on the edge of a well among the olive and cherry trees. A swing tied with long ropes to a high branch of a walnut-tree swayed slightly in a barely perceptible breeze. (Pamuk 1990, 161, Victoria Holbrooke's translation)

> Sonra yeniden, evimin arka bahçesine bakan o pencereden görebileceklerine baktı. Ne gördüğünü, tabii ki çok iyi biliyordum: Bir masanın üstündeki sedef kakmalı tepsinin içinde şeftaliler ve kirazlar duruyordu, masanın arkasında hasırdan örülmüş bir sedir vardı, üzerinde pencerenin yeşil çerçevesiyle aynı renkte kuştüyü yastıklar konmuştu; yetmişine merdiven dayamış ben orada oturuyordum; daha arkada kenarına bir serçenin konduğu kuyuyla zeytin ve kiraz ağaçlarını görüyordu. Onların arkasındaki ceviz ağacının yüksekçe bir dalına uzun

> iplerle bağlanmış bir salıncak, belli belirsiz bir rüzgarda, hafif hafif kıpırdanıyordu. (1990, 180)

As a self-reference to the internal text, this image framed by the view from the window at the close of *The White Castle* evokes the ending of *Garden*. Both books' dissolving of imagined geographies of East and West invite the reader to solve a puzzle with moving pieces. Thus disoriented, the reader has no choice but to reconfigure given oppositions and distinctions, thereby complicating the model of unilateral discursive domination that Edward W. Said proposed in *Orientalism* (1978). Conceiving of Bilge Karasu's and Orhan Pamuk's books as works that play with national frames and identities opens up horizons of interconnected reading within the realm of world literature. Despite claims to the contrary, national cultures are never self-contained; they evolve through contact, translation, and cross-border circulation.

Dissolving borders is a crucial tactic for a conceptualization of Europe today. In Etienne Balibar's words, post-Schengen Europe is a "borderland" (2009). Borders dividing inside from outside are not only found in the vicinity of refugee camps, customs offices, or walls and wires meant to prevent illegal entry. They are constantly executed, negotiated, and enforced in daily life situations. Yet only 23 official languages are used within the European Union, which consists of 28 nation states; the many spoken languages of minority groups and migrants are not included in these official languages. (Turkish falls into this latter category.) If the EU were to incorporate all of these languages, we would be confronted with close to 100 communities of spoken languages traversing inner and outer borders. The differing degrees of power possessed by these languages reflect not simply issues of multilingualism and polyphony, but the very essence of the European project. For this reason Balibar, with reference to Umberto Eco, has emphasized translation as Europe's communal language (2009, 16). *Garden*'s stories also stage the act of translation as a template for encounter and interaction. A foreigner arrives in a new city, comprehends the rules of the "allegedly traditional" game played there, cracks its code, enters into the game, and then disappears. All of these events constitute the basis for cosmopolitan imagery and a pursuit that we could describe as translation.

Our book *Orienting Istanbul*, conceived in the context of global debates in urban studies and Istanbul's term as one of the three European Capitals of Culture in 2010, raised questions about the various actors involved in fashioning the city,

their conflicting interests, and their directions of pursuit. Such a focus on the production of localized urban imaginaries in global mediation and circulation also calls for a reconsideration of what it might mean to "orient Europe" (Göktürk et al. 2011). What have Turkey's intellectuals written about Europe across the centuries, how have they conceived of Europe, and where have they positioned themselves within or outside of Europe? There is currently little scholarship available on this topic. (For debates regarding Europe in Turkish scholarship see Ortaylı 2008, Gürbilek 2010, and Somay 2011.) Amidst continued debate regarding Turkey's controversial membership bid in the European Union, documenting Turkish conceptions of "Europe" and "the West" from the Tanzimat period onward would require us to consider both memoirs and travelogues as well as works of fiction. In this context, *Garden* plays an unquestionably important and particular role.

Within this framework, the novel gains meaning as a portrayal of Europe, the new images it produces wisely exceeding borders that group off identities in the projections of European cosmopolitans. The book's blend of currents from the East and West (from the tales of *Kalila and Dimna* to Marcel Proust's search for lost time) touches on questions of travel and tourism, cultural heritage and current debates regarding the production of place through mediations of market forces. The narrator's geography is not built on oppositions. The stories develop rather in an imagined Europe that undoes borders. A polyphonic but heterogeneous whole in its own right, the book comprises an imagined, Levantine Europe that includes a multilingual, polyphonic Istanbul and extends to Ankara and Medieval Italy. Read in the digital era, *Garden* stages Europe as a hypertext with multiple entry points. Indeed the tenth fairy tale "Red-Salamander" ("Alsemender") fairy tale even mentions the word computer (1979, 171). When read with an imagination focused on questions of exhibition and spectacle, we realize that familiar geographic positionings are actually produced in and through circulation.

Cinematic Text: Reading and Travel

Garden pivots on the themes of exhibition, spectacle, and travel, and cinema is one important source for its stories, dreams, and transformations. Füsun Akatlı has described Bilge Karasu's first book, *Death in Troy*, as a textual "mosaic" (1982, 259). More than a mosaic, the dynamic quality of *Garden* could be described as a cinematic text. This cinematic quality is created through language. While it does

not cite films directly, cinema is as important a source for Karasu's writing as music and painting. Cinema is a medium that can render spaces unmoored and set geographies into motion.

Cinema is mentioned several times in both the frame story of *Garden*, and within the fairy tales. The word "cinema" is used six times within the first three pages of the book. This repetition alerts the reader to cinema's important role as a virtual source for the stories.

> With each passing day, more and more feeling the fatigue of my travels, I constantly was devising new ways to fight my exhaustion so I could find the strength to go out and eat at least and, perhaps, go to a cinema afterwards, if the film interested me. (2004, 1)
>
> Yol yorgunluğunu her geçen günle, daha çok duyuyordum, ama bu yorgunluğu üzerimden atmak, geççe de olsa yemeğe gidecek, ardından, ilgimi çekerse bir sinemaya girecek gücü, yeniden, kısa bir süre içimde bulmak için, yeni yeni yöntemler de geliştiriyordum bir yandan. (1979, 9)

Upon arriving in a new city, the traveler first locates the cinema. Indeed, the cinema is as important a site of consumption and pleasure as the restaurant and sweet shop.

> The *cinema* was just across the narrow main street, just steps from where I sat. The *film* started at 9 o'clock. I had plenty of time to walk to the sweet shop, only six steps from the *cinema*, and buy some of the famous sweets of the medieval festivals. (2004, 2, emphasis mine)
>
> Sinema, üç buçuk metre enindeki ana caddenin karşı kaldırımındaydı. Lokantanın kapısıyla sinemanın kapısı arası, olsa olsa, yedi adımdı. Filim dokuzda başlıyordu. Buranın pek ünlü, gene ortaçağ şenliklerinden kalma yarı helva yarı lokum tatlısından almağa gideceğim şekerci dükkanı ise sinemadan altı yedi adım yukardaydı. (1979, 10)

The mysterious foreigner is seen at the cinema and then disappears from sight:

> We got up at the same time. Our eyes met. I felt a dizzy spell in my head, a reverberation. He walked past me. Ten steps between us, we walked to the sweet shop, then to the cinema. I couldn't see him after the film. At the hotel entrance, we met again, paused momentarily, exchanged abrupt "after-you-no-after-you's." In the landing on the first floor, he stopped

> briefly when I turned to walk toward my room; he then walked behind me, opened the door facing mine, and went inside. (2004, 3)
>
> İkimiz birden kalktık ayağa. O zaman göz göze geldik. Başım uğuldadı, uğultular yankılandı. Önümden geçip gitti. Aramızda on adımlık bir aralık, şekerciye doğru yürüdük. Sonra sinemaya. Sinemadan çıkarken görememiştim. Otelin kapısında "Siz buyurun/rica ederim siz buyurun" gibilerden bir an duraladık. Birinci katın sahanlığında, ben odama doğru saparken, o biraz durdu, sonra ardımdan yürüyüp geldi, kapımın karşısındaki kapıyı açıp girdi. (1979, 11)

Later, in the fifth section of the frame story:

> A new movie had opened. I thought of going to the sweet shop and eating an ice cream after the movie. When I saw him going that way, I returned to my hotel room instead and went to bed. (2004, 83)
>
> Film değişmişti. Sinemadan sonra şekerciye gidip dondurma yemeyi düşünmüştüm. O da oraya doğru gidince otele dönüp yattım. (1979, 80)

It is notable that the film being watched is never mentioned in these excerpts. Even though moving images are a structural inspiration for the text, a cinematic story takes shape in the writing. If we read the text on a structural level, both the transitions between the frame story and the fairy tales, as well as the cuts, jumps and insertions in the individual tales themselves, reveal a cinematic form of montage to be the main method through which the text is formed.

The fairy tale "The Man Who Missed His Ride Night after Night" is an excellent example of this. This story stages a perspective split in two. Amidst cut-off sentences and sections that develop from the inside outward, the text develops visually through images that shuttle between the perspectives of narrator and perceiver. At the same time that the main character paces a busy marketplace in search for a bus to the Sazandere, the coastal city of his dreams, he also observes himself from above like a character in his own film:

> He stood somewhere outside the [marketplace], as if he was filming it, and he watched himself walking slowly from one end of the [marketplace] to the other. (2004, 28) [2]
>
> pazar yerinin dışında bir yerden, film çeker gibi durduğu bir yerden de, pazar yerinin boydan boya ağır ağır geçişini izliyordu kendi kendinin. (1979, 33)

As the man becomes his own spectator, this splitting of perspective obscures the goal of his journey. Under his own surveillance, his resolution to leave disintegrates, and his movements degrade into closed circles; while watching himself, he is unable to go back.

> It was the man in the [marketplace] who had forgotten the sea. But was it the man watching from the street who knew this, or the one walking in the [marketplace]
>
> from end to end? The man walking in the [marketplace] thought of death awaiting him at the end of his path; the one filming him knew that the other thought of this. Why film on the day when the [marketplace] is dead and not on one of the three days of the week when it is brimming with life? the man on the street was thinking perhaps, standing atop the stairs. Yet he wasn't alone in thinking these thoughts; they also occurred to the man walking [across the marketplace]. Lifting his head—as if he wished to avoid his other self with the camera but in the end expected that he would see him—he glanced at the poplars. The nocturnal bird had probably already arrived to sing among those poplars. Then, avoiding his other self with the camera, he fixed his gaze at his feet moving in front of him, and continued walking. He was walking, filming himself walking. When he reached the other end of the bazaar
>
> The more he realized that he was mixing three of four different spans of time altogether, the more he became confused. While his bus approached, he felt drowsy—probably because he was road-weary—he was split in two, between the man walking in the bazaar and the one filming him from above. (2004, 32)
>
> […] Pazar yerindeki adamdı denizi unutan. Bunu, sokağın oradan bakan adam olarak mı, yoksa pazar yerinin
>
> bir ucundan bir ucuna yürüyen adam olarak mı biliyordu? Yolunun ucundaki ölümü düşünmüştü pazar yerinde yürüyen adam, ya da onun
>
> öyle düşündüğünü, filim çeken adam bilmişti. Niye pazar yaşadığı üç günün değil de, bu ölü günün filmini çekiyorum makinemle? diye düşünüyordu galiba sokağın oradaki, merdivenin başındaki. Ama gene de yalnız o değildi bunları usundan geçiren, pazar yerinde yürüyen kendi de öyle geçirivermişti bunları içinden. Başını kaldırmış, filim çeken.

> kendine bakıyormuş gibi, ama sonunda ona bakacağını sanarak, kavaklara bir göz atmıştı. O kuş bu kavaklara da gelir öterdi herhalde geceleri. Sonra filim çeken kendine bakmadan, gözlerini önünde giden ayaklarına dikmiş, yürümüştü gene. Yürüyor, kendi filmini çekiyordu yukarıdan. Pazar yerinin öbür ucuna vardığında
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> Üç dört ayrı zamanı birbirine kattığının bilincine vardıkça usu büsbütün karışıyordu. Geldiği otobüs buralara yaklaşırken, yol yorgunluğundan olsa gerek, ımızgandığı yerde, pazar yerinde yürüyen adamla yukarıdan bu adamın filmini çeken adama bölünmüştü. (1979, 36-37)

As Erving Goffman explains in his theory of framing, every activity placed within a specific frame is developed by ignoring other concepts that remain outside the frame (1986, 210). According to Andre Bazin's theory of film, the frame is like an obstructive mask, and that which remains outside of the screen can be equally as important as that which is contained within it (Bazin 1967). While focusing on the frame, our attention constantly moves to other objects and frames outside of the frame. Instead of watching and following one single story from beginning to end, it is as if *Garden*—through its use of framing and nesting, of stories within stories—presents the reader in the era of multimedia a stripped down, modern theory of reading and traveling.

Which films inspired this cinematic method of narration? Which films was Karasu watching while composing this book? What films are shown and watched in *Garden*? The only direct allusion I have found to a film is to Walerian Borowczyk's *Blanche* in the fairy tale "In Praise of the Crab" ("Yengece Övgü"):

> In the case of suicide by one's own hand (one can also commit suicide by the hand of another...) I've often mentioned that film to you; Valerian Borowczyk's Blanche is a good example of what I am talking about) if the act is to bear any value, it shouldn't be performed secretly, masked, or staged as an accident, delirium or desperation. (2004, 81)
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> Kendi canına kendi eliyle kıyma—başkasının eliyle de kendi canına kıyılır ya… Sana o filmin sözünü epey etmiştim; Valerian Borowczyk'in Blanche'ı, bu dediğime iyi örnek olabilir—söz konusu olunca, bu eylemin, değer taşıyabilmesi için, gizlice, maskelenerek, kaza ya da çılgınlık, umutsuzluk bunalımı süsü verilerek yapılmaması gerekir derim. (1979, 78)

Borowczyk was a Polish painter and director born in 1923. Famous for his film posters and surrealist animated films, he immigrated to Paris in 1959, where he continued his career directing fantasy films. Borowczyk is remembered for his films that came up against censorship, such as the notorious pornographic scenes from *La bête* (1975), and has been described by some critics as one of the first artists of modern cinema (Malcolm 2000). His work is comparable to the dark humor of Franz Kafka and Luis Buñuel. Terry Gilliam considers Borowczyk's *Les Jeux des Anges* (1964) to be one of the ten best animated films in the history of cinema (Gilliam 2001). *Blanche*, shot in France in 1971, features Borowczyk's partner Ligia Branice. Set in a medieval palace, it tells the story of a young and beautiful woman and her old, jealous, and sovereign husband.

While translating *Garden* in the 1990s, in a world before Google and YouTube, this allusion to a film and director I was not aware of remained outside of my frame of reference. The reader/viewer of the 2010s, however, can easily search on Google and watch the trailer of this film on YouTube. The first image is the view of a foggy forest. The credits begin, and we learn that the film is an adaptation of the Polish writer Juliusz Slawacki's tragedy *Mazeppa*, written from exile in the Paris of 1889. Then the image is suddenly cut. A snow-white pigeon, flapping inside a cage, enters the screen. We return to the forest landscape once again, and a palace appears amidst the fog. Then we see a young woman emerging from the bathtub. Her naked body is partially veiled by a lace curtain, her long hair, and the towel that a servant brings and wraps her in. Returning once again to the white pigeon flapping in its cage we assume that this imprisoned bird has a metaphoric meaning, which the color match underscores, as we then see the woman, dressed in a snow-white dress and headdress, putting on her jewelry. Between these scenes, the film cuts back to the view of the palace.

The sound of a voice singing in a shrill tone accompanies all of these images. We later learn that the music is diegetic, played by a quartet displayed on the screen, and the voice is that of a castrato singer. Spectators framed by a window are analyzing the songs. As this small fragment indicates, the past is a self-conscious performance in this film, staged with attentive use of costume, sound, and editing. The repeated images of the landscape and the caged bird that are inserted through the use of montage interrupt the main narrative, forming time and place in a similar manner to *Garden*. We perceive a carnivalesque, almost absurdist humor—one that nears the whit of Monty Python—in the staging of the musicians and spectators. If we read *Garden* together with this visual text,

parallels begin to emerge; from place to place in the book we also notice a dark humor and a slightly absurd animal aesthetic, counterpointing the fatal turn of several stories. If we consider *Blanche* as a whole, the film's themes of love, jealousy, impossible desire and death have similar counterparts in the tales of *Garden*. But even more than the chain of events in the stories, it is possible to establish a likeness on the level of mise-en-scène, atmosphere, and cinematic style of narrative. Karasu may have viewed this film that he references at the French Cultural Center in Ankara. In place of traveling to Italy, he may have gone to the cinema. One answer to the question: "Where is Europe?" is "Europe is in the cinema!" Circulation and transformation between visual media and literature lie at the foundation of imaginary geographies.

For the reader living in the digital era, *Garden* may evoke other films as well, and it is possible to initiate a conversation with films that are not directly referred to in the book. The *Gesualdo* sections of the twelfth tale "Where the Tale Also Rips Suddenly" ("Masalın da Yırtılıverdiği Yer"), for example, awaken other visual and audio echoes. Carlo Gesualdo de Venosa (1560-1613) was a musical composer of the 16th and 17th centuries. In his book titled *Gesualdo*, Enis Batur, for instance, juxtaposes Karasu's "Where the Tale Also Rips Suddenly" to Aldous Huxley, Julio Cortázar, Igor Stravinski and Ece Ayhan's texts (1993, 37-50). Karasu's text could also be placed side by side with Werner Herzog's 1995 film, which is available on DVD and YouTube, *Gesualdo: Death for Five Voices*. If we analyze the use of place and music in *Garden* alongside the film by Herzog, we find that "polyphonic variations" is indeed a fitting description of *Garden*'s structure. As the composer of incredibly beautiful, polyphonic madrigals anteceding late 19th century musical composition, Gesualdo is, on the one hand, far ahead of his time; on the other hand, he is a tyrannical "barbarian," who brutally killed his wife Maria d'Avalos and her lover. He was both a genius and a lunatic. From an aesthetic standpoint, the placement of this composer's story in the twelfth tale of *Garden* both opens up structural correspondences and reveals the terrifying, dark savageness that often underscores modern works of art, reminding us that this kind of violence is not absent from European civilization.

With Web sites like YouTube we have a new kind of archive right at our fingertips. As its purpose is not preservation, YouTube does not fit the classic conception of archiving; it is rather a repository of cultural memory that is constantly in dynamic transformation through shared usage (Prelinger 2009: 268-274). While *Garden* was being written and translated, we did not have high-speed

Internet connections, or a comparable audio-visual archive at our disposal. We can now read differently, establishing connections by opening ever new windows and rapidly changing frames. The way we read has changed, expanded, maybe even become more complex. But in one respect, we can say that Karasu anticipated and staged hypertext reading tactics before the arrival of the World Wide Web. Reading the text within a web of visual media connections opens up an interrogation of oppositions such as local and foreign, inside and outside, East and West, savage and civilized, modern and traditional. Geopolitical positionings, categorical borders, and shared memories are all in constant transformation through translation. We thus come close to Jean-Luc Nancy's conception of being-with, a worldview he describes in *Being Singular Plural* (2000). Bilge Karasu's writing thus remains fresh and timely, speaking to fundamental questions of contact and coexistence in our world.

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[2] I differ here from Aron Aji's translation of "pazar yeri" as "bazaar," suggesting "marketplace" in its stead.