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Assembling Kadıköy: Affect, Atmosphere, and Urban Becoming in Safiye Erol's *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*

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Abstract

This article examines *Kadıköy'nün Romanı* by Safiye Erol as a literary articulation of urban becoming, where space, subjectivity, and affect are coproduced through embodied practices, emotional atmospheres, and mobile encounters. Rather than treating the novel as a nostalgic representation of early republican Istanbul or a romantic narrative of youth, the analysis foregrounds it as a site of spatial composition and affective cartography. Drawing on affect theory (Ben Anderson, Sara Ahmed), Deleuzian assemblage thinking, and mobility studies (Tim Ingold, Nigel Thrift), the article explores how Kadıköy is rendered not as a stable backdrop but as a living, shifting urban assemblage. The novel's modes of movement—walking, driving, and rowing—are treated as affective spatial practices that modulate attention, relationality, and emotional intensity. The affective register of the novel transforms over time, moving from collective exuberance to spatialized sorrow, particularly through the emergence of *ıztırap*, a persistent suffering that saturates both characters and the places they inhabit. By reading *Kadıköy'nün Romanı* as a textured geography of emotion, memory, and motion, the article argues for a conception of urban modernity that exceeds infrastructural or ideological paradigms. Kadıköy becomes a porous district, assembled through rhythms, atmospheres, and attachments—felt, remembered, and eventually departed from. Through this reading, the novel is situated within a broader discourse of affective urbanism and literary spatial thought, demonstrating how fiction may serve as a mode of spatial thinking and emotional mapping in periods of urban transformation.

Keywords: affect theory, urban assemblage, mobility, atmosphere, Kadıköy

Kadıköy Terkibi: Safiye Erol'un Kadıköy'nün Romanı'nda Duygulanım, Atmosfer ve Kentsel Oluş

Özet

Bu makale, Safiye Erol'un *Kadıköy'nün Romanı* adlı eserini, bedenlenmiş pratikler, duygulanımsal atmosferler ve hareketli karşılaşmalar yoluyla mekân, öznel ve hissin birlikte üretildiği edebi bir "kent-oluş" anlatısı olarak ele almaktadır. Romanı erken cumhuriyet dönemi İstanbul'unun nostaljik bir temsili ya da gençliğe dair romantik bir hikâye olarak okumak yerine, duygulanımsal bir kartografya ve mekânsal bileşim alanı olarak merkeze alan makale, duygulanım kuramı (Ben Anderson, Sara Ahmed), Deleuze Guattari terkip düşüncesi ve hareketlilik çalışmaları (Tim Ingold, Nigel Thrift) gibi kuramsal çerçevelerden yararlanarak, Kadıköy'ün durağan bir fon değil, yaşayan ve dönüşen bir kentsel terkip olarak roman boyunca nasıl kurulduğunu incelemektedir. Yürüme, araba kullanma ve sandal gezintisi gibi hareket biçimleri, dikkati, ilişkilendirme biçimlerini ve duygusal yoğunluğu dönüştüren mekânsal pratikler olarak ele alınmaktadır. Romanın duygusal tonu zamanla değişerek kolektif coşkudan mekânsallaşmış bir hüznü yönelmektedir; bu süreçte *ıztırap* olarak adlandırılan yapışkan bir acı hem karakterlerin hem de mekânların içine işlemiş bir duygulanım biçimi olarak belirlemektedir. *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, bu çerçevede, kentsel modernliği yalnızca altyapı ya da ideoloji ekseninden değil, duygu, bellek ve hareketin dokusal coğrafyası olarak düşünmeye imkân veren bir kurmaca olarak değerlendirilir. Roman, kurmaca anlatının mekânsal düşünme ve duygusal haritalama süreçlerine nasıl katkıda bulunabileceğini göstererek, edebiyatta duygulanımsal kent çalışmaları tartışmasında konumlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: duygulanım kuramı, kentsel terkip, hareketlilik, atmosfer, Kadıköy

Safiye Erol's *Kadıköy'nün Romanı* (1938) offers more than a narrative of youth, love, or urban transformation.¹ It presents a deeply textured portrait of a district in flux—a spatial, emo-

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1 Safiye Erol (1902–64) was a novelist, essayist, and translator whose cosmopolitan education and Istanbul roots decisively shaped her literary geography. Born in Uzunköprü, Thrace, she moved with her family to Üsküdar in 1906 and was schooled in multilingual settings (French governess school; German secondary schools in Haydarpaşa and

104 tional, and historical formation undergoing a moment of becoming. Set in the early 1930s, during a pivotal phase in the modernization of Istanbul's urban periphery, the novel documents not only architectural and infrastructural change, but also the affective and experiential reconfiguration of place. Kadıköy is rendered not as a passive setting but as a living, breathing terrain through which characters move, remember, suffer, and return. Its streets, piers, gardens, and sea routes emerge as charged thresholds where private feeling and public space interlace.

At the center of the narrative lies a group known as the Yediler—seven young figures whose shared rhythms animate the early chapters with scenes of leisure, flirtation, and performative sociability. Yet as the novel progresses, this vibrant collectivity dissolves, giving way to solitude, exile, and what the text names as *ıztırıp*: a sticky, persistent form of pain that saturates not only individuals but the spaces they inhabit.² The affective register of the novel shifts accordingly, moving from exuberant vitality to a melancholic atmosphere where emotion is not simply expressed but spatially inscribed. Kadıköy becomes a geography of feeling, where memory adheres to place, and where suffering becomes a condition of the landscape itself.

This study reads *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı* as a cartography of affective urbanism, an attempt to think about spatial transformation not solely through the lens of planning, modernity, or ideology but through the rhythms, textures, and atmospheres that constitute urban experience from within. Rather than framing the novel as a static reflection of historical change, I approach it as an active site of spatial composition and emotional articulation. What follows is a methodological outline of the analytical orientation that guides this reading, one that privileges movement, mood, encounter, and the assembling of space through lived sensation.

This article approaches *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı* not simply as a literary reflection of early republican Istanbul but as a generative site in which space, subjectivity, and affect converge through embodied practices, sensory textures, and shifting temporal rhythms. Rather than treating the novel as a narrative of individual formation or romantic entanglement alone, the analysis foregrounds it as an atmospheric cartography, one in which Kadıköy's evolving urban fabric is co-constituted with the emotional intensities and kinetic gestures of its inhabitants. The reading thus unfolds at the intersection of affect theory, urban spatial thought, and assemblage thinking, guided by a methodological orientation that asks not what space represents but how it feels, moves, and gathers.

At the core of this framework is Ben Anderson's formulation of "affective atmospheres," which offers a vocabulary for apprehending the diffuse yet tangible moods that shape so-

Beyoğlu). In 1917 she left for Lübeck, graduating from the private Falkenplatz Gymnasium in 1919; after a brief return to Istanbul during a period of political unrest, she resumed her education in Germany, studying philosophy at Marburg (1921) and spending a term at Freiburg's Realgymnasium before transferring to the University of Munich. There she earned a doctorate in Oriental studies in 1926 with her dissertation "Die Pflanzennamen in der altarabischen Poesie," signaling a wide philological range across Arabic and Persian alongside German and French. While a student she published two early stories in a German magazine ("Leylâ ile Mecnun," "Büyücü Masalı"). Back in Istanbul from 1927 onward, she translated Selma Lagerlöf and La Motte-Fouqué and wrote essays and short fiction for *Millî Mecmua* (often under the pen names Safiye Sâmî and Dilârâ). She married in 1931 and later adopted her niece Aydın. Briefly a municipal council member in 1943, she contributed cultural columns to *Havadis*, *Son Havadis*, and *Yeni İstanbul*. A pivotal turn came in the late 1940s when Erol met Samiha Ayverdi, a novelist and Sufi, through whom she was introduced to the Sufi master Kenan Rifâî. This encounter profoundly reshaped her intellectual and spiritual orientation, integrating her humanist training with a metaphysical outlook grounded in Istanbul's living mystic culture. Active in civic-cultural associations in the early 1960s, she died in Istanbul on 1 October 1964 and was buried at Karacaahmet Cemetery. For more detailed biographical information, see Abdullah Uçman, "Erol, Safiye," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2020), <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/erol-safiye>; and Seçil Dumantepe, "Safiye Erol," *Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü* (Ahmet Yesevi Üniversitesi, 2019), <https://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/erol-safiye>.

2 The term *ıztırıp* is retained in its original Turkish form throughout this article. While the standard modern Turkish spelling would be *ıtırıp* or *ızdırıp*, this particular orthography reflects Safiye Erol's own usage in the novel. The decision to preserve it is both philological and conceptual: In the context of *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, *ıztırıp* functions not merely as a synonym for suffering or anguish, but as a distinct affective condition with spatial and emotional resonance. Translating it as "pain" or "sorrow" would risk flattening its layered semantic and stylistic charge.

cial life without fully resolving into individual emotions.³ This is complemented by Sara Ahmed's account of affect's "stickiness," which explains how feeling adheres to bodies, objects, and spaces in unpredictable yet enduring ways, leaving sedimented traces across both matter and memory.⁴ Deleuzian assemblage theory provides an additional conceptual lens, allowing us to see space in the novel not as a stable container but as a contingent, emergent configuration of bodies, gestures, histories, and materials.⁵ Under this view, Kadıköy appears not as a bounded district but as a dynamic urban assemblage, always in motion, always in the process of being reconfigured.

To address the novel's attentiveness to mobility, the analysis also draws on spatial phenomenology and mobility studies. Walking, driving, and rowing are approached not as background activities or narrative transitions but as spatial practices that reorient attention, restructure intimacy, and modulate affect. These modes of movement resonate with Tim Ingold's conception of wayfaring as a practice of knowing-in-motion, and with Nigel Thrift's theorization of automobility as a site of the technological unconscious.⁶ In *Kadıköy'ün Romanı*, such practices generate atmospheres and enact relations—between characters and place, between memory and landscape, between past attachments and present dislocations.

Methodologically, the article adopts a mode of close reading attuned to spatial inflection, atmospheric texture, and emotional cadence. Rather than parsing the novel into discrete themes, it follows the affective currents that course through the text, where a lingering scent becomes a vessel of memory, where a stroll inscribes emotional latency, and where a rowboat scene forms a fleeting micropublic afloat on water and sound. Each moment is treated as a node within a broader affective geography, one that stretches across the novel's spatial and temporal scales.

The article contends that *Kadıköy'ün Romanı* both anticipates and enacts a vision of urban modernity that is not merely infrastructural but affective, contingent, and situated. It stages the formation and dissolution of social worlds through minor modulations of tone, movement, and sensory encounter. By tracing how Kadıköy is inhabited, traversed, remembered, and eventually left behind, the novel reveals how literature does more than represent

3 Affective atmospheres refer to spatially and temporally diffuse intensities that emerge from the interplay of bodies, materials, and environments, yet exceed them. As Ben Anderson explains, they are not reducible to personal emotions or subjective states but operate in the in-between, both present and absent, definite and indeterminate. They can envelop, press upon, and subtly shape experience, often without being consciously registered. Drawing from both phenomenology and a materialist imagination, Anderson frames them as collective, ambient forces that disclose the felt texture of social life without being fully captured by representational forms or individual subjectivities. See Ben Anderson, "Affective Atmospheres," *Emotion, Space and Society* 2, no. 2 (2009): 77–81.

4 Sara Ahmed conceptualizes affect as "sticky" in the sense that emotions do not reside in subjects or objects but emerge through contact and accumulation. Feelings stick to bodies, signs, and spaces by circulating through histories of usage and association, producing affective investments that shape how we come to feel about particular objects. This stickiness is not intrinsic but acquired, sedimented through repetition and social narration, enabling certain bodies or places to become saturated with emotion and affective value over time. See Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

5 An assemblage (*agencement*) designates a provisional constellation of heterogeneous elements, including bodies, objects, affects, practices, and statements, whose relations give rise to capacities that none of the parts possess in isolation. It is defined less by the identity of its components than by the variable "lines" that tether them together, continually opening onto processes of deterritorialization (disarticulation) and reterritorialization (recomposition). Space, therefore, is never a neutral container but the emergent effect of how these elements co-function, resonate, and reconfigure under shifting conditions. An assemblage is both material and expressive: It binds concrete arrangements (streets, vehicles, weather) to incorporeal vectors (memories, affects, discourses), making any urban scene a living diagram of forces rather than a static form. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3–4, 88–92.

6 Tim Ingold conceives wayfaring not merely as movement through space but as an ongoing, embodied correspondence with a world continually in the making. Unlike the traveler transported between predetermined coordinates, the wayfarer's path emerges in the act of continually moving forward, enmeshed in sensory attunement, improvisation, and environmental responsiveness. Movement, for Ingold, is a form of thinking, a dwelling in motion, through which landscape, memory, and narrative coalesce. See Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (Routledge, 2011), 148–56; Ingold, *The Life of Lines* (Routledge, 2015), 3–7. Nigel Thrift's theorization of automobility brings attention to how the embodied act of driving forms part of a historically novel "technological unconscious." Far from a mechanistic or detached experience, driving generates a hybrid sensorium, a kinesthetic merger of human and machine, that reconfigures spatial perception, temporality, and affective intensity. Thrift shows that automobility reshapes the urban sensorium through not only infrastructure and speed but also the tactile and affective feedback loops between driver, vehicle, and environment. This reworked habitability situates the car not merely as a tool of transport but as a site of atmospheric and emotional experience. See Nigel Thrift, "Driving in the City," *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, nos. 4–5 (2004): 41–59.

106 place; it offers a way of conceiving of its textures—its atmospheres, its densities, its capacities to hold contradiction, ambivalence, and resonance. In this sense, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı* is situated within a wider discourse on affective urbanism, spatial poetics, and the literary production of place, reminding us that to feel a city is also, invariably, to compose it.⁷

From Pastoral *Sayfiye* to Republican Suburbia: Kadıköy's Socio-Spatial Transformation, 1908–35

Between the late nineteenth century and the mid-1930s, Kadıköy underwent a profound socio-spatial transformation, growing from its origins as a semirural seasonal refuge into a suburbanized yet culturally vibrant urban district. This shift was driven by infrastructural modernization, changing class dynamics, and a gradual redefinition of public and private life under the influence of late Ottoman and early republican ideologies. In the decades following the beginning of the Second Constitutional Era in 1908, and especially in the 1930s, Kadıköy became not only more physically integrated into Istanbul's expanding metropolitan network but also symbolically central to emergent forms of republican sociability, leisure, and spatial modernity.

The early twentieth century saw Kadıköy positioned as a prime *sayfiye* district—a summer resort marked by its sea-facing konaks, verdant meadows, and mixed population that included Levantine families, Ottoman bureaucrats, and middle-class Muslim households. The introduction of the Haydarpaşa–İzmit railway and ferry services facilitated this development, making Kadıköy increasingly accessible even as the district retained its pastoral and seaborne allure. The district's spatial composition during this period reflected an oscillation between inward-facing konak culture, characterized by enclosed gardens and gender-segregated spaces, and emerging public practices of modern leisure: promenades, sea baths, open-air theaters, and musical gatherings. Semipublic thresholds such as garden gates and verandas served as ambiguous zones where domestic seclusion met visual exposure.

In the wake of the republic's establishment in 1923, state-led modernization projects and regulatory reforms significantly altered Kadıköy's material and social landscape, with particularly notable changes occurring in the early 1930s. The period between 1930 and 1935 was marked by intensified planning initiatives and infrastructural interventions aimed at transforming Kadıköy into a model of suburban modernity aligned with republican ideals. The enactment of the 1933 Building Law introduced clear zoning regulations, building height limits, and sanitary codes, leading to the systematic subdivision of large estates into smaller parcels. These legislative measures encouraged the construction of detached houses and modest apartment blocks, especially along the axis of Bağdat Avenue, which was itself paved with asphalt in 1935, symbolizing its elevation to a key urban thoroughfare. These changes were not merely architectural but deeply ideological, reflecting the republican regime's emphasis on order, hygiene, secular visibility, and social legibility in the urban fabric. The older konak-centered *sayfiye* culture, characterized by secluded gardens, seasonal occupation, and vertical family structures, was gradually displaced by more standardized residential forms that emphasized nuclear family life and permanent habitation. The demographic profile of the district shifted accordingly, as members of the emerging republican bourgeoisie, including doctors, lawyers, engineers, civil servants, and retired military officers, settled in Kadıköy, drawn by its tranquility, improved amenities, and increasing integration into Istanbul's metropolitan infrastructure.

7 Serhat Güney and Ayşenur Ölmezses read modern Kadıköy narratives through Raymond Williams's idea of "structures of feeling," then plot those affective patterns, including cosmopolitan liveliness, littoral conviviality, growing nostalgia, on geographic information system (GIS) layers that couple literary scenes with parcel and tramway data. *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı* supplies their historical baseline: Seventy-plus passages (from Mükkerrem's ironic critique to sunset rowing episodes) are geo-located and coded to show how Erol's bohemian-bourgeois milieu, at once carefree and self-questioning, crystallizes an emergent mood of displacement that later texts continue to echo. By demonstrating that the novel's 1930s mesh of seaside leisure, youthful aspiration, and latent melancholy already anticipates present-day affective claims on the district, the authors argue that Erol's text remains a template for Kadıköy's identity—an identity forever balancing hedonistic ease with creative unease. See Serhat Güney and Ayşenur Ölmezses, "Mekânsal Anlatılarda His Yapılarının Araştırılması: Kadıköy Örneği," *Galatasaray Üniversitesi İletişim* 40 (June 2024): 78–94.

Tramways introduced in the mid-1930s reoriented daily life and spatial connectivity, particularly between Altiyol, Moda, and Bostancı. These infrastructural arteries enabled not just physical movement but also the circulation of new social forms. The rhythm of the day became punctuated by ferry departures, tram arrivals, and school bells, temporal markers of a more regimented urban modernity. Kadıköy's residential character persisted, but it now operated within a denser, more networked urban framework.

This new spatial regime also recalibrated gender dynamics. Republican reforms granting women visibility in education and professional life found spatial corollaries in Kadıköy. The conversion of former konaks into girls' schools, such as in Erenköy and Çamlıca, signaled a repurposing of imperial domesticity as modern pedagogical space. Leisure practices likewise reflected shifting norms: mixed-gender bathing at Fenerbahçe and Suadiye, promenade rituals along Moda's coastlines, and appearances in open-air cafes and cinema queues became normalized, even as they retained the performative charge of visibility and display. Yet this visibility remained coded, modulated by class, propriety, and the spatial affordances of specific venues.

Recreational geographies expanded dramatically during the early 1930s, reflecting both the modernization of leisure infrastructure and the popularization of secular socialization. Sea baths, which had once maintained strict gender segregation, increasingly gave way to more open beach experiences in places like Moda, Fenerbahçe, and Suadiye. These beaches became spaces of bodily display, aquatic recreation, and flirtatious encounters, markers of a broader aesthetic and moral liberalization in line with the republican ethos. The modernization of these facilities, including wooden changing cabins, shaded platforms, and rental rowboats, made them accessible to a wider range of social classes and ages.

Entertainment venues multiplied and diversified. Kadıköy hosted a range of *gazinós*, open-air concert gardens, and performance halls that became nodes of cultural life. The Süreyya Opera House on Bahariye Street, inaugurated in 1927, symbolized the district's alignment with European-style high culture and functioned as a venue for operettas, concerts, and film screenings. Other sites like Kuşdili Cinema and Apollon Theater served broader audiences, presenting Turkish-language plays, musical revues, and imported films. These venues played a dual role, offering artistic entertainment while reinforcing the aesthetic norms of a middle-class, republican subjectivity.

Cinema in particular emerged as a key cultural technology during the 1930s. Queues outside evening screenings became rituals of visibility, and cinema-going helped consolidate a shared temporality among residents. The presence of American and French films, alongside local productions, contributed to the shaping of a visual modernity rooted in aspiration, spectacle, and romantic fantasy. Concert halls and music pavilions likewise provided forums for artistic experimentation and popular pleasure, often accompanied by *incesaz* ensembles or classical Turkish music performances adapted to the new cultural atmosphere.

Rowboat culture flourished along Kadıköy's shores. In the late afternoons and on weekends, young people and families would rent small boats from Moda, Yoğurtçu, and Kalamış and embark on short sea excursions. These outings, often accompanied by mandolin or vocal music, became spaces of relaxed sociability and affective experimentation. The act of rowing, and of being seen rowing, acquired symbolic capital, especially for young men. Meanwhile, shoreline spectatorship became its own genre of leisure: Watching boats from piers, verandas, or garden arbors formed a low-intensity but persistent layer of everyday entertainment.

Kadıköy's cultural infrastructure expanded during this period to include civic institutions aligned with republican ideals. The founding of the Kadıköy Halkevi in 1933 exemplified this shift. These People's Houses, meant to foster civic virtue and secular nationalism, became sites of adult education, theater, music, and public lectures. They anchored a cultural modernity that was at once aspirational and didactic. Simultaneously, a diverse commercial and artisanal life flourished in neighborhoods like Yeldeğirmeni and Çarşı, where marketplaces, pharmacies, barbers, and coffeehouses formed the arteries of a still deeply local urbanity.

108 Despite rapid modernization, traces of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cosmopolitan fabric persisted.⁸ Non-Muslim pharmacists, Jewish grocers, and Armenian artisans remained part of the district's social fabric, even as nationalization policies and shifting political tides gradually redefined the parameters of inclusion. Kadıköy's sociability was thus layered: shaped by republican reforms, marked by intercommunal memory, and inflected by the rhythms of neighborhood life. Places like Moda Pier, Yoğurtçu Meadow, and Kalamış Cove became sites of emotional and aesthetic investment, where social encounters were staged and affective memories formed.

Recreational geographies structured much of this sociability. Rowboat culture in Moda and Yoğurtçu facilitated intimate and performative interactions across the district's littoral zones. Open-air theaters and *gazin*os served as venues for music, dance, and flirtation, while also delineating class boundaries. Meanwhile, public promenades like those in Kuşdili and Moda allowed for both spectacle and withdrawal, a choreography of presence attuned to the spatial politics of attention and discretion.

Kadıköy's transformation between 1908 and the mid-1930s thus cannot be reduced to a simple narrative of modernization. Rather, it should be read as a dynamic process of urban reconfiguration in which architecture, infrastructure, gender, class, and memory interacted to produce a uniquely affective and historically sedimented space. The district's evolving form mediated the experience of social life itself: from seasonal leisure to permanent residency, from inward-facing *konak* rituals to outward-facing civic engagement, from *sayfiye* tranquility to suburban modernity. Through these layered changes, Kadıköy became both a lived locality and a symbolic site of Turkey's uneven urban modernity, a space where the remnants of empire, the impulses of the nation-state, and the textures of everyday life remained entangled.⁹

A Novel in Transit: *Kadıköy'ün Romanı* and the District in Transformation

Emerging during a period of accelerated transformation in Kadıköy's physical and social landscape, Safiye Erol's *Kadıköy'ün Romanı*, serialized in *Kurun* newspaper in 1935 and published in book form in 1938, offers a literary account that unfolds in real time with the changes it reflects.¹⁰ Set primarily between 1931 and 1933, the novel captures the district at

8 Sarine Agopian reconstructs late Ottoman Kadıköy's transformation from a place of gardens and scattered *konaks* into a commercial and transportation hub by reading Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian's memoirs alongside his hand-drawn neighborhood plans and local registers. She pinpoints the 1855 fire and the 1856 post-fire reorganization as early, locally steered planning moves, then follows the first public ferries of the 1850s and the 1872 railway as catalysts that reoriented daily mobilities, markets, and land values. Her detailed list of plot subdivisions, sales, and price changes documents how agricultural land was commodified, while council minutes and parish records show neighborhood actors (*kalfas*, merchants, guilds, and householders) negotiating alignments, street widths, and public works. The study also foregrounds Kadıköy's cosmopolitan fabric: Armenian ecclesiastical institutions, Greek and Muslim households, mixed commercial streets, and multilingual urban practices coproduced the district's modernization, rather than receiving it from above. In tracing these intercommunal agencies and infrastructures together, Agopian offers a bottom-up account of urban change that links mobility, property, and everyday governance across communities. See Sarine Agopian, "Urban Modernization of Late Ottoman Kadıköy and the Memoirs of Hovhannes Kalfa Stepanian," *YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies* 5 (2023): 23–46, <https://doi.org/10.53979/yillik.2023.3>.

9 For a more detailed description and analysis of the materials and dynamics discussed in this section, see Ebru Salah, "Sayfiye to Banlieue: Suburban Landscape Around Anatolian Railways, from Mid-Nineteenth Century to the World War II" (PhD diss., Middle East Technical University, 2013); Havva Yılmaz, "Everyday Life, Status Groups and Sayfiye Culture in Kadıköy in Second Constitutional Period" (Master's thesis, İstanbul Şehir University, 2017); Adnan Giz, *Bir Zamanlar Kadıköy* (İletişim Yayınları, 1988); Müfid Ekdal, *Kapalı Hayat Kutusu: Kadıköy Konakları* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2004); Müfid Ekdal, *Bir Fenerbahçe Vardı* (Türkiye Türling ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1987); Müfid Ekdal, *Bizans Metropolünde İlk Türk Köyü: Kadıköy* (Kadıköy Belediyesi, 1996); Taner Ay, *Edebiyatın Kadıköyü* (Ötüken Neşriyat, 2023); Tamer Küttükçü, *Kadıköy'ün Kitabı: Geçmiş Zamanların, Mekânların ve Hatırlamaların Rafında* (Ötüken Neşriyat, 2014).

10 The novel did not reach a wide readership upon its initial publication, a fact underscored by the long interval before its second printing appeared in 2001. This belated reprint suggests that *Kadıköy'ün Romanı* circulated within a limited literary milieu rather than among the general reading public, leaving little immediate impression on Istanbulites' everyday sense of Kadıköy. Yet its afterlife in memory and influence has proved more pronounced. Selim İleri, reflecting on the genesis of his short story "Hayatımın Romanı" from *Pastırma Yazı* (1971), recalls first encountering Erol's book in the window of Semih Lütüfi Kitabevi on Ankara Caddesi, its cover depicting the Moda Beach he had known since his youth. Discovering the very streets and sites of his own experience—Bahariye, Yoğurtçu, Frerler Mektebi, Kuşdili, Şifa, and the Haydarpaşa breakwater lights—produced in him what he calls "a great joy." He later noted that while writing that story, he drew not on Erol's specific settings but on her finely rendered domestic interiors, the spatial sensibility with which she transformed familiar topography into emotional texture. İleri's recollection suggests that *Kadıköy'ün Romanı*, though never a popular success, quietly shaped a literary way of perceiving Kadıköy, one in which the district's houses, gardens, and

a moment when it was transitioning from a seasonal *sayfiye* zone into a suburban node of bourgeois modernity. Safiye Erol renders Kadıköy not as a passive backdrop but as a spatial protagonist, interwoven with the rhythms, crises, and desires of its inhabitants.¹¹

The narrative centers on a group of seven young people—Necdet, Bedriye, Orhan, Nesrin, Mükerrerem, Burhan, and Baha—collectively known as the Yediler. These characters are introduced during a time of relative harmony and exuberance, engaging in leisurely activities that structure the early chapters of the novel: rowing in Kalamış, gathering in Papazın Bağı, socializing at the Fenerbahçe sea baths, attending musical evenings in Moda, and promenading along the coastal paths of Yoğurtçu and Şifa. These scenes are not incidental but form the backbone of a vibrant sociability tied to specific places. Kadıköy is presented as a porous and animated territory, facilitating flirtations, friendship, rivalry, and self-display.

As the plot progresses, this balance proves fragile. The Yediler's cohesion erodes under the weight of complex emotional entanglements. Romantic tensions, including Nesrin's unreciprocated affection for Necdet, Necdet's fixation on Bedriye, and Bedriye's conflicted involvement with Burhan, create an emotional architecture that eventually collapses. Nesrin's sudden death acts as a narrative fulcrum. With her passing, a tone of youthful joy gives way to the permeating presence of *ıztırıp*, an affective condition that saturates both character and setting.

This shift is not only emotional but spatial. The same *gazinós*, piers, and seaside coves that once hosted light-hearted gatherings now register grief, estrangement, and disorientation. Erol emphasizes how suffering adheres to place. Necdet revisits old haunts, but they no longer offer solace; the built environment retains echoes of lost intimacy. The sea, once a site of play, becomes a mirror for melancholy. This affective thickening of space reinforces the novel's central thesis: that emotion is not simply internal but spatialized.

ferries became vessels of feeling rather than mere scenery. See Selim İleri, *Yaşadığım İstanbul* (Everest Yayınları, 2012), 140. 11 Beyond *Kadıköy'ün Romanı*, Safiye Erol authored three other major novels: *Ülker Fırtınası* (1944), *Ciğerdelen* (1946), and *Dineyri Papazı* (1955). She also coauthored the spiritual treatise *Kenan Rifâi ve Yirminci Asrın Işığında Müslümanlık* (1951) and later published *Çölde Biten Rahmet Ağacı* (1962). Posthumous collections of her work include *Makaleler* (2002) and *Leylak Mevsimi* (2010).

Scholarship on Safiye Erol now reads like an unfolding map in which Kadıköy functions less as a fixed coordinate than as a shifting emotional constellation. Havva Yılmaz's allegorical reading of *Dineyri Papazı* first stretched Erol's fiction onto a national canvas, showing how the author embeds Turkey's modern trajectory in an Anatolian-European itinerary. Yılmaz later returned to the district itself, tracing Kadıköy's transformation from elite summer resort to hybrid republican suburb and revealing how that spatial metamorphosis pulsates through *Kadıköy'ün Romanı*. Macit Balık builds on this insight by treating the streets of *Ülker Fırtınası* as "witnesses" that archive both social change and private passion, while Duygu Dinçer demonstrates that the novel's palette of "love's colors" mirrors Kadıköy's own passage from leisurely margin to bustling quarter. Kemal Erol reads the same two Istanbul novels sociologically, exposing generational rifts that crystallize around cafés, ferry piers, and newly opened boulevards; his analysis underscores how urban atmospheres cultivate emotional tension. Other studies shift the lens toward Erol's more symbolic geographies. Dilan Yamaç interprets the ruined fortress of *Ciğerdelen* through Jungian archetypes, reminding us that Erol sometimes displaces metropolitan restlessness onto mythic landscapes where the collective unconscious breathes. Turning back to *Dineyri Papazı*, Zeynep Tek uncovers a vein of narcissistic pathology, proving that large-scale allegory coexists with finely tuned affective nuance; her subsequent dissertation on Erol's "model reader" reinforces the idea that these novels invite endless remapping by anyone willing to follow their shifting moods and settings. Taken together, these studies suggest that Erol's Kadıköy contracts into the intimate interiors of *Ülker Fırtınası*, dilates into national allegory in *Dineyri Papazı*, and resurfaces as a layered palimpsest in *Kadıköy'ün Romanı*. Future work might weave these strands into an affective atlas charting how love, nostalgia, and generational anxiety migrate from Moda's tea gardens to the borderlands of *Ciğerdelen*, thereby illuminating Turkish literary modernity's oscillation between neighborhood intimacy and national vision. See Havva Yılmaz, "Bir Türkiye Alegorisi Olarak *Dineyri Papazı* ve Safiye Erol'un Hayatı," *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları* 7, no. 15 (2016): 162–79; Havva Yılmaz, "Safiye Erol'un Kadıköy'ü: Melez Bir Terkip," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 31, no. 1 (2021): 465–86; Macit Balık, "Edebiyat ve Mekân Bağlamında Safiye Erol'un *Ülker Fırtınası* Romanı Üzerine Bir İnceleme," *International Journal of Cultural and Social Studies* 2, no. 2 (2016): 119–28; Duygu Dinçer, "Safiye Erol'un *Ülker Fırtınası* Romanında Aşkın Renkleri ve Benlik Üzerindeki Tesirleri," *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları* 7, no. 15 (2016): 120–37; Kemal Erol, "Kültür Değişmesi ve Safiye Erol'un *Kadıköy'ün Romanı* ve *Ülker Fırtınası* Romanlarında Kuşak Çatışması," *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 8, no. 16 (2013): 387–406; Dilan Yamaç, "Ciğerdelen'in Kadın Kahramanlarının C. G. Jung'un Kolektif Bilinçdışı Kuramı Çerçevesinde Değerlendirilmesi," *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları* 7, no. 15 (2016): 152–61; Zeynep Tek, "Safiye Erol'un *Dineyri Papazı* Adlı Romanında Narsisistik Kişilik Çözümlemesi," *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları* 7, no. 15 (2016): 138–51; Zeynep Tek, "Safiye Erol Anlatılarının Örnek Okur Düzeyinden Anlamlandırılması" (PhD diss., Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, 2017).

110 In response to these ruptures, Necdet and Bedriye both undertake periods of *gurbet*,¹² a voluntary departure from Kadıköy as a form of self-exile. These departures are not escapes but interruptions, moments of temporal and spatial distancing through which characters recalibrate their relation to the district and to themselves. When they return, Necdet at the urging of Orhan, and Bedriye through a more ambivalent trajectory, it is to a Kadıköy changed by absence, memory, and historical drift. Their returns mark neither resolution nor redemption but a tentative reconciliation with the past.

This narrative arc, encompassing social cohesion, fragmentation, exile, and reengagement, traces the emotional topography of the novel. It also echoes the literal transformation of Kadıköy itself. The novel foregrounds the interdependence of place and subjectivity. Kadıköy is not merely depicted; it is performed through embodied actions, atmospheric detail, and spatial choreography. Musical motifs, seasonal shifts, and quotidian rituals anchor characters to the district. The transformation of public space, from Papazın Bağı to quieter *gazinos* in Şifa and from bustling piers to solitary walks, mirrors changes in the characters' inner lives. Through these evolving configurations, Kadıköy becomes a layered field of memory, loss, and affective potential.

Rather than relying on grand historical events or ideological manifestos, Erol crafts a portrait of modernity as lived texture. Her protagonists are not revolutionaries or ideologues but figures navigating the everyday consequences of historical transformation. Their gestures, such as picking up a mandolin, pausing before a ruined house, or watching a boat glide past Kalamış, render the district legible as an emotional landscape. In this way, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı* functions simultaneously as a novel of youth and a cartography of urban affect, mapping how bodies, desires, and places coproduce meaning.

In reframing the novel in relation to its setting, we see that Erol is not simply writing about Kadıköy; she is articulating how it is made and unmade through social encounter, emotional resonance, and spatial transformation. Her vision is both intimate and historical, capturing the district at a moment of becoming, when the past is still palpable and the future yet indeterminate. The novel's power lies in this sensitivity to thresholds: between adolescence and adulthood, solitude and connection, nostalgia and anticipation, *sayfiye* and suburb.

Kadıköyü'nün Romanı offers not a fixed image of a place but a dynamic portrait of its atmospheres, rhythms, and transitions. It documents how urban modernity is not simply a matter of infrastructure or legislation but of shifting attachments, displacements, and returns. In doing so, it anticipates key questions in contemporary urban theory, particularly those concerned with spatial affect, emotional geography, and the politics of place-making. Kadıköy, in Erol's rendering, is not a closed past but a perpetually unfolding present, one that continues to pulse through the novel's scenes of longing, motion, and return.

Walking as Spatial Engagement and Affective Composition

If *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı* is structured around the shifting assemblages of place, memory, and emotion, then walking emerges within this structure as one of its most revealing practices, both narrative and spatial. As the exuberant collective rhythms of the early Yediler scenes give way to more fractured, introspective temporalities, the novel begins to attend more closely to individual trajectories through the urban fabric. These trajectories often take the form of walking, at times deliberate, hesitant, or meandering, through which characters negotiate not only physical space but also inner states, relational dynamics, and the sediments of memory. Walking becomes a means of sensing the city anew, of reentering fa-

12 Selim İleri recalls first encountering *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı* in a 1960s secondhand bookshop, its Münif Fehim cover of Moda Plajı instantly fusing the novel's 1930s shoreline with the sensory memory of his own 1950s childhood. He admires the text's portrait of a "bohemian bourgeois" seascape, with its leisurely routines, porous social ties, and life lived to the rhythm of lanterns and tides, yet insists that its deeper keynote, not for the characters but for Safiye Erol herself, is *gurbet*—a kind of authorial homesickness, a quiet sense of being out of place, that saturates all her fiction. İleri links the long critical silence surrounding Erol to this same atmosphere of dislocation, arguing that her books, like their creator, spent decades "in exile" from literary canons before recent reprints restored them to view. See Selim İleri, "Safiye Erol'un Romanları," *Kubbealtı Akademi Mecmuası* 31, no. 2 (2002): 60–63.

miliar streets under altered emotional conditions, and of stitching the self back into a place that has grown heavy with recollection and loss. The novel does not treat movement as a neutral backdrop to psychological development; rather, it allows embodied urban motion, especially walking, to function as a compositional device that animates and reconfigures Kadıköy's emotional topography.¹³

A telling example is the walk taken by Necdet, Orhan, and Bedriye from Bahariye to Cevizlik. What begins as a casual social outing becomes increasingly charged as the group moves through familiar streets. Their route, deliberately described, passes through residential areas and leads to a silent pause before the ruins of Necdet's former home, destroyed by fire. The moment is dense with affect: A still plot of land, illuminated by moonlight, evokes a past not yet settled. Bedriye's quiet question, "Do you remember me?"¹⁴ is less a neutral inquiry than an attempt to prompt personal recollection. By guiding Necdet to a site from their shared past, she seeks to reintroduce herself through spatial memory, using the emotional charge of place to bridge a gap in recognition. The walk becomes more than movement; it stages a convergence of place, personal history, and the social codes of discretion, especially through Orhan's implied awareness of the situation. Here, walking does not simply reveal emotion; it assembles it.

Elsewhere, walking appears as an introspective practice, particularly in Bedriye's reflections on her solitary evening walks. She describes leaving the house "with anger or distress,"¹⁵ only to find her thoughts gradually clearing as she walks. Her encounters with the textures of the natural environment, including wild roses, nightingales, and lambs, become part of a sensory rhythm that brings about a form of internal cleansing: "My lungs were cleansed, my mind cleared, and my heart washed clean."¹⁶ In this sequence, walking forms a therapeutic assemblage, coupling movement with the nonhuman world to reshape the walker's mood and orientation.

This same walk, initially private, unexpectedly shifts when she encounters Necdet near Saint-Joseph College ("Frerler Mektebi"), at the foot of the slope between Şifa and Yoğurtçu. The accidental nature of their meeting suggests how urban walking can produce new, improvised social configurations. As they continue together, now walking in the rain toward Bedriye's home in Cevizlik, their shared umbrella and physical proximity register subtle shifts in emotional alignment. The rain and the slowing of their pace alter the atmosphere, folding environmental elements into the affective quality of the scene.

Other walks in the novel operate differently. When Mükerrerem and Orhan walk toward Çiftelavuzlar "with their hands in their pockets,"¹⁷ their pace is energetic, their posture casual. This walk is less about emotional introspection than shared rhythm and spoken

13 This discussion draws inspiration from a body of scholarship that rethinks walking as a mode of sensing, composing, and theorizing space. Michel de Certeau conceptualizes walking as a spatial practice that "writes" the city through embodied trajectories, turning everyday movement into a form of narrative production ("Walking in the City," in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall [University of California Press, 1984]). Tim Ingold approaches walking as a way of thinking-in-motion, arguing that the ground is not merely traversed but continuously perceived and remade through the feet ("Culture on the Ground: The World Perceived Through the Feet," *Journal of Material Culture* 9, no. 3 [2004]: 315–40, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183504046896>). Tim Edensor examines how walking unfolds through rhythmic attunements among bodies, environments, and urban regulations, revealing how pace and style shape spatial experience ("Walking in Rhythms: Place, Regulation, Style and the Flow of Experience," *Visual Studies* 25, no. 1 [2010]: 69–79, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725861003606902>). J. D. Wylie reads a single day's walking as a phenomenological encounter with landscape, emphasizing how affect and weather coproduce the walker's sense of place ("A Single Day's Walking: Narrating Self and Landscape on the South West Coast Path," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 30, no. 2 [2005]: 234–47, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2005.00163.x>). Together, these works have informed my reading of *Kadıköy'nün Romanı* as a text in which movement itself becomes a mode of composition. They invite an understanding of Safiye Erol's urban scenes not merely as representations of place, but as sensory and rhythmic practices that make space perceptible through motion. In this light, walking in the novel is neither a metaphor nor a backdrop; it is an act that gathers emotion, memory, and the material environment into fleeting yet consequential constellations. The city, therefore, is not simply depicted but continuously produced through the embodied gestures of those who move within it.

14 Safiye Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 7th impression (Kubbealtı Neşriyat, 2019), 20.

15 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 22.

16 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 22.

17 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 30.

112 exchange. Their conversation, about Necdet, about relationships, about their own sense of direction, unfolds through and because of the walk. The sidewalk becomes a space of moving dialogue, where bodily pace and interpersonal openness run in parallel.

Walking alone, by contrast, marks Necdet's return to his apartment late at night. His tiredness, described as a kind of physical exhaustion,¹⁸ matches the empty streets and quiet atmosphere of Haydarpaşa after midnight. In this instance, walking marks a withdrawal from public life into solitude. The movement through space serves as a transition, not just from street to room, but from social self to inward thought. The walk does not dramatize emotion but prepares its conditions.

The most intense instance of walking appears in Necdet's pursuit of Bedriye through the streets of Beyoğlu. Here, walking turns obsessive, focused, and reactive. Following her "step by step" through a crowd, he is drawn into an altered affective state, overwhelmed by jealousy and desire. The urban environment, densely populated and socially performative, becomes the stage for this emotional escalation. Bedriye, described as a woman who "creates sensation,"¹⁹ radiates affective force, which Necdet absorbs and internalizes through his silent pursuit. The walk is no longer relational or restorative, but compulsive and voyeuristic, revealing the darker, more unstable layers of urban experience.

Across these different instances, walking in *Kadıköy'nün Romanı* functions as a mobile practice that both responds to and reconfigures the urban world. Whether shared or solitary, contemplative or reactive, each walk creates a temporary but meaningful constellation of bodies, emotions, memories, and material environments. Walking allows Kadıköy to emerge not as a fixed setting but as a lived and continually reshaped space, one composed through footsteps, conversations, glances, and absences.

Driving and the Shifting Experience of Urban Space

In *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, after walking has been established as a mode of intimate, embodied engagement with the urban world, driving introduces a different form of spatial practice, one that alters both the tempo of movement and the affective relations between characters and place. Unlike walking, which allows for tactile contact with the environment and chance encounters, driving produces a more distanced, enclosed, and accelerated relationship with space. The automobile does not simply extend the body across greater distances; it also modifies perception, interaction, and emotional texture. The car, in this sense, becomes part of a mobile assemblage, an interior space moving through the city that organizes the flows of feeling, attention, and speech in ways that are both enabling and limiting.

One early example unfolds in Feneryolu, where Mükerrerem waits in his car outside Nimet Hanımefendi's mansion. As Orhan prepares to leave, Mükerrerem, already seated behind the wheel, invites him along. The car engine is described as "growling like a monster preparing for attack,"²⁰ transforming the vehicle into more than just a means of transport; it becomes a performative object, charged with potential energy and social intention. Mükerrerem's offer to drive, and his role as initiator of their shared movement, subtly asserts his control over the evening's direction. Within the car's bounded interior, their conversation gains a particular tone: more private, perhaps more strategic, than it might have been on the street. The speed and enclosure of the car alter not only how space is crossed but how relations are managed within it.

Driving also becomes a site of affective pedagogy in the scenes where Mükerrerem teaches Nesrin to drive his Lincoln. The narrative dwells on Nesrin's physical and emotional reactions: the ghostly blur and hum of trees swiftly passing by, her initial fear of pressing the

18 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 34.

19 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 35.

20 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 32.

accelerator,²¹ and her growing sense of mastery as she learns to control speed and direction. The car, a symbol of both status and risk,²² becomes the center of a new assemblage: one where mechanical force, bodily sensation, and interpersonal trust converge. Mükerrerem's presence beside her adds further complexity, as he is not just a guide, but a figure attempting to redirect her inner turmoil through this new activity. Driving through the countryside, Nesrin begins to move more freely, even letting the car surge forward with full force,²³ a phrase that captures both her excitement and her sense of liberation. This moment, though seemingly practical, is also psychological: Mükerrerem hopes that the forward motion of the car will pull her away from thoughts of Necdet. The vehicle becomes a space of temporary liberation, a therapeutic interval built on speed, control, and distraction.

This temporary sense of freedom culminates, tragically, in Nesrin's final solo drive. The route she takes, passing through Koşuyolu, İbrahimağa, Haydarpaşa Çayırı, Ayrılıkçeşmesi, Acıbadem, Kurbağalidere, Kızıltoprak, and finally Bağdat Caddesi, is not incidental. It traces a layered geography of Kadıköy and its surrounding districts, placing her movement within a distinctly urban texture. As she drives, her hair flies "like a flag struggling to break free from its pole in the wind,"²⁴ a striking image that fuses physical speed with emotional unraveling. The language suggests a restless desire to escape, or perhaps to dissolve into motion. "She was swept up by her love, unable to steady herself,"²⁵ the narrator notes, tying the intensity of her inner state to her increasing speed. The vehicle's acceleration becomes part of a fatal assemblage: one composed of desire, distraction, a powerful car, and the volatile edges of urban space. Unlike the earlier walks that fostered reflection or connection, this drive ends in fragmentation and death, revealing the darker potentials of automobility when psychological pressure and mechanical force spiral together.

A final, contrasting example comes in the shared drive of Bedriye and Burhan, from Yeniköy into the heart of the city, passing through Fatih, Divanyolu, and Şehzadebaşı.²⁶ The winter setting, with wind, snow, and limited visibility, creates a stark exterior world, while the car becomes a protected interior, warmed by touch and murmured speech. In the enclosed space of the vehicle, Burhan whispers that he has missed her deeply, a moment of intimacy made possible by the car's protective insulation. As they pass through historical neighborhoods, the illuminated minarets and softened contours of the city appear through frosted windows, mediating a sensory experience distinct from that of walking. The car's enclosure enables emotional disclosure without full exposure, offering privacy in motion. Here, automobility does not estrange the characters from the city but allows them to traverse it in a heightened emotional register, shielded yet in motion, intimate yet moving forward.

Taken together, these episodes show that driving in *Kadıköyü'nün Romani* is not simply a modern alternative to walking. It marks a shift in how characters inhabit and perceive the city. The car functions as a social, emotional, and technological device: enabling conversation, offering distraction or escape, altering perception, and at times intensifying risk. While walking grounds the body in the texture of Kadıköy's surfaces and sensations, driving produces a parallel urban experience: one that moves faster, feels more contained, and reveals different dimensions of freedom, control, and vulnerability within the ever-changing urban assemblage.

Floating Urbanism: Rowboat Mobility and the Watery Edges of Kadıköy

In addition to the enclosed, high-speed experience of automobility explored in the previous section, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani* turns our attention to a markedly different form of movement: navigating Kadıköy's coastline and waterways by rowboat. *Sandal* mobility offers not only an alternative to terrestrial travel but also a distinct mode of inhabiting space, one

21 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 122.

22 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 125.

23 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 122.

24 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 125.

25 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 122.

26 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 201.

114 defined by drift, pause, sound, and light, and deeply attuned to the textures and rhythms of the maritime environment. Unlike the fixed routes of roads or sidewalks, moving by boat allows for a kind of wayfaring responsive to currents, tides, and moods, where spatial boundaries are more porous, trajectories more fluid, and encounters shaped by the contingencies of water.

In one early scene, Bedriye and Necdet sit beneath a mastic tree on Şifa's seaward point, watching "a few rowboats coming out" from Yoğurtçu.²⁷ Some follow the shoreline toward Kalamış, Şifa, and Küçük Moda. This distant activity forms part of the scene's ambient motion: The boats become both literal vessels and figures of connection across coastal geographies. For the couple on land, the visible passage of rowboats serves as a contemplative counterpoint to their own stillness. The visual and rhythmic presence of the boats extends the idea of Kadıköy's assemblage into its maritime fringe, suggesting that the district is defined not only by streets and squares but also by the watery paths that connect its edges.

A more vivid example follows when Orhan proposes using a rowboat as a stage for a musical performance.²⁸ His plan, to sing from the water so that his voice might "echo back from the sea,"²⁹ turns the rowboat into an acoustic device, one that interacts with distance, atmosphere, and voice. As Orhan's "sweet voice" rises from the cove and reaches the shore,³⁰ an ephemeral soundscape takes shape, drawing the attention of Mahmut Rasih Bey and others on land. Mükerrerem's arrival by boat from Kuşdili further accentuates the role of rowboats in linking coastal points and assembling groups in motion. The cove becomes a stage, the rowboats its floating platforms—sites of connection, performance, and affective resonance.

A more elaborate instance unfolds in the day-long excursion involving Nesrin, Bedriye, Orhan, Burhan, Necdet, Mükerrerem, and Baha.³¹ Departing from Baha's shop in Moda and setting out from the Moda pier, the group travels by boat along the coast to Kalamış, Fener, and Bostancı. Here, the rowboat is not just a means of movement but a temporary social world, a vessel of companionship, food, conversation, and sensory immersion. The characters are described as if intoxicated by the sun, air, and sea. Their rowboat becomes a buoyant assemblage, hovering between leisure and performance, between detachment from the land and heightened collective experience.

In the evening, they anchor in Yoğurtçu Deresi near Kuşdili Gazinosu, transforming the boat into a floating dining platform.³² Observed from the shore, their gathering draws the gaze of others. The confined, intimate setting of the boat intensifies social tensions: Nesrin's provocative "love survey," the verbal exchange between Necdet and Burhan, and the flirtations and evasions all play out in this liminal space between water and land, privacy and visibility. As an assemblage, the rowboat condenses proximity, affect, and attention within a structure that floats but does not wander. That the group struggles to exit the stream into the cove and must navigate rocky areas near Şifa reminds the reader that movement on water, while fluid, is not without friction or risk.³³ That the group "knows the water not in broad spans but in fingertip detail" evokes a kind of embodied navigation, one that is not just precise and sensitive but scaled to the body's own perceptual granularity and attuned to the subtle contours of the aquatic terrain.³⁴

Rowboats also serve more solitary functions. In one scene, Necdet lies alone in a boat anchored in Kalamış Cove, reflecting on his unrequited love for Bedriye.³⁵ The still water provides a surface not for movement, but for inward drift. The boat becomes a contemplative refuge, offering isolation without disconnection. Similarly, his later solitary journey from

27 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 49.

28 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 50–53.

29 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 50.

30 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 52.

31 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 58–66.

32 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 61.

33 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 64–65.

34 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 64.

35 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 116–17.

Haydarpaşa to Moda involves a quiet shift from active rowing to passive floating.³⁶ He stops paddling near Zaharof's Pier, letting the boat drift, and reflects on the three stages of his love: "rebellion, sorrow, resignation."³⁷ This passage renders the rowboat a space of emotional pacing, where physical and psychological motion are interwoven. When he resumes rowing with "fresh enthusiasm,"³⁸ it signals not only a return to directed motion but also a reorientation of desire and will.

Daily routines also incorporate the rowboat into Kadıköy's lived texture. A later passage describes Necdet's early morning rowing excursions with Mehmet Bey near the remains of the Kuşdili club.³⁹ Their sessions, part sport and part leisure, include fishing, watching the light on the water, and chatting with other fishermen. The description of birdsong, reflected flowers, and passing acquaintances shows how water routes function as social and sensory corridors. Rowboat mobility here is habitual and ordinary, woven into the everyday fabric of the district's maritime life.

At Moda Yalı Gazinosu, we see rowboats as part of Kadıköy's cultural and musical life.⁴⁰ Boats filled with people playing instruments and singing expand the entertainment space of the *gazino* onto the water, turning the cove into an acoustic commons. The rowboats float between performance and participation, connecting shores through sound and light. They do not merely transport people; they extend the district's cultural life onto the water.

The rowboat in *Kadıköyü'nün Romani* facilitates a unique form of spatial and emotional movement, less linear than driving, more immersive than walking. It offers spaces of intimacy, performance, reflection, and routine. It links neighborhoods across water, stages social interaction, and enables solitary drifting. Through these multiple forms of aquatic mobility, Safiye Erol reveals a Kadıköy not bounded by land, but always reaching out into its watery edges, fluid, affective, and alive.

The Weather of Feeling: Affective Atmospheres in Kadıköy

Having explored how different forms of mobility—walking, driving, rowing—mediate the experience of space in *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, I now turn to the novel's rendering of Kadıköy's affective atmosphere. Rather than functioning as mere backdrop, the novel's environments breathe, shift, and carry emotional weight. Atmospheres emerge from the interplay between meteorological conditions, sensory textures, and the emotional and social intensities unfolding within the district. In Safiye Erol's portrayal, Kadıköy is not only walked or sailed through but also felt, inhaled, and responded to. Its air, light, scents, and weather constitute a dynamic, relational field in which moods circulate and accumulate.

From the outset, the novel links weather to collective affect. A "hot, bright Friday" draws the population into the streets, the day's pleasantness acting as an incitement.⁴¹ As night approaches, the atmosphere shifts. The stars emerge "one after another" in the "clear navy blue sky," while a fragrant breeze carries the scents of honeysuckle and wisteria.⁴² This sensory assemblage, composed of visual vastness, floral scent, and cool air, becomes the condition for emotional awakening: "While nature was slowly falling asleep, hearts were awakening."⁴³ Here, the atmosphere is not simply descriptive; it is performative, enabling and shaping the characters' inner states.

But atmospheres in the novel are not consistently serene. At times, they turn volatile, mirroring or intensifying emotional tension. Near Yoğurtçu bridge, "it had gotten quite

36 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 138–43.

37 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 141.

38 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 142.

39 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 253.

40 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 258.

41 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 15.

42 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 18.

43 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 18.

116 dark, the sky was thundering, a warm wind was breathing with wide breaths. Large, single drops began to fall.”⁴⁴ Later, a violent *yıldız-poyraz*—a turbulent northeasterly wind—roars through the streets,⁴⁵ accompanied by swirling clouds and a mischievous sun grinning as if sticking out its tongue.⁴⁶ The environment becomes expressive, even capricious, underscoring the affective instability that marks certain moments in the novel.

Wind, in particular, acts not only as a bearer of weather but also as a carrier of feeling, rumor, and memory. Sometimes it moves gently and fruitfully, a sweet breeze passing through a valley, bringing moisture and the scent of plants;⁴⁷ other times, it turns rough and restless, lifting dust and hitting the ground with angry sweeps, like a tongue lashing out.⁴⁸ It can even act as a medium for gossip: “Like a kite with a tail,”⁴⁹ social stories float through the air. These images reveal how atmosphere in *Kadıköyü’nün Romani* is always more than meteorological: It incorporates and redistributes human presence, language, and mood.

Smell, too, plays a key role. Certain scents are tied to places and persons, binding them to emotional memory. The evening air near Moda is filled with “the invigorating smell of the sea,”⁵⁰ grounding the scene in coastal sensation. Bedriye’s lilac- and violet-scented shawl lingers in Necdet’s memory,⁵¹ turning fabric into an emotional atmosphere. Similarly, a breeze carrying jasmine and honeysuckle to Necdet’s balcony in Haydarpaşa evokes not only seasonal change but longing,⁵² suggesting that what returns on the wind is not just scent but feeling.

These natural elements—light, air, scent, breeze—are not merely decorative; they help produce the novel’s atmospheres. But equally central are the social and emotional energies of the characters themselves. Their joyful energy, gathered on the boat by Kuşdili Gazinosu, creates an atmosphere as fresh as spring.⁵³ This joy is not contained within the group but spills out into the setting, demonstrating how shared emotion can inflect and transform space. Conversely, moments of melancholy and tension create atmospheres of heaviness and dissonance: Bedriye and Necdet, “both a little dejected, both sad,”⁵⁴ infuse the surrounding space with a quiet emotional gravity, showing how public spaces can hold and reflect private sorrow.

Some individuals seem to shape atmosphere through their very presence. Burhan is portrayed as so physically striking that his presence alters the mood of the space, subtly infusing it with a sense of beauty, as if releasing an invisible leaven into the air.⁵⁵ His presence carries an affective charge that extends beyond his gestures or speech, becoming part of the environmental mood. Such figures illustrate how atmosphere can radiate outward from the body, structuring space in less visible but deeply felt ways.

In all these moments, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani* presents Kadıköy not as a neutral container for events, but as a living atmosphere, something porous, shifting, and felt. The urban environment is saturated with weather, light, scent, sound, and affect. Kadıköy’s emotional landscape is composed not only through dramatic episodes but through the subtle accumulation of mood, texture, and sensory detail. This is a world in which feelings are not just experienced privately but carried on the wind, scented in the air, and reflected in the sky, always part of a shared, shifting, atmospheric whole.

44 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 24.

45 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 227.

46 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 227.

47 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 102.

48 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 96.

49 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 120.

50 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 66.

51 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 23.

52 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 254–55.

53 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 61.

54 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 101.

55 Erol, *Kadıköyü’nün Romani*, 150.

Following the sensory intensities and affective currents that animate Kadıköy throughout the first half of *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, the chapter “Olağan Şeyler” (ordinary things) signals a decisive turning point. This chapter marks the dissolution of the Yediler, whose lively presence had, for a time, infused Kadıköy with a vibrant and cohesive social energy. The group had constituted not merely a circle of friendship but a mobile social formation, whose presence animated beaches, *gazin*os, tennis courts, and open waters with a vibrant and highly visible affective charge.

For “a whole spring and summer,”⁵⁶ the Yediler shaped Kadıköy as a space of youth, movement, and performance. Their joyous disruptions of daily rhythm carried a kind of collective resonance that moved across the city.⁵⁷ Whether sailing in elegant yachts, occupying the most desirable tables in popular *gazin*os, or exchanging glances across the facing boxes of the Süreyyapaşa Cinema, their activities formed a circulating social atmosphere. Places like Belvü, Kalamış Cove, and Yoğurtçu River were transformed into relational stages, not backdrops but extensions of the group’s kinetic presence.

Yet this presence proves impermanent. Without overt drama, the narrative hints at the group’s dispersal: “nazar değmişti”⁵⁸—as if struck by the evil eye—an ironic gesture that veils a deeper disintegration. The separation comes in waves⁵⁹—gradually, unevenly, and without formal closure. Sociality begins to unravel. Nesrin’s engagement to Mükerrerem creates distance from Bedriye. Necdet avoids Nesrin and returns to old haunts alone. Bedriye, recently back from Bebek, withdraws into domestic space, speaking only with Orhan. Burhan’s broken arm comes to symbolize both physical and emotional withdrawal. The rhythm of their once-shared routes and routines dissolves into isolated trajectories.

Beneath this dispersal lies a fragile network of misaligned desires. The affective economy of the group, shaped by Nesrin’s love for Necdet, Necdet’s longing for Bedriye, and Bedriye’s attachment to Burhan, forms a closed circuit of unreciprocated affection. Nesrin’s engagement, though socially strategic, marks a personal compromise, while Burhan, aloof and unreadable, remains emotionally unavailable. The unresolved tension around Burhan’s injury, possibly a remnant of conflict with Necdet, reinforces the group’s drift into silence and speculation.

The most definitive rupture comes with Nesrin’s sudden death in a car accident. In a novel so deeply invested in the sensory and affective experience of movement, it is telling that death itself arrives through mobility—an event that literalizes the perilous threshold between freedom, velocity, and loss. Her funeral, attended by an entire social circle “driven mad with despair,”⁶⁰ becomes a site of collective mourning. The loss radiates outward, fracturing not only the Yediler but the wider community that had once been audience to their joy. Mükerrerem’s grief, Necdet’s silent remorse, and Baha’s stoicism reflect divergent responses to a shared absence. The emotional coherence that once held the group together can no longer be restored.

In the aftermath, encounters among the remaining members grow awkward, burdened by memory and absence. Kadıköy’s once-lively venues now appear suspended, echo chambers for voices no longer present. Necdet, withdrawn and ridden by guilt, avoids the places where the group had flourished. Orhan continues to narrate and comment, but his speech is marked by a dissonant cheerfulness, covering an underlying void. Bedriye and Burhan’s tentative closeness persists, yet it unfolds in a changed environment, overshadowed by what has passed.

56 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 119.

57 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 119.

58 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 119.

59 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 119.

60 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 126.

118 With the disintegration of the Yediler, the novel's spatial and emotional coordinates shift. Kadıköy no longer serves as the expansive stage for shared experience but as a fragmented landscape of recollection. Places like Yoğurtçu River or Moda Pier no longer carry the same associative charge; they become sites of absence, where traces of past joy mingle with a quieter solitude. The collective assemblage that had once defined the district's affective atmosphere has dispersed, leaving behind scattered bodies and discontinuous emotions.

In this sense, "Olağan Şeyler" is anything but ordinary. The title itself bears a muted irony: Beneath the surface of daily life, deep emotional shifts unfold, redrawing the map of the district. Kadıköy, once vibrant and synchronously experienced, now appears as an archipelago of private interiors, missed encounters, and silenced attachments. The chapter marks the transition from a shared, performative urban life to a more fractured, introspective relation to space. The novel thus reveals how urban atmospheres are not only generated by collective exuberance but also undone by dispersal, grief, and the slow unraveling of social bonds.

Sticky Pain: *İztrap* and the Affective Transformation of Kadıköy

Following the dissolution of the Yediler and the fading of Kadıköy's vibrant social fabric, the second half of *Kadıköy'nün Romanı* introduces a marked tonal and emotional shift. At the heart of this transition is the emergence of *iztrap*, a term absent from the novel's earlier pages, yet increasingly prevalent as the narrative advances beyond the chapter "Olağan Şeyler."⁶¹ No longer a district of cheerful excursions and shared laughter, Kadıköy becomes saturated with anguish: an emotional state that circulates among its characters, sticks to its spaces, and transforms the district's atmosphere from a field of joy to one of wounded introspection.

Necdet is the first to emerge as a vector for this new emotional register. His unreciprocated love for Bedriye becomes the principal source of his *iztrap*, defining his psychic landscape and dictating his movements through the city. Though he attempts to forget her, he finds himself perpetually seeking "a healing, a consolation, a way to find solace,"⁶² an antidote not to the woman herself but to the pain she represents. His fleeting relationship with Mafalda becomes, by his own admission, either a betrayal or an attempted cure. As he wanders through familiar urban landmarks—pier, *gazino*, promenades—his desire is not simply to find Bedriye but to confront or perhaps relieve the pain etched into those spaces.⁶³ Even Kalamış Cove, where he retreats into a rowboat, ceases to be a place of leisure and becomes instead a vessel for quiet despair.⁶⁴ Later, the entire district seems overrun by *iztrap*: "From Suadiye all the way to Bağlarbaşı, these lands resounded with an unending melody of heart-break."⁶⁵ Here, grief ceases to be an internal affliction and becomes a sonic, even material property of the land, a resonance that spreads and settles.

Bedriye, though outwardly more composed, carries her own form of suffering. Her marriage to Burhan, socially desirable but emotionally lacking, generates what she calls "great suffering" (*büyük iztrap*),⁶⁶ not because of overt cruelty but because of the slow corrosion of intimacy. Feeling that she has become too settled, too absorbed into the routines of daily

61 Çiğdem Buğdaycı reads *Kadıköy'nün Romanı* through the prism of an "anguished love triangle" whose shifting vectors of desire make *iztrap* the novel's central structuring energy. She argues that *iztrap* accrues on three interlocking planes: (1) a corporeal register, where Mükerrerem's psychosomatic complaints literalize the felt weight of social expectations; (2) a moral-existential register, in which thwarted longing becomes an ethical test of modern subjecthood; and (3) a civilizational register that frames individual torment as an allegory of early republican Turkey's own half-resolved modernization project. Buğdaycı shows how scenes of seaside reverie, salon gossip, and clandestine meetings are choreographed to oscillate between sensual pleasure and self-laceration, thereby casting Kadıköy as a space where the promise of cosmopolitan leisure is inseparable from the ache of historical dislocation. In her reading, *iztrap* is less a romantic cliché than a diagnostic lens that exposes the novel's deeper inquiry into the price of new freedoms, especially for educated women negotiating the fault lines between bohemian autonomy and bourgeois respectability. See Çiğdem Buğdaycı, "Bir Aşk Üçgeni: Safiye Erol'un *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*'nda Aşk, *İztrap* ve Modernleşme," *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları* 7, no. 15 (2016): 100–119.

62 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 92.

63 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 119.

64 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 116–17.

65 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 212.

66 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romanı*, 205.

life, she begins to see her existence as stagnant, her presence overly domesticated, her sense of individuality gradually fading away. Burhan's failure to establish a soulful connection and his instrumentalizing gaze intensify her feelings of alienation.⁶⁷ Doubt, disappointment, and quiet resignation mark her emotional world, casting subtle shadows of sorrow across her face.⁶⁸ And yet Bedriye also voices the hope that suffering might have meaning: "Such deep suffering cannot be for nothing,"⁶⁹ hinting at the possibility that anguish might lead not only to insight but to eventual relief or even liberation.

If Bedriye's *ıztrap* is embedded in quiet disappointment, Burhan's emerges from a more abstract, interiorized past. Though he appears proud and indifferent,⁷⁰ his aloofness stems from a disastrous past experience that once left him emotionally wounded.⁷¹ He admits that he knows *ıztrap* "all too well," a confession that reframes his cynicism as the residue of heartbreak. His love, once unreturned, hardened into a grief that turned his soul to stone.⁷² For him, *ıztrap* is likened to a cancer of the soul that cannot be fully cured, only numbed.⁷³ His worldview becomes stripped of idealism; love, he warns, leads only to *ıztrap*.⁷⁴ His suffering is thus both formative and protective, a rationale for detachment.

This affective logic is not restricted to individuals; it moves through relationships, collects in memories, and crystallizes in space. Nesrin's longing for Necdet, her pragmatic engagement to Mükerrerem, and her unresolved emotional conflict culminate in her death, which functions as a collective trauma. Her funeral,⁷⁵ attended by a crowd driven mad with despair, offers a stark contrast to the festive gatherings of the Yediler: Where once joy spilled across the district, now grief floods it. Mükerrerem's open weeping, Necdet's inward torment, Baha's stony silence—all trace different positions within the *ıztrap* assemblage that forms around her loss.

Mihriban Hanım's extended narrative of past suffering further situates *ıztrap* as transhistorical and transpersonal.⁷⁶ Her recollection of her love for Faruk and his betrayal becomes a philosophical parable of endurance, resilience, and pain. She describes her physical and emotional collapse, her body, as she puts it, "surrendered to a tormenting army inventing new forms of pain,"⁷⁷ but also offers a metaphysical revaluation. Quoting Meister Eckhart, she calls suffering a "steed" (*binek hayvanı*) that carries one toward perfection.⁷⁸ Her voice functions not just as testimony, but as intergenerational transmission, offering Bedriye a means of narrating suffering without reducing it to victimhood.

ıztrap clings not only to people, but to places. The city itself becomes reconfigured: Necdet sees a tower near Kalamış as a monument to his pain, and to gaze upon it is, for him, like reading the entire history of his sorrow.⁷⁹ Places previously associated with pleasure are now reframed as monuments of loss. This shift underscores a key insight of the novel: Affect sticks to space. Kadıköy, once rendered through the senses, with its fragrances, breezes, and sunlit piers, is now overlaid with a residue of pain. As joy once animated its squares and coves, sorrow now weighs upon its rooftops and shorelines.

In this way, *ıztrap* becomes not only a thematic undercurrent but a structuring principle in the second half of *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*. It shapes characters' actions, inflects their language, orients their movement, and thickens the atmosphere of the district itself. The novel does not treat suffering solely as a moral test or a psychological condition; it presents it

67 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 164.

68 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 199.

69 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 208–9.

70 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 52.

71 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 245.

72 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 106.

73 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 245.

74 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 246.

75 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 125–28.

76 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 168–87.

77 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 180.

78 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 210.

79 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, 212.

120 as an environmental force—diffuse, mobile, and sticky. *Iztrap* becomes part of Kadıköy's emotional geography, shifting the novel from a portrait of collective exuberance to one of scattered grief and existential solitude. And yet, in voices like Mihriban's, there remains a suggestion that from this pain, if one can endure it, may emerge not simply resignation but a reconfigured relation to self, place, and life.

Leaving the Scene of Pain: *Iztrap*, *Kuvvet*, and the Necessity of Departure

As *Kadıköy'nün Romani* advances into its final phases, the district, once animated by collective joy, is increasingly saturated with *iztrap*, a suffering so pervasive it clings to spaces, seeps into memories, and constricts the characters' ability to breathe, act, or hope. In response, the novel posits a radical solution: departure. For Necdet and Bedriye, leaving Kadıköy becomes not simply a matter of physical relocation but an existential necessity, a refusal to be further immobilized by the sticky emotional residues embedded in its streets, houses, and skies. If *iztrap* has become the adhesive fabric of the urban assemblage, then departure is the only means of regaining *kuvvet* (force),⁸⁰ of recovering agency and beginning again. The epigraph drawn from Meister Eckhart, "Suffering is the steed that carries you most quickly to the state of perfection" (*Sizi kemal mertebesine en çabuk ulaştırın binek hayvanı iztraptır*),⁸¹ prepares us for this painful transformation: The way out must pass through the very terrain of agony.

Necdet's departure is catalyzed by an eruption of emotional intensity. Upon hearing of Bedriye's illness, he rushes to her mansion in Cevizlik and, in a moment of unguarded confrontation, declares her to be the cause of his greatest suffering: "You are the greatest sorrow [*iztrap*] of my life. The most devastating pain I've ever felt came from you."⁸² The force of this encounter overwhelms him. The return of the burning rush of his love signals not hope but danger, the risk of being swept back into the *iztrap* he has struggled to suppress. Fleeing the room becomes an instinctive act of self-preservation. Kadıköy itself, with its dense web of associations and memories, becomes uninhabitable. As he puts it, "there wasn't a single inch of Kadıköy's soil untouched by memory."⁸³ From Fenerbahçe to Suadiye, from the linden trees of Moda to the lilacs of Acıbadem, every location becomes a mnemonic device, a spatial trigger for *iztrap*. The towered mansion in Kalamış stands as a monument to his solitude; the Moda cove, the place where he once felt he would live and die for Bedriye, is now saturated with the echoes of a love that never arrived.

80 The notion of *kuvvet* in *Kadıköy'nün Romani* unfolds as a deeply existential and transformative force that governs characters' responses to suffering, love, and personal crisis. Far from representing mere physical power or social authority, *kuvvet* manifests in the characters' capacity to endure profound emotional hardship and to emerge from it with renewed interior resolve. Necdet, for instance, experiences *kuvvet* as a painful maturation, discovering that the depth of his anguish aligns with a preordained *kemal mertebesi*—a telos proportionate to his inner capacities. Similarly, Mihriban's and Bedriye's narratives illustrate how *kuvvet* does not insulate one from pain but obliges one to transmute it into an inner clarity or freedom. The novel recurrently frames *kuvvet* as a moral imperative: It compels the subject to confront and metabolize *iztrap*, not to escape it. This paradoxical entwinement of vulnerability and strength renders *kuvvet* a spiritual or ontological force rather than a volitional choice. This rendering of *kuvvet* resonates in crucial ways with Nietzsche's concept of force (*Kraft*), especially as articulated in *On the Genealogy of Morals* and *The Will to Power*. For Nietzsche, force is not a static possession but a relational, dynamic principle that defines life itself as a struggle of wills. Force is always differential—it exists only in the context of its expression, resistance, or transformation. Every living being, Nietzsche insists, is an expression of force as it seeks to impose form, interpretation, or order upon the world, even amid resistance or destruction. In this framework, suffering is not a mark of weakness but the crucible through which force clarifies itself, asserts form, and overcomes reactive tendencies. The strong are those who can affirm life as it is, transfiguring pain into a pathway for becoming. Force, thus understood, is both that which compels and that which affirms life in its multiplicity and hardship. Reading Erol's *kuvvet* alongside Nietzsche's force reveals a profound philosophical kinship: In both, force is not reducible to domination or mastery but is rather a structure of becoming through which the subject is both constrained and elevated by the necessities of their own being. Pain is neither accidental nor simply to be overcome; it is constitutive of the path to interior strength, or what Erol calls *tevekkül* and Nietzsche names *amor fati*, the love of one's fate, including its cruelties. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (Vintage, 1989), 11.12–13; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (Vintage, 1968), 1067.

81 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romani*, 210.

82 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romani*, 210–11.

83 Erol, *Kadıköy'nün Romani*, 211.

Necdet's final walk through Kadıköy, passing through Talimhane, Kuşdili, Kızıltoprak, and Çiftehavuzlar, is less a nostalgic reverie than a ritual severance. These places, once filled with the laughter of stolen childhood fruit and the thrill of early sports, are now steeped in grief. Yet the departure is not framed as abandonment. Even as he leaves, he affirms that "this lively, cheerful, and playful town" will continue to live on in his heart.⁸⁴ The horizon, marked by the silhouette of Kayışdağı, becomes a visual symbol of what will be carried forward—not in its raw pain, but as a transfigured memory.

Bedriye's departure, by contrast, is structured around internal collapse. Her marriage to Burhan, initially promising, has become a source of silent devastation, exacerbated by emotional disconnection and the loss of their child. Her decision to flee is framed not as a romantic gesture but as a matter of survival.⁸⁵ Cevizlik, once a site of security and love, has become a suffocating container of unrealized intimacy and existential numbness. Her move to Vienna to pursue music is both a deferral of death and a wager on meaning. "Starting over" represents not abstract hope but the slow and deliberate act of piecing a life back together from the wreckage of *ıztırıp*.⁸⁶

The cost of this departure is acute. Giving up the man she loves is portrayed as a prolonged sequence of tortures composed of countless little deaths.⁸⁷ Even the train ride from Sirkeci is haunted: She cannot help but turn her eyes toward Kadıköy as it vanishes from view. Yet this farewell is also framed as a journey of hope, a movement toward a different temporality, one in which suffering might ultimately give way to *gaye*, understood here as purpose, expression, and a reimagined form of joy.

Both departures suggest that Kadıköy, in its current affective state, is incompatible with healing. The urban environment has become overdetermined by *ıztırıp*, its spaces too dense with affect to allow for transformation. Only by leaving, by severing spatial ties to the pain-laden assemblage, can these characters begin the process of becoming otherwise. Yet even as they depart, the place remains in them. Their bodies carry the imprint of Kadıköy's streets, scents, and silences; their movements onward are conditioned by what they leave behind.

Kadıköyü'nün Romani aligns with a broader logic of affective geography: Places are not inert backdrops but active participants in emotional life. Kadıköy is a landscape that shapes and is shaped by its inhabitants' pain, joy, and longing. When these affects become unbearable, the only path to survival is distance. But distance does not erase memory. It only transforms it. And through this transformation, *ıztırıp*, that most sticky of affects, may paradoxically become the steed carrying one forward, not toward forgetting but toward another way of being.

Returning to the Beloved District: Kadıköy as a Site of Reengagement and the Philosophy of the *Ebedî Fakat*

Following periods of *gurbet*, spatial separation and emotional exile, Necdet and Bedriye's respective returns to Kadıköy signal not a simple homecoming but a complex and affectively fraught reengagement with the *semt-i dildar*, the beloved district. Kadıköy, once saturated with their suffering, is now approached not as a nostalgic refuge but as a charged space where past pain, present strength, and the possibility of transformation converge. The district has changed in their absence—and so have they. Their return unfolds not as a recapitulation of the past but as a negotiation with memory, affect, and space, staged against the backdrop of what the novel repeatedly names as the *ebedî fakat*: the enduring "eternal but," in which every joy carries a hesitation, every sorrow holds a trace of hope, and every homecoming resists final resolution.

84 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 213.

85 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 157.

86 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 218.

87 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 222.

122 Necdet's reentry into Kadıköy is orchestrated by Orhan, whose voice in this phase of the novel functions as a conduit for the district's affective pull. Orhan appeals not to abstract sentiment but to the tangible, lived texture of belonging, found in the rickety pier that marks the beginning of homeland, the scent of the sea, the familiar tobacconist and newspaper seller, and the ferry ride experienced not as mere transport but as a social ritual akin to sitting in a neighbor's salon.⁸⁸ Kadıköy is not just a place—it is an assemblage of gestures, voices, routines, and sensorial cues that produce a form of embodied recognition. For Orhan, this atmosphere is irreproducible elsewhere: To be from Kadıköy and to live away from it is to court misfortune, alienation, even spiritual exile.

Necdet, who has spent a year in self-imposed *inziva*, a voluntary retreat, in Cağaloğlu, where he reads, writes, and avoids intimacy, eventually yields to the pull of return. The Necdet who returns is not the man who left. The *ıztırap* that once compelled his departure has not vanished; rather, it has been absorbed into a quieter, steadier mode of being. Settling in a modest house on a quiet street in Sakızağacı, he experiences a gradual reanimation of self, like the slow reappearance of a lost paradise.⁸⁹ This reanimation is not achieved through grand gestures but through small, daily rituals embedded in the spatial texture of Kadıköy: fishing at Yoğurtçu, dawn runs through flower-scented streets, evenings spent at Zühal Kahvesi. The familiar cries of street vendors, eccentric figures like Aşot and Arap Hacı, reestablish the rhythmic intimacy of the district. These encounters do not erase his past *ıztırap*, but they offer a new framework for coexisting with it—a more livable rhythm, a less painful assemblage.

Bedriye's return is marked by a different arc. Her exile in Vienna is not just physical distance but a purposeful withdrawal into artistic discipline and self-reconstruction. Music, travel, and solitude shape a space in which the raw *ıztırap* of her marriage to Burhan can be metabolized. When she reappears in Kadıköy, she is described as "fresh" and "beautiful,"⁹⁰ not in a superficial sense but as someone who has passed through suffering and returned with a clarified form of strength. Her reentry is quiet, initially confined to the familiar walls of her mansion in Cevizlik, shared once more with Mihriban Hanım. Yet her very presence signals a reconstitution of the social field, a reopening of emotional circuits once closed by grief.

The meeting between Necdet and Bedriye in the garden of this house is charged with emotional ambivalence, with joy, awkwardness, memory, and cautious reapproach. Necdet is struck by her radiance and the life she seems to have lived with dignity and discipline. Bedriye, in turn, does not erase the past but reframes it: Her remarks suggest that the *ıztırap* she endured in marriage exceeds the pain of unrequited love, that degradation from within love itself is the deepest wound.⁹¹ In this moment, the novel juxtaposes two kinds of suffering, one defined by absence and the other by proximity, and stages a tentative dialogue between them. Necdet and Bedriye's renewed connection, though understated, gestures toward a shared vocabulary of endurance and transformation, a space where neither expects salvation from the other, but both recognize the altered terms of their bond.

The backdrop to this return is the novel's quiet insistence on the *ebedi fakat*, the eternal but. This phrase, which Necdet turns over in his mind, is less a cynical resignation than a philosophical orientation: that life, and Kadıköy itself, is never purely joyful or purely painful, but layered, ambivalent, and always unfolding in tension. The district that once expelled them through the intensity of their *ıztırap* now receives them again, not because their wounds have healed entirely, but because they have learned to live with the scars. The streets, piers, cafés, and gardens of Kadıköy remain the same in structure but have been reconfigured in affect; their meanings are no longer fixed by trauma but opened to reinterpretation.

The return is not a closing of the circle but a deepening of the spiral. Necdet and Bedriye re-

88 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 249–50.

89 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 252.

90 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 255.

91 Erol, *Kadıköyü'nün Romani*, 257.

occupy the same geographic spaces, but with different temporalities and emotional registers. The beloved district, *semt-i dildar*, is not redeemed in any final sense. It continues to shimmer with the *ebedî fakat*: always familiar, never safe; always home, never simple. But it is precisely this tension that makes return possible—not as nostalgia, but as an act of living on.

Conclusion

Kadıköyü'nün Romanı offers more than a literary snapshot of a district in transition; it unfolds as a richly textured meditation on how space is felt, assembled, and reassembled through emotion, memory, and movement. In tracking the fluctuating rhythms of youth, sociability, sorrow, and return, the novel constructs Kadıköy not as a passive urban backdrop but as a layered, affective terrain where atmospheric impressions accumulate, dissolve, and reconfigure in relation to the lives that traverse it. From festive rowboat outings to solitary walks, from ecstatic attachments to aching departures, Kadıköy emerges as a district animated by feeling, saturated with *ıztırıp*, and open to reengagement.

Through a methodology grounded in affect theory, spatial phenomenology, and assemblage thinking, this study has sought to illuminate how Erol's novel stages urban modernity not as a matter of infrastructure alone but as a continuous negotiation between sensory experience and historical transformation. The novel's treatment of mobility, whether through walking, driving, or rowing, reveals how different velocities and orientations produce distinct emotional geographies. Likewise, its depiction of atmospheric conditions, including winds, scents, temperatures, and tonalities, trains the reader to feel the district as a vibrant ecology of mood, attunement, and relational force.

Yet this reading is only one possible entry into the spatial poetics of Safiye Erol's literary Kadıköy. While *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı* is perhaps her most extensive and immersive engagement with the district, it is far from the only one. Her other works—particularly *Ülker Fırtınası*, *Ciğerdelen*, and *Dineyri Papazı*—include fragmentary but resonant depictions of Kadıköy and its changing cultural atmosphere. These texts, when read alongside *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı*, suggest the possibility of tracing a broader literary cartography across Erol's oeuvre, one that would map how the district's sensory, emotional, and symbolic registers shift across genres, temporalities, and narrative positions. Future research might thus extend this study's affective approach to explore how Erol's Kadıköy exists not only within the boundaries of a single novel but as a recurring and evolving constellation within her larger literary world.

To read *Kadıköyü'nün Romanı* is to confront the layered textures of a district and a moment, one suspended between empire and republic, youth and maturity, joy and sorrow. It is to witness how a place is not merely remembered or represented but continually made and unmade through gesture, voice, rhythm, and return. In Safiye Erol's rendering, Kadıköy is not a nostalgic image of a lost past, nor a utopia of republican progress, but a living, breathing, affective space, one that endures, changes, and calls one back.

Appendix: The movement of Safiye Erol's characters within Kadıköy. Base map: Suna and İnan Kiraç Foundation (SVIKV) Semavi Eyce Collection, Istanbul Research Institute (IAE), HRT_000171.

Routes	Locations
 The fatal car ride resulting in Nesrin's death	 Mükerrerem's house
 Necdet accompanying Bedriye to Cevizlik and his return to Ruhtim	 Necdet's house
 Necdet and Bedriye's walk from Saint Joseph to Yögürüçü Bridge	 Burhan's house (Mısırlıoğlu)
 Necdet's pensive journey	 Zaharoff's Pier
 The seven's boat excursion	 Necdet's second house (Sakızağacı)
	 Mahmut Ata Sanatorium (near Şifa)
	 Bedriye's house (Cevizlik)
	 Papazın Bağı
	 Nesrin's house
	 Nesrin's car accident

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