**Pınar Umman, “Resilience and Resistance in Orhan Pamuk’s Nights of Plague”**

Based on my master’s thesis, this paper examines the role of the pandemic in Orhan Pamuk’s Nights of Plague (2021) as a central structural element, plot device, and thematic, initiating different kinds of transformations for the characters and the novel itself. It takes a closer look at how the plague, while driving Mingerians to the depths of despair, also enables resistance to form against Ottoman rule and a stronger sense of belonging to be created among the island folk, which in turn inspires hope. As such, the novel suggests that a catastrophe of historic proportions is bound to have an effect beyond the tremendous losses it causes: in the case of Minger, a paradigm shift and the re-articulation of allegiances, identities, and priorities are what follows, with the plague actually modeling the Girardian "mimetic contagion" behind nationalism in the novel. Moreover, for all the fears of contagion that drive its plot, the novel, through its application of poetic justice, advocates for necessarily “impure” artistic knowledge as key to resilience, with an idea of “minor” or “delicate” health as an aspirational state to be achieved via art.

**Didem Ozan, “The Politics of Suspension in the Aftermath of the February Earthquakes in Turkey”**

I will look at Agamben’s view on state of exception together with Schmitt’s ideas on the political to discuss recent February earthquakes. State of exception generates a space in which antagonism between the norm and its application comes to the extremist point. For Schmitt, the political dwells in the very existential moment, which calls for friend/enemy grouping in extreme case. The political enemy is what negates existence of bodies. People asked, “where is the state?”
when the state was expected to prevent deaths, but it did not operate. I ask if the established order was suspended and suspected by people, then, they decided on state of exception in which they built their encounters of solidarity. Since they evaluate state of exception from perspective of government, I want to bring perspective of social bodies to look for affective political actions. I will try to think about this issue through Sara Ahmed’s views on cultural politics of emotions. I wonder if what they feel towards the state could move them to what empowered their existence and away from what decreased their capacity to live. In other words, the expected order could not be applied by the state, in return, people tried to operate against the situation that annihilated lives. This suspension of the order by people seems to be significant since it opens possibility of
the political action.

**Ufuk Karataş, “Dialectic of Hope and Despair in Disaster Cinema”**

After the end of the western in the 1970s, the disaster film emerged as a cinematic genre. As
the name suggests, the disaster film depicts a disastrous event and its aftermath; showing the
catastrophe in its full spectacle-form. The conflict and the respective spectator sentiment
towards the narrative that exists in every film, is now foregrounded in the disaster film. Images
of hope and despair that emerge in between a romantic couple in a rom-com, are now
transposed to the level of the society, and even civilization itself. This article will analyze and
dissect how images/signifiers of hope and despair have been used in the disaster film. Based
on a Lacanian psychoanalytic analysis of these signifiers, I will argue for the differentiation
between the signifier of “being hopeful” and the signifier of “to hope”; and claim that the same
differentiation cannot be made with despair. Drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis, Hegelian
dialectics, and Žižekian film theory; I will show how this imbalance between hope and despair
leads to the formation of a political desire (or a desire for politics) in the disaster film.

**İlkan Can İpekçi, “Gender and Sexuality Outside the Clinic: A Psychosocial Analysis of Queer\* Trauma
and LGBTQIA+ Mental Health in Turkey”**

This study investigates the effects of queer\* trauma on the mental health and daily lives of LGBTQIA+ individuals in Turkey from queer psychoanalytic perspectives. The author contends that queer\* trauma arises from insidious, systemic traumatic experiences of
embodying non-normative gendered and sexual identities in a society that perpetually
delegitimizes, pathologizes, discriminates against, and perpetrates violence against them.
Through the case studies of three psychodiverse queer-identifying individuals, the author
examines how the interlocutors’ everyday life experiences are implicated at the intersections
of psychoanalytic and queer theories of trauma, highlighting the necessity of considering the
interconnections between the individual, family members, peers, communities, and larger
systems to grasp the psychological ramifications of queer\* trauma beyond the boundaries of
the clinic. Acknowledging the inadequacies of classical and contemporary psychoanalytic
theories of trauma, the author calls for feminist queer readings of these texts to investigate the
covert, everyday traumas and envision new forms of queer resilience in Turkey. Finally, the
author underscores the dearth of research on the mental health of LGBTQIA+ individuals in
Turkey, highlighting the institutionalization of conservative, cisheteronormative beliefs and
patriarchal, nationalist cultural heritage, and the resulting psychosocial harm inflicted on
LGBTQIA+ individuals in Turkey.

**Esma Güzin Yarıcı, “*An Inquiry into Mr. Gay Syria film within the axis of Affect and Performativity Theories”***

I am conducting research about the narratives on gay Syrians that are portrayed in Mr. Gay Syria film. Within the scope of this study, I aim to focus on how narratives take the role of shaping queer politics in the Middle East-Geography against the hegemonic “Western” based migration regimes. The idea of the “suffering gay refugee” figure that Saleh Fadi brings forward
incorporates my research focus in sense of how the political subjectivity of Syrian gay refugees in the narratives transgress notions of vulnerability and resilience. Thus, by analyzing Mr. Gay Syria I argue that we can point out the narratives’ affective potential to transform political grounds for queer and feminist politics in Turkey. As the methodology of this study, I aim to conduct two separate focus group discussions on the online platform together with the screening of Mr. Gay Syria. One group will be formed by activists from Turkey, and the other group will be formed by MENA region LGBTI+ migrants. Besides these FGDs, the in-depth reading of the film and other resources such as magazine interviews, and festival reviews will be other research sources for the narrative critique.

**Eylül Yorulmaz, “The Posthuman Body as a Site of Resilience: Gender Fluidity and Hybridity in
Angela Carter’s The Passion of New Eve”**

As the notion of resilience has risen to prominence in posthumanism over the last
decade, it has also opened up new avenues for evaluating and reshaping the conception of
gender and body. The posthuman subject has come to an awareness of how one’s gender is
constantly reshaped on fluid and permeable grounds to cope with the environment one lives in.
In the contemporary literature, Angela Carter poses a plethora of questions about the
transforming perception of what it means to be human. In her controversial novel, The Passion
of New Eve (1977), she deconstructs traditional gender roles by creating a surreal world in
which the boundaries between female/male, cultural/natural and human/animal are blurred. The
novel touches upon the debates over social taboos such as gender transition surgery and male
pregnancy by highlighting Evelyn’s, or New Eve’s, transformation journey. Throughout the
chaotic incidents, s/he discovers a new way of living and surviving in a complex world by
embracing her multifarious being. Eve’s constant reconstruction of her body renders her a
resilient subject who can create adaptive selves by recognizing her/his vulnerability in the face
of nature. Consequently, this paper attempts to illuminate how posthuman body acts as a means of resilience in Angela Carter’s The Passion of New Eve by revealing the gender fluidity and hybridity of its protagonist.

**İrem Topçu, ““Memleket bu haldeyken?”: The Nostalgia of Independence on Turkish Media”**

Academic works have been published on historical TV series that portray idealized
versions of the Ottoman and Islamic Turkish past, such as Muhteşem Yüzyıl (Arsan &amp; Yıldırım, 2014), Diriliş: Ertuğrul (Güler, 2018) and Payitaht: Abdülhamit (Çevik, 2020). However, an inadequate amount of discourse surrounds the “counter” media of the neo-Ottoman trend on
Turkish television. This paper analyzes two pop culture works, the TV series Vatanım Sensin
(2016-2018) and the web series Pera Palas’ta Gece Yarısı (2022), which both cover the early
years of the Turkish Independence War from the eyes of fictional and relatively decentral
subjects like women and agents. Based on textual analysis and a small-scale hashtag ethnography conducted on Twitter, the re-formation of Kemalist historiography through these series is discussed as a reaction to the long Justice and Development Party (JDP) regime. I propose that popular culture creates alternative means of resistance, spaces of escapism, and reification of nostalgia in, by, and for the secular Kemalist groups in the current political atmosphere of Turkey.

**Hatice Sena Arıcıoğlu, “The Limits of Resistance: Exploring Women’s Struggle to Remove Their Headscarves”**

Head-covering practices of women in Turkey have been caught in a triangle of identity,
performativity, and embodied resistance for decades. However, what is understood from the
headscarf issue is going through a rapid transformation, with hundreds of women mobilizing
not for their right to wear but to remove their headscarves. Against this background, women’s
recent practices of voluntary un-covering, i.e., removing their headscarves end up being
understood as acts of resistance. Relying on women’s personal accounts, this study
challenges the taken-for-granted approaches to resistance and argues that the already-existing
mechanisms of resistance cannot explain what makes resistance possible, where resistance
ends, and what comes after resistance for women who remove their headscarves. For these
women, it is their emotions, affective experiences, and inner world that drive their resistance
while they distance themselves from intelligible identities, visible performances, and bodily
actions as burdens. Therefore, by examining women’s struggle to remove their headscarves,
this study suggests that an affective turn is needed in theorizing and making sense of
resistance within feminist politics. In this way, as women envision alternative ways of being
in the world before and after removing their headscarves, the core assumptions about what
constitutes resistance are brought into question.

**Sümeyra Güneş, “Can the Subaltern Joke? Identity Humor and Offense on Istanbul’s Stand-up Stages”**

My research explores how stand-up comedians claim visibility and carve themselves alternative
spaces on stages in the highly censored public space of Istanbul and within the broader political context of Turkey’s authoritarian rule. Beyond state surveillance and related legal consequences, stand-up comedians in Turkey have to navigate more ambiguous workings of power. Appropriateness, political correctness, censorship, and the freedom to offend are
always situated within a particular set of specific political, legal, and social circumstances. What
does it mean for someone from a minority background in Turkey, whether they are Alevi citizens belonging to a religious minority, Kurdish citizens constituting an ethnic minority, LGBTQIA+ individuals, or members of migrant populations to make identity jokes on a stand-up stage in Istanbul? How are the lines of acceptable representation as well as offense drawn and
negotiated between Istanbul’s comedians and their audience? The struggles over identity representation through humor and offense in an extremely heterogenous urban space also rest on an affective space that gets involved in a dialectical relationship with its occupiers. This paper seeks to mediate between approaches that insist on the autonomy of affect and approaches that prioritize a discursive and narrative approach to the study of emotions through
demonstrating that space of comedy is constituted by and continues to rely on both the discursive and the affective.

**Yasemin Özer, “Syrian ‘Brokers of Care’ and Lived Citizenship in Istanbul”**

Based on a year-long ethnographic research in 2019 in Istanbul, this paper focuses on a group of refugee actors it refers to as “brokers of care,” who embody an array of skills, competencies, and acquired expertise that make them strategically positioned in their communities to be conduits of care and resources for others. Concentrating on the life story of one Syrian refugee, Iman, it demonstrates that while brokers of care are themselves refugees who live with all the economic precarities and political vulnerabilities that come with differentiated inclusion, they, nevertheless, play an essential role in the daily flow of life in the city. They mediate, linguistically and culturally, between different actors and institutions. Drawing on knowledge of available resources and how to access and distribute them, they are adept at navigating a maze-like urban landscape. Most importantly, the article argues, through these activities, Syrian brokers of care live out citizenship as an embodied experience while also facilitating the enactment of lived citizenship for others in their communities in Istanbul. In contrast to widely publicized political activism by refugees, who claim rights through protests or encampments across European cities, the kind of refugee agency discussed here is less spectacular yet just as potent in terms of ensuring community survival.

**Enis Demirer, “Washing hands for 20 seconds as a queer gesture: Quotidian resilience in times of a global pandemic”**

Provoked by a set of illustrations that have been created by the queer illustrator Semih Özkarakaş during the general lockdowns amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic, my paper investigates the role of creativity and everyday performance as constituents of a queer practice of resilience in the time of an imminent crisis and uncertainty. Arguing for an understanding of resilience that centres longing and imagination in dialogue with theorists like José Esteban Muñoz, I suggest that in the genre-bending hands of Özkarakaş, the hand-washing posters which all of a sudden became commonplace in our lives as reminders of the immanent risk of a contagious virus became utopian performative scripts that sought to revitalise joy as an inexhaustible repository for queer resilience. In defiance of a public health system which had already been persistently failing LGBTI+ subjects and whose shortcomings have become gruesomely hyper-visible amid a global health crisis, Özkarakaş’s illustrations robs the images that were popularised by this very broken health system and repurposes them as tools for collective perseverance under circumstances where the possibilities of sociality were utterly hampered.

**Nazife Kosukoğlu, “Dubious Intimacies: Friendship and Criminal Law”**

In our late modern times, friends and friendships are extremely important. Economic hardships
have turned sharing a house with flatmates into a common practice for professional adults. As
formal families, neighborhoods and public agencies do not or can not provide the same types of
support that they once did, friendship and selected ties of intimacy have acquired a new
importance. But who is a friend? And what kind of a bind is friendship in terms of its legal
consequences? In this paper, I explore these questions in the context of Turkish criminal law.

Analyzing case-law, legislation and legal discourse, I argue that Turkish criminal law has been
extremely dismissive of friendship in its approach to intimacy, and relations of care and that it
has failed to recognize the validity of ties other than those cemented with blood or marriage in
various ways. Examining this dismissal and failure from a historical and feminist perspective,
this paper highlights the role of law in the constructions of intimacy and the need for
recognizing the multitude of ties that bind people to each other.