THE EMBODIED LABOUR OF FEMININITY IN SEX WORK AND PERFORMANCE IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY: THEORY AND PRACTICE

by

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Abstract

This dissertation is a theoretical and practical investigation of the implications of the figure of the prostitute and utilization of feminist theory on sex work in performance practice. Through my interdisciplinary grasp of the notion of the prostitute, I argue that the figure of the prostitute and its rearticulation through sex work theories can offer a methodological tool to reconsider the notions of femininity and masquerade in their relation to labour. Through the lens of critical theory and practice-based research, I seek to work at the intersection of sex work politics and performance practice. The second chapter looks at the role of the figure of the actress, and that of the prostitute as its counter-figure, in the formation of the new Republican woman in Turkey. The third chapter revisits feminist theory on femininity and masquerade. The fourth chapter examines the notion of labour, the feminist critique of Marxist labour theory, and different approaches to sex work within feminism. The last and fifth chapter documents and discusses the practice-based workshops that I devised and ran in İstanbul between 2013 and 2015.
Preface

This dissertation is an original, unpublished, intellectual product of the author, Ö. Akınç. Chapter 5 is based on practice-based research approved by UBC Okanagan Behavioural Research Ethics Board with the account number H13-02702-A002 and title, "Exploring the Prostitution Effect as a Feminist Gestus in Theatre Practice and Theory in Turkey and Canada."
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Dedication

to my mother, Döndü and my grandmother, Esma

with deep gratitude for their love.

annem Döndü ve babaannem Esma'ya

yaşattıkları sevgiye minnetle.
Chapter 1: Introduction


Gani Met (Trans-woman activist and sex worker)

¹I believe it can be illustrated that the feminist movement in Turkey has a distinctly "white" character. Kurdish women have recently stepped into shift the emphasis of the women's movement, but prostitutes are still nowhere to be seen, even though prostitution is exclusively a women's occupation. Women from the rural regions are also absent. Prostitutes and rural working class women are defining elements of womanhood; yet, the women's movement characterizes the notion of the "woman" in such a way as to deprive it of such essential elements. Therefore, in a sense, the notion of the "woman" is an essential element that is absent from the movement. It is a group of white, multilingual university graduates that is stepping forward with the claim of constituting the voice of the women. Yes, this is an unpleasant description. As a feminist woman, I am not pleased to be saying these words, but unfortunately, this is the state of the feminist movement. It is a movement that can only accept women who have saved themselves, and it refuses the actual experience of being a woman. It is not possible for such a movement to manifest itself beyond intellectual exercise. This is the situation as I see it. (Translation: Murat Güneş) http://www.pembehayat.org/haberler.php?id=540
I know the feminist that Gani Met, Ankara-based trans-woman activits and sex worker, is describing in her interview quoted above: she resembles someone I know. Her name is on the tip of my tongue; dilimincunda. I write/yazıyorum this dissertation with her on the tip of my tongue. The feminist that Gani Met describes literally and symbolically surrenders/teslim olur to the task of writing. Writing is already conceptualized and claimed by feminist thinkers (Virginia Woolf, Luce Irigaray, Gloria Anzaldúa, and others) as a medium of change, transformation, creation, and production against/at the margins of the hegemonic system of phallic signification. The Turkish equivalent of "writing," yazmak, has two different meanings in addition to "writing" in its etymological roots: "to make a mistake" and "to spread." Maybe, combining these two, she will spread the mistake. Or possibly, she will stay on the tip of my tongue and continue to be invisible. In another scenario, she will let us transform our languages together and speak about—if not to—the prostitute. Like Haraway’s term chimera as a fabricated hybrid of machine and organism (162), the feminist on the tip of my tongue speaks fabricated hybrids of English and Turkish languages, moves through virtual and material medium interfaces, records the embodied and disembodied encounters. This dissertation aims to question this haunting presence, thereof absence, of the prostitute in women's lives through an embodied and theoretical exploration.

I first engaged with feminism as a political movement in 2001 when I moved to İstanbul from a peripheral city in Western Turkey (Balıkesir) to study Psychology.
at Boğaziçi University. I enjoyed enthusiastic talks and readings on feminism. I adored women who spoke their minds and questioned the roots of sexism in the society. I attended women’s meetings, demonstrations, and protests. The whole experience was galvanizing. I was simply happy to find my sisters. The first mind-blowing feminist books I read were written by Anglophone and Francophone authors: Kate Millett, Simone de Beauvoir, and Kathi Weeks, to name only a few. With my sisters, we decided to start our own feminist reading club. We were especially taken by female writers who had a remarkable impact on the emancipation of women in their generation. These works were easy to inhabit, be inspired by, and circulate. Once, we were lost among many options of what to read and we decided to ask another sister. After taking a glance at the book list, she suggested we read a writer from Turkey. We followed her suggestion and put our heavy theory book (Feminist Theory by Josephine Donovan) away. We started reading Tante Rosa, written by Turkish author Sevgi Soysal. Sevgi Soysal’s humorous and witty style pleasantly surprised us in our own mother tongue. My feminist engagement found its indigenous and intersectional influences in my late 20s. The more feminist scholars I met, the more I became familiar with the Kurdish women's movement in Turkey, and the more I listened to trans-feminist comrades; my story became less about myself and more interconnected with other ways of resistance. My relationship with my grandmother, Esma, also was influential and led me to reflect on the middle-class tone in my feminism. In my conversations with Esma, I was reminded about the importance of listening, non-verbal communication, and inter-generational differences. She is illiterate yet a very passionate thinker especially when it comes to

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It was formerly an American college founded in 1863, as the first American college outside of United States. Located in Istanbul, Turkey, the college turned into a public university in 1971 but kept English as the language of instruction (from University Website).

Ironically enough, this book was full of references from European popular culture. Sevgi Soysal is born to a German mother and Turkish father. She studied philosophy and drama in Germany.
advocating empowerment of women. Nevertheless, I still wonder about my own strategies of staying away from *the prostitute*, rendering her invisible in these movements. This dissertation harbors this curiosity. Carrying the histories of my *white feminism* (in Gani Met's terms) along with me, I trace *the prostitute* that haunted my/our feminist practices through her absence.

The central argument of this study is built on the idea that an interdisciplinary approach that brings together sex work studies and performance studies will provide new tools/methodologies both for a feminist performance practice and for feminist politics. It looks at how the prostitute/non-prostitute divide imposed on women works its way into the legacies and discourses of acting, femininity, and labour. It is composed of five chapters, each of which is devoted to one aspect of this divide. The first four chapters look at the figure of the prostitute from historical and theoretical angles, while the fifth chapter documents the practice-based workshops. While Turkey is central to the second and fifth chapters, in the third and fourth chapters Turkey appears through specific examples drawn from performance practice and feminist activism.\(^7\)

In the second chapter, I explore the associations between the actress and the prostitute in the context of early Republican Turkey. Theatre in early Republican Turkey, modeled on Western styles and forms (And; Gürün; Yurt), embraced the themes that adhered to the standards set for a new secular Turkish society. In line with the nationalist agenda and in order to prove their commitment to the profession of acting, female actresses situated themselves against the figure of the prostitute. I argue that the ideological way actresses differentiated themselves, both intentionally

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\(^7\) I limited myself with a couple of examples from Turkey even though I am aware of the practice of feminist theatre and performance cannot be limited with only those. The feminist theatre practices in Turkey (such as Tiyatro Boyali Kuş, Hareket Atölyesi, Tiyatro Öteki Yüz or more recent examples like Kara Kabare) are out of the scope of my dissertation and they deserve to be taken as a subject matter of my future research.
and unintentionally, from the profession of prostitution has broader implications in regards to the gendered aspects of labour in performance. Moreover, the actress is ideologically and artistically constituted as a subject of the nation, and theatre as an institution of art in Turkey is governed and shaped by the visual regimes of male-gaze that define and control normative parameters of modern spectatorship. The invention of the actress hinged upon the construction of a decent femininity that was inherently part of her labour in acting and that remained consciously detached from the prostitute's labour in sex work. The prostitute body, I assert, has haunted the ideological configuration of modern acting since women started to appear on the stage and embody the feminine in Turkish theatre, but also in the Western/European theatre tradition taken as its model.

In addition to its being a counter-figure for women in theatre, the figure of the prostitute has also had a fundamental effect on the formation and experience of femininity. The feminine ethos is seriously bound up with the threats that the figure of the prostitute entails for women. These threats imply material consequences, like being exposed to violence and being excluded from all networks of support in social life, and call for different performances of femininities. In the third chapter, I argue that we can reach an understanding of the haunting effects of the figure of the prostitute only through examining its operation in and through the performance of femininity, including the feminist analysis of masquerade and mimicry. I argue that the ideological figure of the prostitute serves as a suturing fabric to handle the inconsistencies in the ideological system of womanhood/femininity.

The fourth chapter examines the notion of labour from the socialist feminist viewpoint and its critique of the distinction between material and immaterial labour. This chapter argues that the concept of the prostitute should be replaced with the
notion of sex work in order to understand the ways in which the debates on the labour of women have always been incompleten when sex work is left out.

The fifth and final chapter argues that when the figure of the prostitute as a suturing fabric is confronted with embodied physicality, this process can also become a source to reconfigure, change, and further reflection. This chapter lays out the content of my workshops, which are embodied and movement-based versions of the questions I explored in my theoretical research. With my discussion of the outcomes of a series of practice-based workshops, I aim to generate new discussions on contemporary facets of feminist engagements in Turkey, through their appearances in the devised prostitute personae of each woman who took part in the workshops.
Chapter 2: The Prostitute Haunting the Actress: Embodying the Actress vs. Prostitute Dichotomy in Turkey's Belated Modernity

As I understand it, the ghost is not the invisible or the unknown or the constitutively unknowable, in the Derridean sense. To my mind, the whole essence, if you can use that word, of a ghost is that it has a real presence and demands its due, demands your attention. Haunting and the appearance of specters or ghosts is one way, I tried to suggest, we're notified that what's been suppressed or concealed is very much alive and present, messing or interfering precisely with those always incomplete forms of containment and repression ceaselessly directed towards us.

(Gordon 2)

I grew up in the ‘80s and ‘90s, the period during which Turkey began to integrate its economy with the global capitalist market that replaced the previous model of domestic production-oriented industrialization in the late 1970s. This period is characterized with being fully exposed to the forces of financial globalization, such as IMF and the World Bank (Cizre-Sakallioglu and Yeldan 2000). Moreover, family values were tightly interwoven with and reinforced through the values of the secular nation-state. Even though the economy was changing fast, the early Republican narrative on Turkishness remained to define one's place within a polarized picture of Turkey: backward or secular. Being the descendant of parents and grandparents who have come to strongly identify with the ideology of the
Republican Turkish state, who have been proudly secular, who lived through two violent coup d'etats and who, eventually, believed in my generation's competence to “catch up with the developing world” (for which they were perpetually late), I am the daughter-project of the neo-liberalized version of the secular nation-state in Turkey. The strongest symbol of Republican values, the political leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, marked the historical narrative on Turkey's relation to the West and the Ottoman Empire. His picture hanging on the walls of every official building, Atatürk has long been the password-image of a secular, modern, and educated society as opposed to a religious, backwards, and ignorant one. Every single book in the curriculum started with the image of Atatürk. Kemalist ideology shaped the way I developed my sense of belonging during my adolescent years. I identified with him, the father-founder of the Turkish nation state, with such a profound sense of loyalty and admiration that I strove to be him when I grew up. In this seamless mindset, nothing could have made me feel more awkward and upset about my identification with Atatürk than my best friend at the time, Sema, who one day said that she severely hated Atatürk. We were both 8 years old, then. The word hate hit me in the face. I remember that day very vividly: we first peed behind the bushes on the street as we always did, rather than interrupting our street fun to go home for a toilet break. We held a conversation about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as we kept walking on the street. I remember the moment I heard her say the word hate: it was as if the earth under my feet was falling apart and I was helpless. My disenchantment with the hero of my life was very painful as it was my beloved friend who abhorred the dream-

8 For an ethnographic and sociological analysis on everyday manifestations with regard to the attachment to secularism among Turkish people see Esra Özyürek's book Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey.

9 Kemalism, also known as Atatürkism, is the national ideology of the modern Turkish Republic, taking its name from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's middle name. It is based on six principles, which are: Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Laicism/Secularism, Reformism, and Statism.
person I strove to become one day. How could anyone in the world hate him? My immediate explanation was that she did not understand what amazing things happened in Turkey thanks to Atatürk, and she could not because she was wearing hijab.\(^\text{10}\) The hijab immediately functioned as a political symbol: Atatürk had liberated women from the hijab and Sema had simply missed the liberation. No wonder she had the wrong idea, I wanted to believe. Actually, what happened was that she had broken the chain of what René Girard calls mimetic desire. As I was to understand much later, that through worshipping Atatürk, I was indeed imitating my parents’ frequently stated admiration and attachment to certain ideals of citizenship that Atatürk represented for them. Such a crack in the image of Atatürk was a threat to me because it meant failure of my performance as a “good daughter” in the eyes of my parents. This is why my immediate reaction to Sema's comment was a viscerally felt and vividly remembered disgust, or abjection,\(^\text{11}\) a boundary-demolisher.

Another visceral moment that captures my changing relationship with my homeland took place in June 2013 when I was on the street in Istanbul for one cause with thousands of others. The trigger that moved me out of my home and made me walk towards the same destination as thousands of people was a call from my friend, telling me that she was on her way to the central urban park, Gezi Park, where the police were attacking people who were camping in the park to stop its demolition. The park had been a shelter area for homeless people and sex workers who worked on the streets, and now it was going to be demolished as part of a long line of gentrifying urban renewal projects; a replica of the former Taksim Military Barracks building was to be built in the park area, with a shopping center and luxury

\(^{10}\) For a sociological analysis on hijab in modern Turkey see Nilüfer Göle's book *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling*.

\(^{11}\) I use the abject in the way Julia Kristeva theorizes it in her work, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, which I also talk about later in the next chapter.
residences. The spirit on the streets transcended me, individually, and yet it did not belong to a certain type of community that I knew of. As I was walking through and along with the spirit that led me out of my home, I was gradually coming to terms with the magnitude of the movement that I was taking part in. Without a centralized call, hundreds of bodies coming from different directions were joining each other. It was almost embodying the sense of belonging and autonomy simultaneously. The slogan that most resonated with me was: “There is no salvation on your own: either together or none of us.” It was what critical performance theory would call liveness, what Victor Turner calls the liminality and ambiguity of ritual processes, and what cultural theory would explain as hybrid moments that “not only [disrupt] the binary but [bring] spontaneous newness which is different object” (Bhabha 19).

There was a huge crowd, acting like one body, and this body was determined to break the police blockade and enter the park. I felt safe and surrounded by peaceful people, even though I was aware that the police could attack the crowd at any moment. And they did. The riot police were ruthlessly shooting pepper gas canisters all around. Pepper spray impairs vision and makes breathing very difficult. It was frightening for a person like me who has never had to fight back physically in her life. However, despite the violent and dangerous attack of the police, the streets filled with people felt like home to me. The whole experience of street protests and the occupation of an urban park viscerally and perceptually transformed my relationship with Turkey. Sharing the borderline experiences of life, injury, sickness, joy, and death, I met my generation and the generation after me. That is to say, the Gezi Park protests turned into a huge opportunity for differently motivated political groups to meet for the first time, without a top-down agenda, to collaborate. Following long

12The notion of liveness as an authentic communal feeling has been critically re-evaluated especially by Philip Auslander.
hours of clashes with the police, protestors broke through the security barricades and entered the park. The park was occupied as a police-free zone for fifteen days.\textsuperscript{13} I saw a sign that read: “You took our graves, you are not going to be able to take our park. The Armenian\textsuperscript{14} people.” It was only then that I realized that by claiming the city park, we were actually claiming the Armenian cemetery underneath it.

Norman Denzin, referring to Victor Turner, describes \textit{the moments of epiphany} as “ritually structured liminal experiences connected to moments of breach, crisis, redress, and reintegration or schism, crossing from one space to another ...strange and familiar situations that connect critical biographical experiences with culture, history, and social structure” (34). These two moments of epiphany speak to one another in this sense that the second one uproots deeply situated elements of official ideology in the collective and embodied memories described in the first one. Once the official history of Turkey is shaken to its roots, the histories of ethnic minorities, as well as the conflicting relationship between the West and East in the context of Turkey's formation of nation-state, come to the surface. Claiming the land, then, means meeting all its people and their forgotten or erased legacies. The legacy of people who share the same history and land continue to haunt each other, and this haunting prompts "something-to-be-done" (Gordon 3) rather than leaving us in paralysis. Bringing what is in the blind field into life, haunting, in this sense, is imbricated with futurity that calls for some kind of action or movement. Our moving bodies are exposed to and flourish through socially and politically articulated forces that render them vulnerable to the processes of intellectual and academic work as well. Yet, they hint at what it means to perform, embody, resist, and mimic the larger

\textsuperscript{13} Arzu Öztürkmen's article on Gezi Park, "The Park, the Penguin, and the Gas: Performance in Progress in Gezi Park" provides a perspective from which the whole experience of Gezi Park can be read as performance. Also, for an extended analysis on Gezi Park protests see Karakaya\c{a} et. al and Özkırıml\i.

\textsuperscript{14} Armenian's systematic extermination in Anatolia during and after the WWI is still a contested issue and has not been officially recognized by the Turkish State till this day.
power structures that shape our realities. These anecdotes inform the framework of the research in a way only sensorial and embodied ways of knowing can convey. The next parts of this chapter look at the institution of theatre as a space of performance of national identity in Turkey, particularly through the figure of the actress who is situated against the figure of the prostitute. I argue that the opposed discourses of the actress and the prostitute continue to haunt each other’s legacy.

2.1 Turkey and the “Father of the Nation”

The establishment of the Republic of Turkey is marked with the Independence War (1919-1923), which was won against the occupying European forces after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in WWI. This history cautiously differentiates itself from the Ottoman legacy in the same lands. In this sense, Turkey’s fight for independence in the fast-changing twentieth century is twofold: it is a victory against both the European armies and the Ottoman Empire that had governed Anatolia and beyond since the 13th century. The republican state was founded in 1923 on the grand premise that it would westernize and civilize the society that had long suffered from being late to a fast-developing world. After the Independence War, the family members of the Ottoman dynasty were expelled from the country (Bardakçı, Last Ottomans) and the founder, Mustafa Kemal, was given the surname Atatürk, which literally means the “father of the Turks.” Top-down reforms of the new Republic pointed at the recurring myth of the Ottoman Empire as a “sick man.” Kemalism, the ideology named after Mustafa Kemal, indicated the six principles of the Republic: Nationalism, Republicanism, Statism, Populism, Revolutionarism, and Secularism. The Republic legally separated religious and state affairs, and constituted a secular body of government: the parliament as opposed to the singular religious sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire. Secularism is still a contested concept in Turkey today, as in
the example of hijab, in which one’s stance on the freedom of women to wear hijab in public schools and state institutions typically determines which side s/he is on: secular or Islamic. Radical regulations extended to the cultural and artistic realms as well. The hegemonic narrative of national identity was encouraged through the foundation of institutions such as the Turkish Language Institution and Turkish History Research Institution. The “Turk,” which was initially a European classification of the Ottomans (Cemal Kafadar cited in Navaro-Yashin 10), was fast becoming a “scientifically and historically” delineated and indisputable race. For instance, change of the Alphabet led to the deepest chasm between the Ottoman period and the Republican period. The Ottoman alphabet (consisting of a mixture of the Arabic and Persian languages) was replaced by the Latin alphabet. In East-West Mimesis: Auerbach in Turkey, Kader Konuk uses the phrase “self-imposed appropriation of Western European culture” (East-West Mimesis12), a phrase that perfectly captures the ambiguous modernization project in Turkey.

The legacy of the Ottoman Empire was not only antagonistically positioned against the Republican state, but it was also extremely trivialized and reduced to a simplified history of what came before the Turkish Republic. Before its disintegration in the aftermath of WWI (which led to Balkan and Middle Eastern states, as well as the modern state of Turkey), the Ottoman Empire had been the most powerful colonialist state in the world during the 16th and 17th centuries, controlling much of Southeastern Europe, Western Asia, the Caucasus, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa. To this day, the influences of European, Mesopotamian, and Asian cultures and languages still constitute the richest subject of Turkish history studies, literature theory, and linguistics. The quote below, describing the integration of non-Muslim populations into the Ottoman Empire, namely converts, is worth referring to at length.
here, as it captures the multi-religious and multi-cultural character of the Ottoman Empire:

Converts were the most likely group instrumental in exchanges between Europeans and Ottomans. We have mentioned the French Jesuit or Capuchin who converted to Islam and ended up helping Katib Çelebi with his European atlases and other sources. An Italian, known only under his Muslim name Nuh ibn Abdülmennan became chief court physician. A particularly interesting example is Albert Bobovsky (or Bobovius), born in Poland and educated as a captive page in the Ottoman palace. He was in charge of the pages’ choir, and was employed as an interpreter, until he was expelled for excessive drinking. Probably through the Dutch representative Lewinus Warner he was in contact with the Bohemian protestant reformer Johann Amos Comenius, and contributed to his missionary efforts by translating some of his works into Turkish. Warner, who had also befriended the atheist Mehmed Lari, became pivotal in an effort to translate the Bible into Turkish. The first attempt was commissioned to an Istanbuliot Jew, known as Haki, then, for unknown reasons, a second translation was commissioned from Bobovsky. Bobovsky also provided French and English clerics and diplomats with information on the Ottomans and on Islam. Remarkably, he continued to live as a Muslim, and composed religious poetry in Turkish. (Hagen 251)

The cultural exchange and circulation among different communities during the Ottoman Period is telling about the on-going influences of multicultural legacies in the memories of the land. Interestingly enough, it was not only the Turkish official history that left this cultural legacy in the dark, but also post-colonial studies, both inside and outside of Turkey. According to Meltem Ahıska, a Turkish sociologist,
“the Turkish replica of modernity is either taken too literally or remains invisible in theories of modernization, Orientalism and postcolonial criticism” (360). The reason for this, she asserts, is that the Ottoman Empire itself was the epitome of colonial power and most studies, including Edward Said’s work on Orientalism, left Ottoman history out due to this ambiguity. Ahıska analyzes Turkey’s version of modernity through the conceptual framework of Occidentalism, which she takes as an “answering practice to the constructions of the West, which operates in the mythical time of reified representation” (368). Those practices of answering to a contingent West culture are employed as either an effect or cause of “being late” to an already civilized western world. The sense of “belatedness” has been multiplied through the anxieties over what constitutes “authenticity” for Turkey. The anxiety of “being late” to a developing world is a familiar feeling for every individual born in Turkey in the twentieth century. As Turkey is working on legislative reforms concerning human rights to become a full member of the European Union today, the sense of “being left behind” still constitutes the ambiguous nature of its relationship with “the West” in political and public opinion, or what Ahıska calls “Turkey’s self-consciously crafted Western identity” (351). Even though theories of Occidentalism feed important arguments about Turkey’s unique and complex relationship to its construction of the West, they might still reproduce the binaries in which we cannot be constructive. The West-East binary is still at work in these views, limited and sometimes manipulative. At this point, Sibel Irzik and Güven Güzeldere urge us not to cling to the metaphor of being in-between, and call for taking globalization into consideration as well:

Against this background, the sense of belatedness and the fear of inauthenticity that accompanied the traumatic late-nineteenth-century encounter with the Western model have become complicated by a bewildering
sense of simultaneity with the rest of the world. Analyses in terms of Turkey’s geographical and cultural situation “between two worlds” are becoming increasingly untenable in a world that seems all too “single.” (Irzik and Güzeldere 285)

In the political arena, Turkey is confronting the unresolved tensions surfacing in different communities (Kurdish, Armenian, Alewi) that have intrinsic ties to the history of Anatolia with their legacies, yet have been politically mis/underrepresented in modern Turkey. However, as Irzik and Güzeldere posit above, it is never a simple task today to interpret the cultural and political dynamics of contemporary Turkey. We cannot subsume the whole political sphere into one binary, like the divide between West and East or the Ottoman Empire and the Republic, which is itself a construction. As Homi Bhabha reminds us in the Location of Culture, “terms of cultural engagement are always produced performatively, regardless of their antagonistic or affiliative natures” (2). His conceptualization of interstitial spaces, where new hybrid forms of identity are negotiated, is useful for grasping the in-between spaces where the difference between to be Western and to stay authentic is perpetually enacted, performed, and displayed through myriad performative ways. In Turkey’s strained and complicated relationship with the Ottoman heritage, these interstitial spaces can be observed through many aspects of modern art and culture.

2.2. The First Actresses as the Daughters of the Turkish State

The tradition of performing arts in Turkey includes artistic forms such as storytelling, shadow puppetry (Hacivat ve Karagöz as the most well-known figures of Turkish shadow theatre), and oral poetry accompanied by music(Faroqhi and Öztürkmen). There are also cross-dressing practices of male dancers, who are called
köçek. Köçek were the male dancers who dressed up as women in public amusement events set up for the Ottoman Sultan. They epitomize an important practice of performance that is distinctive in regards to men’s training in dancing and women’s exclusion from the public sphere.

Woman dancers performed only for private occasions designed for the Sultan’s taste. Dilek Özhan Koçak’s book, *Ottoman Theater: The Scene of Cultural Transformation in the 19th Century*, examines in detail theatre as the catalyst of cultural transformation in the Ottoman society. According to Koçak's study, in the 17th and 18th centuries, European (mostly Italian and French) groups visited Ottoman cities and staged their plays and operas in palaces. European theatre events, in this sense, provided a public environment where intellectuals could meet people from different cultures and enjoy “Western” styles of storytelling: melodrama, tragedy, and comedy.

Intercultural influences gained momentum throughout the reformation period, known as the Tanzimat Period, between 1830 and 1908. For instance, Kader Konuk, in her article on Lady Montagu who stayed in Istanbul for several years as the wife of an English Embassy officer, demonstrates that the exchange of influence between the Ottoman culture and Europe was not one-sided. She discusses Montagu’s fascination with dressing up as an Ottoman woman and calls this gendered cultural performance “ethno-masquerade.” The Tanzimat Period arose from the fear that the wave of nationalism spreading through the European countries could threaten the sovereignty of the Empire by affecting minorities and non-Muslim populations. Through the declaration of the Ottoman Imperial Edict of Reorganization in 1839, the Ottoman Empire guaranteed legal and property rights
protection to all people, including non-Muslim populations, for the first time, with the aim of keeping non-Muslim populations in check.

In 1869, as part of the reformation process in the Ottoman Empire, Sadrazam Ali Paşa invited a group of influential artists to launch the first Ottoman Theatre Collective. The condition for the group coming together was that it play “morally appropriate plays and tragedies in Turkish, Bulgarian, Romanian and Armenian.”

In 1870, Hagop Vartovyan (popularly known as Güllü Agop), the Armenian theatre artist, initiated his theatre collective, which had Armenian and Turkish plays in its repertoire. With the establishment of the first theatre collective, Armenian women began to appear on the stage. Until then, women were banned from appearing both on the stage and in theatre audiences under the Ottoman Rule.

In opposition to the official history, which celebrates the tragic life of the first Muslim women, it was actually Armenian (and Christian) women who embodied the first image of the actress for the coming generations of woman artists in Anatolia. Mira Nivart was among the first Armenian female actresses who gained a public reputation with her performance in melodramas. She was upheld as the actress who “truly felt what she played” or “lived her role” by the writers of the era. In tune with this sort of popular mythologies woven around her stage persona, her actual death took place during a play, too.

Another Armenian woman, Yeranuhi Karakasyan, worked as the “lead actress” in the Ottoman theatre for ten years and appeared in male and female roles.

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15Quotation from Mehmet Fatih Uslu’s doctoral dissertation, “Melodrama and Comedy: Turkish and Armenian Modern Dramatic Literatures in the Ottoman Empire.”

16The Armenian heritage in Turkey’s theatre history remained unacknowledged until the 21st century Armenian texts have only recently been translated by Turkish historians, scholars, and artists. A few of these include Vartovyan Company and New Ottomans written by Fırat Güllü in 2008; and San Lazarro Stage between East and West: Armenian Mikhitarist Monastery and First Turkish Plays, translated by Mehmet Fatih Uslu in 2013.
An interesting case of replacement, and thereby erasure of Armenian legacy, occurred when a Muslim Turkish woman, Afife Jale, actualized her dreams to be an actress like Armenian women. Jale was avid in her desire to be an actress, a passion that put her in perilous situations, including custody and blackmail. The fact that Muslim women were not allowed to appear on stage did not stop her from trying. On a day when an Armenian actress, Eliza Binemeciyan, was not able to perform her role, Afife Jale replaced her. It was an opportunity that came through the absence of an Armenian actress that gave Afife Jale her first-time stage experience.

This switch, theatrical in every sense of the word, captures the shared legacy of Armenian and Turkish women in the theatre. To put it differently, it can be seen as the replacement of the multi-ethnic Ottoman society with one nationhood, or imagined community, the Turkish nation-state. In the wake of cultural and political transition from multi-ethnic Ottoman empire to Turkish nation-state, the multilinguality in the society was also disappearing. Armenian performers' broken Turkish (with accent) was pointed out publicly as a linguistic and cultural insufficiency by Turkish journalists of the era. In this way, Muslim women's participation in the theatre could be justified once again as a national cause.

Theatre in Turkey, even though emulating European theatre in terms of architecture, acting, and playwriting, has been one of the artistic areas where concerns over authenticity of Turkish culture play a paramount role. In this cultural epoch, the figure of the woman started to embody the national and secular ideologies of the state that was about to come. According to Michelene Wandor, accepting women's active participation in theatre happened at the expense of reducing women to guardians of moral values. Although Wandor is referring to early modern English society, her analysis is insightful for my purposes here because it usefully foregrounds
the anti-theatrical prejudice inscribed within Western theatre adopted by early Turkish Republicans: “While ‘admitting’ women to the stage was an important professional step forward, the ostensible aim of such an action was to lend the right kind of moral tone to the theatre. From being seen as little short of a whore, the actress was now seen as the potential shining light of decency” (24).

Afife Jale's narrative holds a symbolic place in the history of modern theatre in Turkey. Important to the interest of this study, Jale's struggle to make her goals happen in the theatre had an anti-prostitution tone to it as the snapshot below from the play *Afife*, which was written in 1993 by Nezihe Araz, depicts:

Hidayet–My daughter cannot be an actress. Cannot be a whore. She cannot be labeled legally and publicly as a whore. No! Never and ever. (*Afife enters the stage. Brave, proud and determined.*)

Afife–Don’t worry about it at all. I will not be a whore!

Hidayet – So, you will be an actress?

Afife–Yes! And nobody is going to keep me from it! 17

The play was based on Afife Jale's life. The dialogue above depicts the daughter-father tension in Afife's life, which had led her to leave her family to enroll in the city conservatory's acting classes for women. It is not certain whether Afife's father uttered the sentences in the way they appeared in the play. Nevertheless, it captures the dilemma the actresses of the era faced.

This moral stance stems from (and in response to) the public opinion that associates the figure of the actress with the figure of the prostitute. It also echoes an  

Afife- [...] Boşunuza kendinizi yormayın. Ben... Fahişе olmayacağım!
Hidayet – Demek, oyuncu olacaksin?
Afifе- Evet! Ve buna kimse mani olmayacak... (Nezihe Araz, “Afife”1990, 22).
anecdote about Bedia Muvahhit, another early Republican actress. According to this story, Muvahhit is at a gathering in a household owned by a wealthy local. A woman approaches to Bedia and says: "I also wanted to be an actress but my mother prevented me saying 'you would become a whore'. Bedia's response has no apologetic tone to it at all: "And then how did you become one?"\textsuperscript{18} The association between women's working and prostitution has been referred to in different ways for different reasons by the actresses themselves, yet it was mostly repudiated by the actresses in order to prove their commitment to the profession of acting. Afife Jale even questions the occupational rights of prostitutes of the era as she once posed: “Why is prostitution a legal occupation for women but not acting?”

By 1926, at the time women were legally allowed to take part in theatre, Afife Jale had already developed a drug problem from which she suffered until her death in 1941 at a mental hospital. Her question, though, deserves to be addressed for a couple of reasons. This morally loaded yet fair question reflects not only the legal status of prostitute women during the early Republican period and women's exclusion from theatre, but it also turns the moral anxiety on the appearance of women in theatre on its head by addressing its roots. In other words, what Jale's question debunks is the mystery of the prostitute as a threat by pointing out the material conditions of the prostitute women in the society. To grasp the discursive maneuver in which the actress and the prostitute are positioned against each other, it is critical to pay attention to the situation of prostitute women during the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, briefly.

In spite of the emphasis put on the differences between modern Turkey and the Ottoman era in official history, the legal and economic system on which current

\textsuperscript{18}http://nostalji.anilarim.net/forum/lofiversion/index.php?t=2286.html
brothels are built dates back to the Ottoman period. The first historical documents recording the presence of prostitutes in the Ottoman Empire are from the 16th century, during the reign of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman. In *Wicked Istanbul: Regulation of Prostitution in the Early Turkish Republican Period*, Mark David Wyers states that during the occupation of the Ottoman Empire by European forces, Muslim women were the center of attention for European soldiers who were seeking sexual services. Wyers defines his study as a “history of exiles,” as many Muslim women who worked as prostitutes were exiled from Istanbul to the inner parts of Anatolia.

According to Wyers, historical records show 175 brothels operated during this period, thus confirming American writer Ernest Hemingway’s comment about Istanbul being more liberal than even Europe with free sex life in its brothels. This document dispels the myths that non-Muslim women were the only prostitutes. Since Muslim women were legally banned from working as prostitutes under the reign of Ottomans up until 1917, and since religious segregation of prostitutes in brothels continued until 1923, non-Muslim women were marked as the prostitutes in the cultural memory of Turkey. Famous women who were known to be prostitutes, such as Arap (Arabian) Fatı, Giritli (Greek) Närin, Atlases Kamer, and Kitreli Nefise ve Balatlı Ayni, were named according to their ethnicities and places where they lived.

The first institutional intervention into brothels was in 1565, as Murat Bardakçı mentions, in a police raid on the house owned by Arap Fati. After this raid, which marks the beginning of the long history of criminalization and legalization of brothels up until today, Emperor Süleyman declared an edict to deport all prostitute women from Ottoman land. (Özbek) However, this legal attempt to abolish prostitution only led to a black market. Bardakçı states that brothels were
camouflaged as laundry shops and cafés for a long time. The first legal brothel, run by Madame Langa Fatma, was opened in 1884 on Abanoz Street.

Sex work in general is invisible, while the association between prostitution and non-Muslim women has always been strong. Hence, the trajectory through which the figures of the prostitute and the actress intersect in the cultural and political history of Turkey leads not only to the establishment of common moral standards that juxtapose two roles assigned to biological women in the formation of the modern public space, but also to the ideologically constructed divide between Muslim and non-Muslim populations in the process of Turkification of Anatolia during the establishment of Republican Turkey. The figures of the prostitute and the actress in Turkey’s modern history both bear the memory of a stereotypical foreign woman, given the fact that the first actresses and officially recognized prostitutes were both from non-Muslim populations.

2.3. Entangled Roots of Anti-theatrical Prejudice

The modernization project in Turkey's early republican era is deeply inscribed in the establishment and constitution of theatre as an institution modeled upon the Eurocentric theatre tradition. From the theatre buildings, education, stage, and the plays chosen, to the aspects of acting and playwriting, theatre flourished in modern Turkey with many resemblances to and direct adaptations from Europe, particularly from France due to close relations between French and Turkish Republican elites. In her book, Time, Space, Reflection (Zaman, Mekan, Zuhur), Beliz Güçbilmez traces the story of this kind of import logic in the field of playwriting to eventually illustrate the incompatibility between Western realist playwriting and the Ottoman art of miniature. She compares the realist dramatic forms originated in Europe as melodrama with the way they appeared in the Turkish context, and deciphers the
absence of the dimension of the past (which, she argues, is the core element of Western realist dramatic form) in the plays written and staged in Turkey. She observes that this absence in realist Turkish plays renders the story devoid of any depth with respect to the history of events or characters. On the other hand, this absence of past echoes the style of the Ottoman miniature art, which is a disproportional figurative painting technique that “was transferred to the Persians from the Chinese and Turks and from them to Europe” (Rukancı 2). In this form, the painting does not offer a center from which a perspective can arise. Miniatures are described as small, detailed, and colourful pictures that are unlike realist paintings. Güçbilmez asserts that the influence of the miniature tradition haunted early Republican playwriting—ironically enough, more so in the early Republican era when the official history uncompromisingly dissociated itself from the Ottoman tradition. By reading the project of adapting Western theatre in the early Republican era, which decontextualized itself by disavowing the previous multicultural encounters that occurred in the same geography, Güçbilmez re-contextualizes the history of the inscription of Western identity in Turkish theatre. By doing so, she provides an insightful approach to the hybrid forms that theatre in Turkey has taken until today.

In her article, "Discontented Womb of Turkish Theatre: Hysterics in the Melodramas of Namık Kemal," Güçbilmez also discusses the gendered dynamic in the mimicry of European theatre in the Early Republican plays. She likens the ambition of Early Republican playwrights (represented by Namık Kemal) to conquer Western dramatic forms to the ambition of men who hope to conquer women without being imperiled by them. In other words, the playwrights of the era were like men who were afraid of losing their phallic power in their encounter with a woman.
Instead, though, when Güçbilmez looks at the plays written under the influence of Western plays, she concludes that the “woman” that early Republican Turkish playwrights were trying to conquer was actually a man dressed up as a woman: a transvestite. According to Güçbilmez, the hysterical tone of female characters in the early plays written in Western dramatic forms is a symptom of this unacceptable encounter. The figure of the actress, in this sense, embodies the national hysteria and obsession on the stage and performs to an imagined nation-audience. She, therefore, subscribes to a contract in the service of emerging notions of modern nationhood always in trouble with the West regarding the issue of where its boundaries should be drawn.

Ironically, the Western theatre that became a source of inspiration for Turkish playwrights has a history of anti-theatrical prejudice imbued with whorephobia and misogyny. Tracing the notion of anti-theatrical prejudice in the context of Euro-American theatre history, one can further argue that the troubling nature of the encounter between Turkish playwrights and European playwriting traditions stems from the Western theatre tradition's own fear of the similarity of theatre to prostitution. Jonas Barish, theatre historian, devotes his influential book *Anti-theatrical Prejudice* to the exploration of the idea that there has been moral and religious hostility against theatre in the Western world from Plato to the philosophers of the twentieth century. He argues that the anti-theatrical prejudice heightened concurrently with theatre gaining popularity and positive power for the masses. The objections were based on either religious and moral or secular (such as considering theatre-going a waste of time and productivity) reasons. Actors and theatre artists faced many barriers from Roman times through to nineteenth-century Europe. Acting, theatricality, melodrama, opera, or making a spectacle of oneself have
pejorative, belittling associations. Distrust of the profession of acting in particular, and the art of theatre in general, multiplied with the growing power of theatre to incite action and stir enjoyment. In Barish's words: "theatre being the most volatile of the arts, the most dynamic in its impact, the most provocative of public emotion, brings the fear of free imagination to the surface" (319).

The prevalence of opposition against theatre makes Barish conclude that it comes to appear as a kind of ontological malaise, a condition inseparable from our beings, which we can no more discard than we can shed our skins (*The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice* 2). Bernard Shaw said that "the curse of our stage at present is the shameless prostitution of the art of acting into the art of pleasing. They make the theatre a place where the public comes to look at its pets and distribute lumps of sugar to them" (ibid 343). Thus, theatre is condemned on the grounds of being one of the illegal offspring of prostitution. In his article, “Base Trade: Theatre as Prostitution,” which focuses on the “troublesome conjunction of player and whore” and “the coupling of stage and brothel” (838), Joseph Lenz asserts that the first association between theatre and prostitution was the common ground both theatre and prostitution shared. Lenz gives a detailed account of this first association in the context of England, where Puritan opponents of theatre managed to prohibit theatre totally in 1642. Accordingly, the first theatres were built outside the cities where the brothels, insane asylums, and prisons were located. In parallel to their closeness to brothels, theatres had been linked with disease and prostitution, as they were also controlled on the grounds of spreading infection (835). According to the article, theatres had become social places where prostitutes and clients could meet, and theatre, like prostitution,

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19 According to the studies of Jenna Lubin et al., the owners of theatres and brothels could be the same people in this period: The subsequent movement of many playhouses from the city to Southwark,
relies upon visual display of bodies. For of these reasons, infection of sexually transmitted diseases was turned into an infection of immorality. In the words of Lenz:

Like a brothel, the theatre houses "some lewd intrigue of Fornication"; like a bawd, it advertises its product with effeminate gesture and costly apparel; like a prostitute, the motive is the same—money. Thus, the theatre is a brothel, a pandero, a whore, a way toward debauchery and a site for it. (836)

In parallel to the harsh criticism towards theatre, the Puritans' hateful declarations about theatre also accused viewers of committing adultery and letting immorality spread among the youth. Laurence Senelick, too, points to the dependency of both theatre and prostitution on the body in his book, *The Changing Room: Sex, Drag and Theatre*. As Senelick asserts, the anti-theatrical prejudice devalues theatre on the basis of its resemblance to prostitution and "the actor, male or female, by exposing the body, is a tempter, his profession a gang of profane men and shameless women who go about corrupting youth, altogether lascivious and libidinous" (9). Therefore, "exposition of the body" and "lasciviousness," as the common denominators of prostitution and theatre, make both institutions 'feminine' and thereby unpredictably dangerous. As the prostitute body usually implies the female body and its availability to the phallic gaze, theatre, through copying its qualities and using its tools, turns itself into an exploitable and subordinated prostitute. Not surprisingly, the derogatory implications of acting have always addressed femininity (as I will discuss further in the next chapter) as opposed to the mind, rationality, and order (Diamond); and yet, theatres were all-men casted without female performers or collaborators until the mid-17th century (1660). It is in these social circumstances that actors impersonated

*across the Thames, sparked the lasting association of theatres and brothels. Not only was the proximity of these sites the same, but often the most notable patrons of the theatres were also whore masters.*
female characters, and this led to a unique understanding of cross-dressing and gender perception in theatre (Senelick; Case).

Following the harsh period of prohibitions and oppressions in the eighteenth century, theatre in the Western world underwent a revision, or in Senelick’s words, “Western theatre has tried to sublimate the connection and to establish claims as high art, something standing above the needs of flesh” (10). While on the one hand, femininity and lasciviousness in acting were totally discredited, on the other hand, women, for the first time, showed up in the theatre scene. To render theatre respectful again and free from the stigma, the behaviour of the audiences had to go through a process of civilization. As Erika Fisher-Lichte explains, theatre laws prohibiting disruptive misbehaviour (eating, drinking, or talking) of the audience passed in the 18th century (36). Increased darkening of the auditorium transformed the experience of being in the theatre into an experience of camera obscura, which dissociates the eye from the body and intensifies the hegemony of central perspective in the visual sphere. The following quote demonstrates the way theatrical gaze operates and establishes the gendered dimensions of visual pleasure for the industrial age:

Significantly, both the stereoscope and the phantasmagoria took the nineteenth century by storm just as a new binary relation between the sexes established itself within the increasingly dominant bourgeois classes. In fact, the visual dynamic associated with these devices appears quite resonant with this new relation, one that cast man as viewing subject and woman as object being viewed. (Sikes 119)

The actress embodies the definition of modern theatre once she appears on the stage to complete the missing piece of the modern puzzle: the biological woman. In this
sense, the female body sets the boundaries between eroticizing the experience of the male-dominant gaze and being *uncivilized*. Spectacle is a “social relation among people, mediated by images,” according to Guy Debord, for whom spectacle constitutes “a pseudo-life in being, like money, the abstract representation of value which created equivalence between things that are not comparable” (49). The prostitute and the actress as modern subjects conjure many associations in relation to modernization and spectacle. The rapid integration of the female body on stage coincided with the rapid criminalization and demonization of the prostitute body through modern legal and scientific discourses. Just as the prostitute, *the pure commodity*, became a special source of fascination for male modern thinkers, scientists, and artists attempting to grasp the ambiguity of modernity, the actress amazed the audiences through the actress as spectacle, which for Guy Debord is like money, the abstract representation of value, and titillated them by standing at the edge of prostitution and art. While in the realm of prostitution transgression was kept behind locked doors, the realm of theatre turned into a public arena where the boundaries of what was morally and legally transgressive were constantly tested and negotiated. Hence, the (co)existence of the prostitute and the actress in early industrial societies brought different states of feminine visibility into life, which became both interchangeable and antithetical at once. The central argument in this chapter is that the figure of the prostitute in acting resides neither *behind* the actress nor *distinct* from the actress, but it is a modern discursive configuration that legitimized the *new woman* through *letting* women appear on the stage/in public. *The prostitute* is a haunting secret in the formation and invention of the actress in modern theatre discourse.
In conclusion, the figure of the prostitute has haunted the figure of the actress for a long period of time in both the Western and the Turkish contexts, albeit in different ways. The ghostly presence of the figure of the prostitute accompanies the conditions in which the modern woman appears in the public space. Avery Gordon argues that history's inscription onto marginalized bodies as the marking of “the violence of the force that made them” (22) generates counteractions of resistance. For Gordon, those acts of resistance represent precisely the spectral’s power across time—performances as well as “stories concerning exclusions and invisibilities” where the ghost emerges as a “crucible for political mediation and historical memory” (17-18). Concurrently, the figure of the prostitute has ideologically and materially accompanied and haunted the figure of the modern actress in Turkey throughout the institutionalization and westernization of theatre as one of the apparatuses to invent a nation-state. In conclusion, within Turkey’s early Republican context, as the public presence of the actress was deemed acceptable only on the condition of the disappearance of the prostitute from the public sphere, the actress has always been haunted by the prostitute, as her other on the stage.
Chapter 3: The Prostitute Haunting the Woman: Masquerade of Femininity and Performance

The social environment I was born and raised in had been prostitute-free. As a daughter of a middle class, secular, and heterosexually connected family, I had not been introduced to the figure of the prostitute even as an idea. Nevertheless, I instinctively knew what acting like a prostitute would cost me. Every time I was reminded that I was a good daughter, I immediately knew/felt that I shouldn't be a bad one. One day, when I overheard my mother ask my father if he was seeing prostitute women, the colour of the emotion that the figure of the prostitute evoked in me changed from being an unknown threat to a painful and factual something. With the tone in my mother's voice, I was sure about one thing: the prostitute, whatever it is, had something to do with my mother's broken feelings. It was a monster between couples. It was what my mother was not. It might have been my father's fatal fault. It was the disgusting face of sexual desire, a phantom-like being that disclosed the fragile bonds within the family. What was its place in the family? Thus, the figure of the prostitute first existed in my life as an unknown threatening figure/other from which I had to protect my own being and then, as an embodied other whom my father might have physically touched and thereby hurt my mother and me.

There are a few particularities that were felt to be certain in this unknown figure of the prostitute. For one thing, it is a her. In other words, she is a woman. She is within the reach of all men, starting with "the Father." Women, unless they are prostitutes themselves, cannot reach her. They can only feel her through men. In this sense, she acts like a boundary for non-prostitute women. A boundary but also a potential entry point. She holds an abject space to which women can enter only at the cost of giving up their privileges as decent mothers, daughters, sisters, wives.
Therefore, she can also act as an invitation to demolish the boundaries. My child self was curious to look into the abyss that hurt my mother; the figure of the prostitute is a source of curiosity and discovery for the very same reasons that render it threatening. It holds a space of curiosity, always awake, that might lead to an act of courage to perform one's own part in the game. In this curiosity lies the potential to revitalize feminist thinking on the performance of femininity. This brings me to the theme of this chapter: the role of the figure of the prostitute in the masquerade of femininity. Firstly, I will revisit the critical thinking on the notion of femininity in its relation to mimicry/masquerade. Secondly, I look at Turkey-born performance artist Şükran Moral's performance, Bordello, that efficiently demonstrates the absent presence of the figure of the prostitute in women's lives.

3.1 Femininity

If the figure of the prostitute “acts as a whip holding female humanity in a state of pure subordination” (Pheterson 89), how do women behold and react to this whip? Acting upon, rejecting, accepting, dealing with this whip generates various modes, affects, and fashions of femininity. The performance of femininities is inherently linked to the very fundamental need of having/making a self-image. In Johan Huizinga's terms, it is a serious play. In Clifford Geertz's terms, it is a deep play with high stakes. Nevertheless, the Self that comes to being in women experiences a double alienation in relation to the all-encompassing sense of Self that shatters once the person enters into the language.20 Language was defined by Walter Benjamin "as the highest level of mimetic behavior and the most complete archive of non-sensuous similarity: a medium into which earlier powers of mimetic production and comprehension have passed without residue, to the point where they have liquidated

20The relationship between language and subjecthood has been theorized by Jacques Lacan. The source I used is Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction by Elizabeth Grosz.
those of magic” (722). The enigmatic situation of women in the symbolic order that inscribes their subjectivity as absence makes the medium of language non-sensuous once again. In Monique Wittig's words:

Language as a whole gives everybody the same power of becoming an absolute subject through its exercise. But gender, an element of language, works upon this ontological fact to annul it as far as women are concerned and corresponds to a constant attempt to strip them of the most precious thing for a human being—subjectivity. Gender is an ontological impossibility because it tries to accomplish the division of Being. But Being as being is not divided. God or Man as being are One and whole. So what is this divided being introduced into language through gender? It is an impossible being, it is a being that does not exist, an ontological joke, a conceptual maneuver to wrest from women what belongs to them by right: conceiving of oneself as a total subject through the exercise of language. The result of the imposition of gender, acting as a denial at the very moment when one speaks, is to deprive women of the authority of speech, and to force them to make their entrance in a crablike way, particularizing themselves and apologizing profusely. The result is to deny them any claim to the abstract, philosophical, political discourses that give shape to the social body. (6)

According to Wittig, the question of sexual difference is intricately linked to the question of language and it is a mere conceptual maneuver. If women are inscribed as absent, the exploited subject of representation in the phallic order of things, how do they seize control of their participation in the phallocentric language? How do they make use of their signifying powers that are immediately visible when they surrender themselves to the masculine sign system that is fueled with masculine desire to
consume femininity as “irrational,” “emotional,” or “ridiculously funny”? Wittig's conceptual maneuver, therefore, a performative one. In the space where the binary of masculine and feminine reigns, all that women embody and perform is tailored towards completing/fixing what is missing. Thereupon, femininity, signifying a lack of social privilege/phallus when compared to masculinity, is readily associated with performing, masking/masquerade, disguising, camouflaging, accomplishing, enacting, and acting. In the same fashion, femininity conjures up notions such as beauty, sexuality, seduction, weakness, and deceitfulness. Either seeking an authentic femininity to navigate the paths of visual regime of hyper-sexual culture or digging deep down only to bring news about the non-existence of an authentic femininity, much research and thinking addressed the notion of femininity and its manifestations in the contemporary times. The theories that considered women as passive carriers of the ramifications of the patriarchal sign-system apparatuses immersed themselves in the ideology that delineates patriarchy as the inevitable explanation and reason for all. According to this lineage of thinking, every attempt to rescue the woman from the all-encompassing influence of masculine imagination will be another male cliché and reassure the status of woman as the victim. The question of discharging from the constraints of the masculine imagination that governs all cultural, political, and artistic interpretations pertaining to female presence both conditioned and surrounded the feminist critical intervention. In what follows, I would like to interrogate the role of mimicry and masquerade both as a sensuous and a tactile way of surviving the feminine/masculine entrapment and maybe as a way to get away from it.

The concept of gender was appropriated in the social sciences and humanities and feminist studies in order to refer to socially and ideologically produced
differences between men and women. This view clearly differentiates itself from biological essentialism, according to which the feminine and the masculine are innate qualities based on biological differences among men and women. The pioneering gender studies scholar, Gayle Rubin, uses the phrase ‘sex/gender system’ to explain “a set of arrangements by which the biological raw material of human sex and procreation is shaped by human, social intervention” (1975, 165). She defined gender as the “socially imposed division of the sexes” (1975, 179). However, the feminist endeavor to undercut biological determinism of what it means to be a woman still suffered from a determinism, as was critically argued by Judith Butler and others. One of the claims that Judith Butler developed about gender and its constructedness is helpful in the context of my study. This term is what Butler calls gender performativity. In opposition to a fixed notion of gender identity, Butler puts forward the idea that gender is completely an illusion of a unified and coherent set of practices, gestures, and ideas. She states that "gender is instituted through a stylized repetition of habitual acts" (179). Butler's argument is important for two reasons, which she underlines. Firstly, the performative constitution of gender gives way to a feminist political strategy to re-signify the way “woman” is constituted. Secondly, the category of woman cannot be the foundation of a feminist politics today.

Butler's theory is taken further by another feminist scholar, Teresa de Lauretis. Her theory of the technology of gender speaks to the aims of this dissertation nicely, as she highlights the central role of representational regimes in the experience of gender. de Lauretis states that gender is both "a product and process of a number of social technologies, of techno-social or bio-medical apparati" (3). She elaborates on what she calls "technology of gender" based on four propositions. First, gender, even though it has real implications both socially and subjectively, is representation. By
representation, she means that gender is a representation of a relation, that of belonging to a class, a group, a category. This, according to her, creates a *sex-gender system* that is predicated on structural opposition of two biological sexes. The sex-gender system is "both a socio-cultural construct and a semiotic apparatus, a system of representation which assigns meaning (identity, value, prestige, location in kinship, status in the social hierarchy, etc.) to individuals within the society" (5).

Second, the representation of gender is also its construction, which can be clearly observed in the tradition of Western Art. With this proposition, de Lauretis argues that there is a possibility of agency in the flow where the social representation of gender shapes its subjective construction, and vice versa. Third, the construction of gender occurs also in the academy, in intellectual thinking, and even in feminism, all of which go beyond what Althusser called "ideological state apparati." This third proposition is particularly important as it includes the critique of feminist inquiry of gender, as well. de Lauretis states that the construction of gender is also affected by its deconstruction, as gender is not only the effect but also the excess of representation, "what remains outside of discourse as a potential trauma" (6). de Lauretis' propositions lead her to conclude that the subject of feminism has to seek its politics in the spaces between hegemonic representations and other spaces that are left on the margins. It is worth including her lengthy quote here as it gives way to the next section where I discuss the *elsewhere* she mentions from within the performance of femininity:

The movement in and out of gender as ideological representation, which I propose characterizes the subject of feminism, is a movement back and forth between the representation of gender (in its male-centered frame of reference) and what that representation leaves out or, more pointedly, makes
unrepresentable. It is a movement between the (represented) discursive space of the positions made available by hegemonic discourses and the space-off, the elsewhere, of those discourses: those other spaces both discursive and social that exist, since feminist practices have (re)constructed them, in the margins (or "between the lines," or "against the grain") of hegemonic discourses and in the interstices of institutions, in counter-practices and new forms of community. These two kinds of spaces are neither in opposition to one another nor strung along a chain of signification, but they coexist concurrently and in contradiction. The movement between them, therefore, is not that of a dialectic, of integration, of a combinatory, or of difference, but is the tension of contradiction, multiplicity and heteronomy. (26)

Therefore, according to de Lauretis, the subject of the feminist politics is both inside and outside of the ideology of gender. The concept of representation at the heart of gender formation and identification operates in subtle, tactile, and sensuous ways on the level of individual psyche—which I discuss further in the next section in conversation with Luce Irigaray's theory of mimicry. What does the notion of mimesis offer us, and how does the masquerade of femininity work?

3.2 On Mimesis as a Critical Conceptual Framework

The mimetic faculty is a mysterious notion, foregrounding a human tendency to mimic or to imitate, to produce symbols, artifacts, and forms. The human brain and its evolution towards complex skills of empathy, imitation, and language informs us about the central importance of imitation in the construction and sustainability of our lives. Imitation, as an evolutionary and fundamental force in the human species, has been the topic of numerous studies in humanities, philosophy, and sciences, and it has boomed in its scope since the 19th century. Today, making sense of the scope
and significance of the mimetic faculty requires revisiting fields of study such as psychoanalysis, performance, sociology, philosophy, theatre, gender studies, and art history. The understanding of imitation as the poorest attempt to reach the truth of things was challenged by Aristotle with a different approach to the survival and moral qualities of mimesis, and catharsis in particular. Development of language and consciousness (psychoanalysis), emergence of new representational technologies and adaptation to a modern and industrial life (Walter Benjamin), the complex role of imitation in the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized (Frantz Fanon, Michael Taussig), the operation of gender through normative everyday life gestures (Judith Butler), the nature of spectatorship and empathy (research boom on mirror neurons), and the expansion of new technologies of communication and self-expression all extended the contours of the debate to their furthest points. The concept of mimesis as "the fundamental actus, the being-in-act, of understanding, action, and language in which our being is rendered meaningful" (Schweiker 34), thus, is at the center of many philosophical, cultural, and political concerns. There is an abundance of meanings and metaphors elicited by mimesis, such as mime, mimicry, emulation, identification, imitation, reproduction, dissimulation, doubling, depiction, resemblance, verisimilitude, representation, masquerade, copy, and so on. These concepts also stand at the nexus of critical debates concerning the binaries of self/other, mind/body, truth/appearance, femininity/masculinity, and original/fake.

Nature creates similarities. One need only think of mimicry. The highest capacity for producing similarities, however, is man's. His gift of seeing resemblances is nothing other than a rudiment of the powerful compulsion in former times to become and behave like something else. Perhaps there is none
of his higher functions in which his mimetic faculty does not play a decisive role. (Benjamin 333)

As stated by Walter Benjamin above, critical theory treated mimesis as the basic social bond among humans, which enables the transmission of culture across generations as well as the interactions among different cultures. Sociological and anthropological studies on mimesis include but are not limited to the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, James Frazer, Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Roger Caillois, Michael Taussig, and René Girard. This tradition of thought, although it has been strongly influenced by Karl Marx's and Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophies of modernity and industrial societies, has strong connections with ethnographic discourse on pre-modern cultures and non-western, non-capitalist communities. The inexorable governance of imitation in our lives and meaning-making systems also signifies the place and role of magic in our mimetic encounters. Walter Benjamin wrote about the new forms of seeing and feeling with the advent of the camera. The physiognomic aspects of visual worlds are revealed through the camera, in which magic and technology converge for the first time, according to him: tactile optics normally found in waking dreams where fantasy and hope are intermingled. Seeing, as habitual tactile knowledge, was taken to be a secular/technological magic with this new "sociology of affects." Michael Taussig, following Walter Benjamin, asserts that "everyday is a question not of universal semiotics but of capitalist mimetics," and also underscores the element of surprise in mimesis: "mimesis is what stops us in our tracks as a mighty magic come alive as death animates things" (305). Mimesis implicates both copy and material connection,

21 I refer to Ulus Baker's book, *From Opinions to Images: Towards A Sociology of Affects*

Uncontrolled mimesis is outlawed. The angel with the fiery sword who drove man out of paradise and onto the path of technical progress is the very symbol of that progress. For centuries, the severity with which the rulers prevented their own followers and the subjugated masses from reverting to mimetic modes of existence, starting with the religious prohibition on images, going on to the social banishment of actors and gypsies, and leading finally to the kind of teaching which does not allow children to behave as children, has been the condition of civilization. (219)

Here, Taussig addresses the critical loss of the tactile experience of senses in modern consciousness, what Benjamin called "capitalist mimetics" or what Adorno and Horkheimer called "organized control of mimesis." Next, I look at the feminist articulations on the ways in which "capitalist mimetics" operates in the realm of sexual difference and especially in women's habituated bodies. I interrogate the question of mimicry through its complex manifestation in the masquerade of femininity.

### 3.3 Masquerade and Femininity

Performing femininity on an unconscious and sensuous level has direct and solid consequences in the everyday life of women. In her article, "Womanliness as a Masquerade," British psychoanalyst Joan Riviere writes about one of her patients, who is a well-educated and professionally successful woman. This woman pursues a fulfilled professional life as well as a sexually and emotionally satisfied marriage. On the other hand, Riviere observes that every time she completes her performance in public she compulsively seeks approval and compliments from men—who mostly act
as the figure of the Father, the authority. This need of hers, according to Riviere, indicates a tension she cannot solve without the masquerade of femininity. That is to say, this woman cannot cope with the idea that she is superior to men when she confronts them in private, which then leads to a performance of femininity that makes her appear as a woman in need of attention from men. In this way, by rendering her intellectual ability invisible, she is inclined not to disappoint men. She, unconsciously, wards off the anxiety that can come from men in a way she might not be able to deal with. Based on this case, Joan Riviere convincingly theorizes that “Womanliness therefore could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it—much as a thief will turn out his pockets and asked to be searched to prove that he has not stolen the goods” (38).

Therefore, Riviere’s analysis of female psychology reveals that femininity is what women feel obliged to project to men. She, however, does not situate masquerade within a binary that assumes a genuine counterpart to it. Instead, she considers only one performance of womanhood:

The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the 'masquerade.' My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial. They are the same thing. The capacity for womanliness was there in this woman—and one might even say it exists in the most completely homosexual woman—but owing to her conflicts it did not represent her main development and was used far more as a device for avoiding anxiety than as a primary mode of sexual enjoyment. (43)
This view clearly challenges the classical understanding of mimesis, what Lacoue-Labarthe calls *mimetologism*. In the classical approach, if there is a mask or masquerade of any kind, there is also a truth that is hidden underneath. Or in Whitford’s words, “truth is the absence of any reflection; the Idea is pure presence to itself” (109). This is the setting of Plato's cave presented in the *Republic* during a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon. The analogy of the cave is narrated in the book after the analogy of the sun and the analogy of the divided line. In the cave, Socrates narrates in the book, men are chained to the wall of the cave and they face a blank wall. There is a fire behind them that they do not know exists. In front of the fire there is a raised walkway behind which puppeteers carry objects or puppets of people or other things. They work "just as puppet showmen have screens in front of them at which they work their puppets" (514a). While the shadows of the objects are cast upon the cave wall, the chained men watch them as their only reality and give names to the shadows, which they believe to be real images. This setting illustrates the situation of people who lack real knowledge and wisdom. Real knowledge is, according to Plato's understanding, the Forms. In their search for pure ideas, which stand for the highest version of truth for Plato, men need to free themselves from the cave. In the continuation of the cave allegory, one of the chained men is freed from his chains and forced to look at the fire. The shock of the immediate light hurts the eye of the man and he wants to go back to his old place facing the wall. However, he is dragged out of the cave by force into the light of the sun. The sun and the man's encounter with its light represent the discovery of the highest knowledge, which every wise person should seek, according to Plato. This enlightenment, then, leads to the desire to free other people from their chains and help them find the real knowledge even though they will resist embarking on this unknowable journey.
The relevance of this allegory in the context of this chapter comes through its feminist utilization as a practical metaphor. French psychoanalyst and feminist thinker Luce Irigaray adopts the cave allegory from a feminist standpoint. Irigaray’s insightful work, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, was published in 1974 in French, bringing a huge controversy with it. The publication led to Irigaray's dismissal from her teaching position at the University of Vincennes and also her expulsion from the École Freudienne de Paris. In the book, Irigaray shows how, in the tradition of Western philosophy and psychoanalysis, women do not have a subject position and are depicted as monstrous beings. The male-centered philosophical and psychoanalytical tradition associated women with matter and nature, while men are always associated with culture and subjectivity. *The riddle of femininity*, a term coined by Sigmund Freud, has dominated the psyche of modern consciousness. Inheriting the question “What does a woman want?” from Breuer and Charchot, Freud called female sexuality a “dark continent.” Irigaray asserts that such psychoanalytic designations of femininity as enigmatic perpetuate discourses that define it as a lack, a deficiency, or as imitation and a negative image of the subject (78). She argues that Western philosophy is built upon the sacrifice and erasure of the mother. As a consequence of this sacrifice, one sex (male) exists only through complete silencing of another sex (female).

According to Gertrude Postl, Irigaray does not write on a philosopher. Rather she writes this philosopher. In other words, she mimics the philosopher in order to reveal the contradictions and gaps within his/her own language. This way, she makes the text speak its own contradictions. In the section where she speaks to/with

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22 TorilMoi, in her article “From Femininity to Finitude: Freud, Lacan and Feminism, Again”, criticizes the notion that equates femininity with castrated body (which constitutes the basic argument both in Freudian and Lacanian theories of femininity) and problematizes “the fantasy of finding the key to the riddle of femininity.”
Plato, she describes a cave that is exactly similar to Plato's cave. In her re-writing the allegory she shows the resemblance between the cave in Plato's narrative and morphology of the female genitalia. She invites the reader to see the cave as "a metaphor of inner space, of the den, the womb or hysteria, sometimes of the earth..."

(243 This Sex Which Is Not One) and continues to speculate that:

The entrance to the cave takes the form of a long passage, corridor, neck, conduit, leading upward, toward the light or the sight of day, and the whole of the cave is oriented in relation to this opening. Upward—in this notation indicates from the very start that the Platonic cave functions as an attempt to give an orientation to the reproduction and representation of something that is always already there in the den. The orientation functions by turning everything over, by reversing, and by pivoting around axes of symmetry. From high to low, from low to high, from back to front, from anterior to opposite, but in all cases from a point of view in front of or behind something in this cave, situated in the back. Symmetry plays a decisive part here—as projection, reflection, inversion, retroversion—and you will always already have lost your bearings as soon as you set foot in the cave; it will turn your head, set you walking on your hands, though Socrates never breathes a word about the whole mystification, of course. This theatrical trick is unavoidable if you are to enter into the functioning of representation. (244)

According to this description, the cave/womb is matched with representation. That is to say, representation/reflection is unreliable just like the womb/body/material that is the source of inadequate copies of the ideal Forms. "The cave gives birth only to phantoms, fakes, or, at best, images. Engendering the real is the father's task, engendering the fictive is the task of the mother that 'receptacle' for turning out more
or less good copies of reality” (300). In Irigaray’s scenario, the cave symbolically represents the female roots of humanity and leaving the cave is actually a deliberate act of cutting off the maternal ties. In Elin Diamond’s words, men escape from the cave since they realize that “what they experience as origin is already mimicry, a representation of repetition” (xi). Accordingly, the misogyny through which the phallogocentric gaze discredits femininity on the grounds of its illusionary nature and deceitfulness is a way to get rid of the anxiety that stems from one’s allegedly unwanted feelings/desires towards maternal roots. In this anxious encounter with maternal roots, Irigaray finds a rich resource with which to analyze the misogynist underpinnings of the negative valences of imitation: weakness, unreliability and instability.23 For instance, to her, the polarized controversy around the issues of contraception and abortion in our day is a symptom of a similar need to escape “the question of the imaginary and symbolic relation to the mother, to the woman-mother” (10). The assumed relationship between origin of truth and representation of truth is replaced with the relationship between maternal legacy and the patriarchal system. Irigaray’s critical insights about what she calls specular philosophy in the canonical works of Western philosophy and psychoanalysis establish the bedrock of her theory about women and mimicry. Irigaray, concerned with the erasure of the maternal roots from the psychic and intellectual history of human subjects, discerns the erasure of mother at an earlier stage than the “murder of the father” on which modern psychoanalysis is developed. Accordingly, because of the sharp rupture with this female genealogy, women are the exiles in this world where, in the words of Irigaray, the fertility of the earth, the mother-woman, was replaced by the father’s

23 Lacoue-Labarthe, similarly, talks about mimetologism as understanding of mimesis to be a rhythmic repetition without closure, infinite oscillation between copy and original. Such a view, for him, stabilizes the chaotic and possessive circulation of resemblance in order to avoid the effect of “feminization” (128).
language (16). Secondly, the men under the Light/Phallus of the Father create a phallogocentric language that subsumes all differences (including femininity) into sameness, which Irigaray calls “the economy of the same or the culture of hom(m)o-sexuality.” Lastly, this flight scenario from the womb/cave is evidence of women’s specular role of reflecting men back their ‘other’ and women’s exchange value among men. Hence, in this world of men, femininity, as being the bearer of the cost of patriarchal truth, does not have a space of its own but only within the chain of exchange among men. Whitford states that, for Irigaray, femininity in this male economy is the “non-acknowledgement of the continuing debt to women” (119) and values women have for men are threefold accordingly; they are mother (natural use value), virgin (coin of exchange/envelope veiling), and prostitute (both use and exchange value). In this “tightly-woven systematicity” (77), women replicate a ‘femininity’ that is not of their making. What is the function of this replication? For Irigaray, women are aligning with patriarchy in order to protect themselves. They feel compelled to be the other of the same. Irigaray mentions Joan Riviere’s term “masquerade” as the only way a woman can survive in the male-centered world. For Irigaray, women survive in the patriarchal order only through miming, adapting the femininity that reflects men back to their own ‘other,’ which is either mother or virgin or prostitute. She states that “masquerade is necessity to ‘become’ a woman, a ‘normal’ one, whereas a man is a man from the outset. He has only to effect his being-a-man, whereas a woman has to become a normal woman, has to enter into the masquerade of femininity” (134).

To develop her theory of resistance through mimicry, Irigaray, as a psychoanalyst herself, investigates the case of hysteria in women. She does not take hysteria as the way to resist phallogocentric language because she speaks the given
and masculine language miming the patriarchy. Nevertheless, Irigaray argues that the hysteric woman can be read as a proto-feminist in her attempt to protect her space, since she takes mime to the nth degree. The hysterical state is a state of surrendering to the norm that defines one and allowing oneself to be reduced to it. It is a "parody of the expected" (qtd. in Robinson 38). Irigaray elaborates on a “productive mimicry,” as a further point, which will let women find a parler femme (speaking as woman), “open the possibility of love of self, the recognition of the debt to the mother, and free the mother to be a sexual and desiring woman” (Whitford 77). How can mimicry be unleashed in such a productive way, then? The key to mimesis is that the conventional views are not repeated devotedly. For Irigaray, mimesis turns into mimicry in the possibility of the reserved thing for a political strategy through which women might choose to assume the feminine role deliberately and thereby “convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it” (76This Sex Which is Not One). Irigaray sees this everyday masquerade, for which other authors also use the term strategic essentialism, as an obstacle that needs to be overcome in order to find one's own voice. Masquerade of femininity at the basic level is fatal and “imposed” upon women, perhaps leading to losing one's self/voice in the game/masquerade. However, the very possibility of repeating a negative view unfaithfully is the way masquerade works for Irigaray, suggesting that women are something other than the view expressed or the masquerade performed. In other words, there is “something in reserve” (76) in mimicry that has transgressive potential for change and protects women from disappearing/being destroyed completely. In parallel to Joan Riviere, Irigaray does not locate that hidden reserve as the landmark of an unmediated self; rather it is the implication of a political strategy that can help women to find their own way through distancing themselves from the
imitated. Here, she talks about *mimicry as excess* as being the only tool either to transform the imposed masquerade into “productive mimicry” or, in Michael Taussig’s words, into a fight with one’s ‘other.’

At this intersection point, Homi Bhabha also needs to be addressed as he talks about mimetic excess in “conflictual economy of colonial discourse” which desires its ‘other’ being “almost the same but not quite” (126). It can be argued that Bhabha’s notion of mimetic excess, as he puts it, between mimicry and mockery, has much to do with Irigaray’s and Taussig’s interest in mimicry in the sense that they also look for the gaps and blurred moments when “the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double” (127). At play is the situation of the colonizer being portrayed/othered by its Others as a response to its portraying them. As Taussig writes:

Such interaction created mimetic excess—mimetic self-awareness, mimesis turned on itself, on its colonial endowment, such that now, in our time, mimesis as a natural faculty and mimesis as a historical product turn in on each other as never before […] Selves dissolve into senses and the senses show signs of becoming their own theoreticians as world histories regroup. (252-253)

Additionally, as he explores the mimetic faculty in the practices and cultures of the Cuna Indians of San Blas, Panama, Taussig makes an interesting analysis of the womb, which can be read in conversation with Luce Irigaray. He looks at the maternal roots of the mimetic faculty in the context of his research on Cuna Indians and talks about the womb as the guarantor of mimesis, the *male secret*. "Cosmic womb, the arche-organ of reproduction of simulacra with which the magician and healer set to work" (177). He expresses his astonishment about the centrality of the
womb of Muu, the Great Mother, from whose womb all things came (including the magically powerful wood, such as balsa, from which the shaman's curing figurines are made) (176) in Cuna Indian rituals and suggests that mimesis can be seen as a male secret which is governed by rules among men. "In these mimetic worlds things connect with their invisible counterparts by virtue of the womb. Rendering copying synonymous with reproduction, this organ ensures that mimesis fuses a male secret with origins" (112). Taussig notes several times that it is the womb that is the most prohibited and unconscious among the Cuna Indians. In this regard, male secret can be linked to the economy of same that Irigaray is using to define the closed system of mimesis among men, which includes women only if they are mirroring men back their other. For Irigaray, the economy of the same is an “oath that binds men together to that substance common to all, repressed, unconscious and dumb, washed in the waters of oblivion” (225). According to her, woman nourishes the universal consciousness of masculine self at the cost of her own self. This is the key dynamic in the phallogocentric world that brings Irigaray to the explanation of “why femininity consists essentially in laying the dead man back in the womb of the earth, and giving him eternal life” (225). Therefore, deliberate performance—or mimetic excess in Taussig's words—of femininity is a critical strategy. However, even though Irigaray states that there are three states of women "paying the debt" back to the masculine economy—and they can happen through the roles of mother (natural use value), virgin (coin of exchange/envelope veiling), and prostitute (both use and exchange value)—she does not provide us with alternatives for what other types of "self-representation" might look like. The potentials are contained in what she calls elsewhere:
That "elsewhere" of feminine pleasure can be found only at the price of crossing back through the mirror that subtends all speculation. For this pleasure is not simply situated in a process of reflection or mimesis nor on one side of this process or the other: neither on the near side, the empirical realm that is opaque to all language, nor on the far side, the self-sufficient infinite of the God of men. Instead, it refers all these categories and ruptures back to the necessities of the self-representation of phallic desire in discourse. A playful crossing, and an unsettling one, which would allow woman to rediscover the place of her "self-affection." (77)

What Irigaray's theory fails to see is that the figure of the prostitute plays a more complex role than just being one of the Others of the masculine subject. As I articulate further in the next chapter by locating "sex work" at the center of my inquiry, the figure of the prostitute cannot be grasped in its entirety without considering it in relation to labour. Continuing with the male secret both Taussig and Irigaray mentioned, though in different ways, I also argue that the figure of the prostitute is especially significant as s/he sits in the space of that secret. In other words, she has access to a space where the male secret is turned into a performance of sexual encounter, affective encounter, or an encounter of affirming one's gender. This point, also personally, resonates with my encounter with the figure of the prostitute as a threat that I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. I would like to take this inquiry further through a performance piece that was performed by Şükrân Moral in İstanbul. This piece occurs in the very place where the threatening figure of the prostitute's male secret is enacted and performed: the brothel district.
3.4 Şükran Moral: Performing in the İstanbul Brothel District

Şükran Moral is a Turkey-born performance artist whose work predominantly deals with the issues of patriarchy, religion, women's bodies, contemporary Turkish society and contemporary art. The town in Northern Turkey, where she was born, Terme, is also believed to be the site of an ancient nation of women warriors, the Amazons. In Samsun, there is a 12-meter tall statue erected for them. In contrast to acknowledgement of the Amazon's legacy in the region—not surprisingly from a tourism driven mindset—Moral's family, she tells Der Spiegel in an interview, did not allow her to continue her education after primary school. She says: "they told me I'd turn into a whore and I should learn to cook. They wouldn't let me read books." One of her performances in Turkey, Married with Three, took place in a village of the city of Mardin. She organized a wedding ceremony and party in the village. She got married to three men, all younger than her. The grooms were from the village, as were the people who were invited to the ceremony and the party afterwards. She filmed the whole experience including a scene where she and the three grooms are sitting on the floor, grooms sitting next to her with their pants stripped down to their ankles. This performance directly addresses the polygamous marriages and forced-marriages of little girls. In one of the installations, she made a sculpture of a young girl in a bride's dress. The face of the sculpture-girl was reflecting her sorrow and helplessness. Moral states that she wanted to address the issue of child brides in Turkey with this sculpture. Her performances have usually stirred controversy not only in Turkey but beyond Turkey as she made direct references to culturally strong figures and stories. In another controversial performance of hers, entitled "Artist/Jesus," she poses semi-nude on a cross. Moral's artistic approach can be
found to be Orientalist and agitative in the way it takes issues at face value. Even so, I believe that her performance *Bordello* should be considered in a different light.

Şükran Moral participated in the 5th İstanbul Biennial, in 1997, with the video piece, *Bordello*, that drew attention only from a small group of artists at the time. It engendered a much bigger controversy ten years after its first appearance. Both the previous silence and the later controversy on the work hinged on the venue where the performance was held: the famous brothel district, Karaköy, which is open exclusively to male visitors. The video piece shows Moral in the brothel wearing a transparent night dress. While "waiting for her clients" she holds a sign reading "For Sale" in her hand. There is another sign on the door that reads "Modern Art Museum." She films the visitors of the brothel street—men wandering around, searching for a woman to be with. Moral said later, in an interview,\(^{24}\) that she wanted to address the situation of the artists and their exchange value in the art market, which she compares to a brothel. She also states that she would like to turn the Modern Art Museum (MoMA) into a brothel in her next project. Even though Moral's aim with this performance was to start a conversation particularly in the visual art world, I believe that *Bordello* presents a unique case for feminist performance practice and theory in order to reflect on the connections between sex work and performance, in a more explicit fashion. Firstly, it is an act of trespassing. Cis-women are not allowed to enter the brothel district in İstanbul, unless they work in the brothel, in which case they need to show their license to the security officer at the gate. Aslı Zengin, who studied the ways in which Turkish state perpetuated its power in/through sex workers' lives, talks about the silence she encountered when she decided to conduct an ethnographic study about female sex workers in İstanbul.

\(^{24}\) Video interview by Galerie Zilberman: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9cTKucqKdM
Zengin contends that her gender as a woman has been one of the main constraints during her research, as she was not allowed to enter places like brothels, night clubs, and bars as a "proper" woman (13). According to Zengin, the exclusion of women without license from the brothel district is symptomatic of the sovereignty of the state and its rendering the brothel as a marginal space. This scholarly work supports the strategic importance of Şükrân Moral's entrance to the brothel. Interestingly enough, Moral's access to the brothel district as an artist was possible also (and only) because she is a cis-woman, meaning she could blend in and masquerade as one of the sex workers. Through this very material and bodily act, Moral also defies the ideology that divides women into two camps: prostitutes and non-prostitutes. Her performance occurs in this liminal space where she moves between categories of art and life or prostitute and non-prostitute. This, then, conjures Goodwin's description of the "depraved sexuality" that the figure of the prostitute embodies:

A liminal being who moves between social and psychological categories, the prostitute destabilizes systems, indeed threatens even the fundamental binary opposition between life and death. The prostitute as haunting presence is overdetermined: her body already the site of decay, she evokes death; and she is doubly repressed, as socially undesirable and as illicitly desired. Most obviously, the prostitute figures forth repressed and illicit desires, "depraved" sexuality, the woman’s “unchaste” body, the animal that is on the margin of the human being, social intercourse as most crudely physical. (158)

Moral's performance in the brothel district has a similar theatrical, surreal, and other-worldly effect. She is there almost as a ghost who is visible to women but not men. Women working in the brothel know that Moral is actually an outsider. Through this shared secret among women and Moral, men can be said to be the objects of this
project, where the second point of Bordello's importance for this study lies. Bordello directly engages with the customers/male visitors of the brothel. In the segregated space of the brothel, Moral performs for men yet only to observe them in their endeavor to be emasculated. Although disguised in sex work, Moral's performance disrupts the male gaze in the space where it is most confident of its power to see and control the other/its other. Thirdly, Moral, as a woman who herself was threatened by the whore stigma when she was a kid, enacts upon the prostitute as a disembodied threat accompanied with a sense of disgust. Here, Julia Kristeva's theory of abject is useful to remember. According to Julia Kristeva, disgust epitomizes all our physiological and psychological reactions towards a potential invasion to our identity by a threatening Other. She uses the notion of abject to address this particular emotional reaction to the experience of loss of the distinction between the object and the subject, between self and the other. Differentiating her own term from Sigmund Freud's concept of uncanny, Kristeva defines abject as “a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory” (6), where the meaning is totally collapsed. The Other that activates the abjection is one that "precedes and possesses me"(10) instead of one that I can identify and incorporate. It is an effect that one permanently thrusts aside in order to maintain her living. Then, the loathing and disgust turn out to be strategies for self-protection. The threatening aspect of abject comes from its annihilating power at the moment of acknowledgement. Moral's deliberate embodiment of the figure of the threat oscillates between disgust and self-protection. Her performance beckons to this disturbing yet constantly haunting feeling of repugnance and transforms the parameters of the space from within and only with the implicit approval of women who work there.
Chapter 4: The Prostitute Haunting the Labour: Sex Work and Feminism

This chapter traces the analysis and understanding of labour in Marxist and feminist thinking and the absence or confusing place of sex work within these discussions. In this regard, when seen through the lens of labour, the figure of the prostitute I used throughout the second and the third chapters is replaced with the figure of the sex worker, which situates the person who is engaged in sexual business within the larger relations of work. This chapter also examines different approaches in feminism where sex work is considered either as the symptom of patriarchal violence or labour that deserves to be regarded with serious attention. Finally, I look at three examples of sex work activism and art from Turkey.

Firstly, it is important to note that different forms of commercial sex (such as cam-girl, porn-star, stripper, dominatrix, escort, masseuse, erotica artist, sex surrogate, sex therapist, and so on) are not going to be analyzed one by one in this chapter. Adding to this diversity in the type of service that is given, there are also different degrees of involvement in the sex industry. Graham Scambler classifies five different ways of being involved in sex work: Coerced (population forced to work for others), destined (group of people who have family members in the industry), survivors (drug addicts or those with huge debts), workers (permanent workers), opportunists (who ended up in commercial sex to finance their short-term projects), and bohemians (who involve in sex work casually, without an obvious need). Although Graham's theory might be a nuanced way to look at sex work today, this dissertation does not follow these categorizations. The sociological analysis of why people are involved in and perform sex work is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, sex work in this chapter is understood as a special labour performed by
female/transgender sex workers\textsuperscript{25} that includes intimacy with strangers, who are mostly men, like the type of labour pertaining to performance practice. The distinctively performative character of sex work is that sexual contact is included, although not always. The scope of labour in sex work entails various services and acts including dressing up for the client, engaging in a structured dialogue with the client without any physical contact, having sexual contact with the client, role playing, deep listening, or giving a massage. Both sex work and performance practice involve an act of speaking to another, calling for the attention of the other, playing with the other, delineating and crossing boundaries with the stranger. In other words, they can both be considered within the category of labour that is inter-personal, intimate, embodied, and attention or care driven, rather than a generic approach to the people who in some way or another are involved in sex work. In Melissa Gira Grant's words:

Sex work is not simply sex; it is a performance, it is playing a role, demonstrating a skill, developing empathy within a set of professional boundaries. All this could be more easily recognized and respected as labour were it the labour of a nurse, a therapist, or a nanny. To insist that sex work is work is also to affirm there is a difference between a sexualized form of labour and sexuality itself. (34)

This performative aspect of sex work can be a source of exploration for a feminist performance practice. As a field of scholarly research that incorporates ethnographic and theoretical knowledge into its discussions, sex work studies provide a rich source to understand the contemporary manifestations of performance of femininity and

\textsuperscript{25} Even though sex work is not performed only by women and transwomen, this dissertation takes into account female (trans or cis-gender) worker and male customer in its discussions. For male sex workers in Turkey see Umit Yılgın Yiğit's book \textit{Seks İşçisi Erkekler Anlatıyor} (Male Sex Workers Tell).
masculinity, as well as how sex workers manage to maintain a sense of Self in a world where their labour is utterly abhorred yet desperately demanded. Thus, an articulation of how sex work operates in the material world can start a new dialogue between performance studies and sex work studies.

Ridout and Schneider emphasize the importance of the analysis of labour in performance within the context of precarious labour in the late capitalist era. Referring to the production of affect as the labour in performance, they raise the question of how we can understand the place of the “performing body as labouring body, which has turned out to be immaterial commodity itself” (6). Even though it is true that theatre and performance history were always already occupied with emotional, immaterial, and precarious aspects of performing (from Stanislavsky to Grotowski), the goal in this chapter is to demonstrate the significance of a close analysis of labour in sex work for a performance practice. Thus, an awareness of the contextual and political importance of sex work can also inform us about a wider picture of the status of labour and eros. This chapter also lays out the theoretical discussion of the notions that are explored in the practice-based workshops, which are the subject of the next chapter.

4.1 Colonization/Conceptualization of Human Labour

The analysis of the issue of labour entails two steps. The first question concerns the definition of labour while the second step is about the nature of social agreement we need in order to assess the required labour to finish a certain work within a certain amount of time. Apparently, the first question is tightly attached to the question of time and space/Earth. The changing parameters to reproduce our daily lives immediately affect the definition of work. Bernstein’s saying that “sex is like yesterday’s news. It is constantly changing” (5) might be also true for the issue of
labour, especially in our day and time as we are witnessing flourishing fields of work in the age of informational technologies. The second question is more relevant to the ideology at work that determines the parameters of the division of labour, time, and space. In the wake of the financial crisis that is felt in different parts of the world in different ways, we witness a vast amount of unemployment, insecurity, and poverty. Within the neo-liberal economies of the 21st century, labour has come to an extremely fragile and vulnerable state. Zygmunt Bauman calls our times “soft-ware modernity,” while Donna Haraway uses the term “the informatics of domination” to describe the precarious conditions of living and working today. Precarity, as a new conceptual tool, is used to describe a shared state of fragility and insecurity across all fields of work. The impact of informational technologies and globalization caused a proliferation of new fields of labour practices, some of which have been considered completely unnecessary and even harmful by some labour theorists.

What we, as humans, make to pursue our lives, how we interact with the environment we live in, and in what ways we organize our time are basic questions of political philosophy. These questions and their answers are all politically and historically specific, encompassing all living beings and their complex network of

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26 Within the ambit of social movements and autonomous political groups, these new forms of labour organization have been given the name “precarity,” an inelegant neologism coined by English speakers to translate the French precarité. Although the term has been in circulation since the early 1980s, it is really only over the past two or three years that it has acquired prominence in social movement struggles. Particularly in the Western European nations, the notion of precarity has been at the centre of a long season of protests, actions, and discussions, including events such as Euro May Day 2004 (Milan and Barcelona) and 2005 (in seventeen European cities), Precarity Ping Pong (London, October 2004), the International Meeting of the Precariat (Berlin, January 2005), and Precair Forum (Amsterdam, February 2005). According to Milanese activist Alex Foti (2004), precarity is “being unable to plan one’s time, being a worker on call where your life and time is determined by external forces.” The term refers to all possible shapes of unsure, not guaranteed, flexible exploitation: from illegalised, seasonal, and temporary employment to homework, flex- and temp-work, subcontractors, freelancers, or so called self-employed persons (Brett and Rossiter).


28 Hesiod’s book Works and Days, written around 700 BC is one of the first sources that has been influential in the history of political philosophy. Another book that is very inspiring in terms of the difference between craftwork and work is The Craftsman, written by Richard Sennett.
relations. I start my discussion of labour with the modern perception that is endowed with compulsion and plays into the logic of capitalism. A deep-rooted feeling of compulsion that goes with the idea of labour manifests itself through new forms of sovereignty, such as through the new implications of bio-power in our everyday lives. With Guy Robinson’s words, the historicity of this feeling reaches back many generations:

The notion of selling labour power would be incomprehensible in a Neolithic culture and to a member of a tribal society. And those 'advanced' colonial countries had themselves faced the same problem of forcing that labouring discipline on their own peasantry in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and had solved that problem by vicious laws of vagabondage and enclosure. In England, the vagabondage laws prescribed whipping, branding, imprisonment, slavery and execution for refusing work. (133)

Transition to the large-scale production economy necessitated disciplining of the masses and making routine labour acceptable. In Karl Marx’s words, this process of “expropriation of the peasantry from the common lands” resulted in demanding people to “constantly look upon their labour-power as their own property, their own commodity” (809). The discussion of labour-power as a commodity in the system of capitalist economy started where labour-power’s control became a matter of the owners of the capital, instead of the owners of the labour itself. As Silvia Federici, Italian Marxist feminist writer, convincingly argues, capitalism brought a new bourgeois spirit that “calculates, classifies, makes distinctions, and degrades the body

\[29\]I am using the term “capitalism” as an economic system of selling and buying goods in a free market where labour is also bought and sold. Capitalism is dependent on the phenomenon of wage-labour and private ownership (which means concentration of means of production in the hands of small number of wealthy population). The term has been debated since it emerged in Europe in the 16th century. Thinkers such as David Harvey and Zygmunt Bauman use the term “late capitalism” with its more flexible applications in workplace. I will use the term “capitalism” throughout the chapter without mentioning those differences.
only in order to rationalize its faculties, aiming not just at intensifying its subjection but at maximizing its social utility” (139). This male-oriented project could only be realized through the disciplining of the body in a very radical way, with the exact authority of rationalism and scientification as the main promises of the Enlightenment, while on the other side it created new others that were embodied in the figures of the proletariat, women, and non-white populations. The following words from Maria Mies put it succinctly: “With the rise of capitalism as a world-system, based on large-scale conquest and colonial plunder, and the emergence of the world-market, it becomes possible to externalize or exterritorialize those whom the new patriarchs wanted to exploit” (161).

Therefore, the dirty work of the new world system has to be done by populations who are considered to be more in their body than in their intellect. Manual or embodied labour is abhorred and devalued. Here, the association of body itself, as a notion that represents the opposite of science and rationality, gains momentum. While Lauren Berlant calls this process “the reduced fate of the body” (768), Silvia Federici clearly describes the ambiguous modern approach to the body in the following statement: “the body was both a beast inert to the stimuli of work and also a container of labour-power” (137). The divide between the body as an uncontrollable entity and the body as a useful medium for socially accepted outcomes, therefore, has been created. As I discuss later in this chapter, all the pejorative connotations regarding labour find their address in the figure of the sex worker. In other words, the figure of the sex worker embodies all that is unwanted about labour and social life.
4.2 Re-claiming Labour in Marxist Theory

The modern impetus to reclaim labour as one of the human faculties that reconnects humans to nature seems to be a challenging task in the face of a growing alienation from the activity of labour. This task was undertaken by Marxism, which sees labour as a distinctly human and fulfilling activity. Apart from the alienating and violent nature of working under capitalist rules, productive and creative activity was seen as that which makes humans self-conscious subjects who can overcome their inevitable estrangement from nature (as opposed to the view that nature is our home), through productively empowering one's world in her labour (Sayers 613). The following quotation from Hegel summarizes this understanding while at the same time, with its language of domination and impregnation, demonstrates its extremely gendered roots.30

the human being impregnates the external world with his will. Thereby he humanizes his environment, by showing how it is capable of satisfying him and how it cannot preserve any power of independence against him. Only by means of this effectual activity is he no longer merely in general, but also in particular and in detail, actually aware of himself and at home in his environment. (qtd. in Sayers 614)

Being one of the heirs and critics of Hegel, Marx called this process of making earth our home through creating productively Vergegenständlichung (objectification) (324). In this manner, labour is a formative activity through which humans give form to materials and thus, objectify themselves in the world. Marx discusses commodification in its pejorative sense, but it is noteworthy to underline at this point that objectification is not a negative term. It is, on the contrary, necessary for

30 The patriarchal roots in the conceptualization of labour will be discussed further in the next section.
establishing and sustaining strong structures of living. Marx articulates the fundamental place of labour in humans’ lives in the following quotation: “as the creator of use-values, as useful labour, is a condition of human existence which is independent of all forms of society; it is an eternal natural necessity which mediates the metabolism between man and nature, and therefore human life itself” (128).

Accordingly, human labour is universal as it trespasses all forms of society; it is objective in terms of being the condition of human existence, and it is natural in the sense that it answers to human needs. Reclaiming the essential importance of labour for humans’ relation with themselves, as well as with nature, was crucial for Marxist thought in accordance with the specific purpose of achieving a political aim to raise a class consciousness among workers. The wage-labour system turns labour out to be an enemy to its owner, the human. At this point, Marx’s detailed analysis of capitalism starts and it constitutes the subject matter of Das Capital. In this extensive work, which draws upon the fields of political economy, German critical philosophy, and the utopian socialist tradition, Marx analyzes the capitalist mode of production, the enigmatic character of the product of labour, the social characteristics of humans’ own labour, and the emergence of the new social classes: namely, the working class, the middle class, and the bourgeoisie.

For Marx, the biggest challenge to achieving a genuine relationship with one’s own labour-power, Arbeitskraft, comes from the enigmatic power of the product of human labour. When the product comes to the market, it functions as a social hieroglyphic that barely contains a trace of the labour-power that produced it. With the example of a coat that is produced from linen, Marx explains how it is difficult to grasp human labour in its material existence, once it is a commodity in the capitalist market: “Human labour is accumulated in the coat. The coat is a ‘bearer of value’
although this property never shows through, even when the coat is at its most threadbare" (143). In this example, Marx makes an interesting move from human labour to the product of human labour. He demonstrates how the labour-power is hidden in the commodity and behaves as an objective part of it. In the following quotation, he explains this:

The product of labour is an object of utility in all states of society; but it is only a historically specific epoch of development which presents the labour expended in the production of a useful article as an ‘objective’ property of that article, i.e. as its value. It is only then the product of labour becomes transformed into a commodity. (153)

To analyze the enigmatic character of the product of human labour, Marx introduces another concept, which is commodity fetishism. Deriving the term fetishism from religious and spiritual practices of attributing sacred spirits to non-living things, Marx similarly emphasizes a life that is attributed to the commodity itself. This, for him, erases human relations that create products and replaces them with arbitrary relations as if they are naturally existing between things. In his own words, “fetishism attaches itself to the products of labour as soon as they are commodities” (156). Hence, the subject of the analysis is the objects and their circulation in the market. Market rules and strategies to sell a product disconnect it from its production process, and this is the fatal problem of the capitalist mode of economy, according to Marxist thought.

The exploration of the commodification of labour-power takes another turn with the question of how to determine the value of the products. Goods gain value in the market in relation to each other. In order to describe this interrelationality, Marx

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31 For an in-depth analysis of the concept of fetishism from the perspective of women, see Female Fetishism: A New Look, by Lorraine and Makinen.
addresses relations among individuals. Accordingly, we see and recognize ourselves firstly and only through the eyes of others, just in the same way commodities gain value in relation to each other in the market (144). This analogy echoes the role of mimesis in our lives as we form our Selves. In short, for Marx, commodities are not valuable in themselves, as “we may twist and turn a single commodity as we wish; it remains impossible to grasp it as a thing possessing value” (138). The term that signifies the value of the products of labour in the market is the *exchange-value*, which is distinguished precisely from what Marx calls *use-value*. In this equation, use value is natural as, for Marx, every commodity necessarily has a beneficial function that responds to a need in life. The puzzle is in determining the exchange-value in the face of our mystified and de-humanized relationship with labour-power.

The most important criterion for Marx that controls and manipulates exchange value is the centrality of productive labour in the capitalist economy. To put it differently, a commodity or a service gains credit in the market only if it has a correspondent value when exchanged with another commodity—or with money, as the universal correspondent. Although Marx is critical about the rules of capitalist market relations, he builds his theory on this fixed binary between productive and unproductive labour. For this reason, Marxist analysis is based on only material labour and excludes the labour-power that is considered to be out of the market, such as housework, labour of carework, emotional labour, etc. Although this situation drew a lot of critical attention to Marxist theory, in what follows I introduce the socialist feminist critique to the productive/non-productive divide in this

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32Jean Baudrillard revisits the Marxist division between use-value and exchange-value and questions the association of use-value with naturalness and exchange-value with artificiality. According to his theory, in the age of mass media and culture, commodities also have a “sign-value” (as the expression of style, luxury, trend) apart from exchange value or use-value. Derrida’s suggestion to this dilemma is not to abandon the terms “use-value” and “exchange-value”, but taking into account how they are haunted by culture and each other. He asserts that “exchange value haunts use-value, for example, by expressing repetition, exchange ability, and the loss of singularity.” (161)
understanding of labour. The socialist feminist critique clearly demonstrates the importance of emotional labour in the flow of economy, and the problematic association between emotional labour and women. (Finch) This, eventually, reveals the ideological divide between sex work and other types of work.

4.3 Immaterial Labour and the Prostitute as a Family Member

What happens when there is no concrete object (a product) at the end of a specific period of time of labour dedicated to a service, a child, a dinner, an organization, a seminar, or an artistic creation? How do we talk about a labourer’s relation to her working self if the labour aims to reproduce life rather than producing a product/marketable service? What is the object of immaterial labour? This discussion occupied especially post-1970s labour debates with a specific concentration on the labour that goes into the reproduction of life within a household. (Della; Dickenson) This labour includes everything from cleaning the house to attending to other family members' needs and emotional states. The Marxist understanding of labour relying on the unproductive and productive labour distinction concerned many feminists (Kathi Weeks).

Today, the long history of sexual division of labour within the home still continues to be a matter of invisibility. The issue of housework and child-raising might seem to be allocated to service sector workers: house cleaners, nannies, preschool educators, cleaning agencies, and so on. However, contrary to advanced developments in technology, industry, and service sectors, the political debate on the situation of abortion, maternal rights, women’s labour in the house, and birth-control methods is an obvious manifestation of the interest of political power in the lives of

[33]Housework is not considered to have a “material equivalent value” in today’s law. This is what a judge in Turkey stated when a woman requested money for her labour at home. “No monetary value for housework”: http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/22092299.asp
women, as the source of easily exploitable labour. Feminist thinking on the rise of neo-liberalist economies is pursued by many feminist scholars. Angela McRobbie defines the contemporary neoliberal facet of patriarchy as "a broad constellation of progressive socio-political interests converging around the category of woman," which is geared towards a "progressive heterosexual maternal womanhood" (120). Through addressing Nancy Fraser's statement that there has been a "feminist complicity" in the way feminism is co-opted by mainstream discourse, McRobbie provocatively argues that young women are "the new subjects of new meritocracy under the New Labour" (120). Likewise, neo-colonial practices of capitalist intervention in Third World Countries (Mies), neo-witch-hunting practices, are continuing to haunt on-going politics on reproduction.34

Returning to the socialist feminist intervention, the appropriation of women's labour within the marriage as the archetype of the patriarchal oppression constituted the number one concern of the feminist struggle. Pioneering materialist feminist Christine Delphy criticizes Marxism for creating pseudo-theories of family and says that “feminist theory needs to analyze the relationship between the nature of domestic goods and services and their mode of production because of the fact that the appropriation of women's labour within the marriage constitutes the oppression common to all women” (76). Family space is assumed to be devoid of contractual relationships and is imagined to be the place of unconditional love and affection. The ideological formation of private space as the negation and opposite of the

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34The whole brutal onslaught on the peoples in Africa, Asia, and America by European merchant capitalists was justified as a civilizing mission of the Christian nations. Here we see the connection between the ‘civilizing’ process by which poor European women were persecuted and ‘disciplined’ during the witch-hunt, and the ‘civilizing’ of the ‘barbarian’ peoples in the colonies. Both are defined as having an uncontrolled, dangerous, savage ‘nature,’ and both have to be subdued by force and tortured to break their resistance to robbery, expropriation, and exploitation (Mies 178).

35Abortion debates continue to keep American people busy at every election. Recently, in Turkey, too, campaigns against abortion rights have been started in media and right-wing politics.
public/work domain is rendered possible only by constructing the notion of family away from market relations and not considering housework labour as part of the real economy. In Annette Kuhn’s words, “Family has come to serve as a final and last-ditch explanation for the reproduction of labour power and relations of production, while at the same time its actual operation remains largely unanalyzed” (65).

The myth of the nuclear family has been debunked by many pioneering feminist figures of Second Wave Feminism. American and European based Marxist feminists built on Marxist political economy to conceive unwaged reproductive labour, particularly household caring labour,³⁶ both as a locus of exploitation and as a site from which resistance can be built. The “Campaign of Wages for Housework,” pioneered by Selma James, was a milestone for the struggle to make housework labour visible in the 1970s and 80s.

Prostitution is always positioned against housework as a threat that will have devastating effects if it really penetrates into private space. The ideological structure of family space never lets this sort of intrusion and confrontation happen. Yet, the prostitute is both absent and present in the house, handled by the mother/wife/housewife, as the gatekeeper of the house. She can never be a prostitute and a housewife at the same time. A woman who is married to a man and has children not only is a representation of an honorable housewife, but she is also reflecting the prostitute back to society by not-being-a-prostitute (although this is exactly the situation for lots of women in the commercial sex sector who are often wives and mothers while being engaged in sex work). Marxist feminist Leopoldina Fortunati

³⁶Theorization of the concept of emotional labour as being “unrecognized as such, a mystification that is key to its commercial exploitation” took the emotion as an active means of making the world instead of an excess in the political organization of work life (Hochschild 43). Another pioneering feminist theorist, Nancy Fraser, coined the term social reproduction, which encompasses all human capacities available to create and maintain social bonds “which includes socializing youth and reproducing the shared meaning, affective dispositions and horizons of value that underpin social cooperation.”
displays this ironic correlation between housewife and prostitute: “Prostitution is the only female job which is not determined by her existence as a houseworker. The capitalist division of sexual work does not only mean that the prostitute’s work is different from that of the houseworker, it also means that the former is effectively prevented from being both at the same time” (64).

Hence, the figure of the prostitute as the antithesis of the housewife serves as a constitutive other. She has no husband. She has no place within social relations. She is not wife to one man, nor mother to children. Her labour is rendered not only invisible but also demonic and devoid of any value. Yet, her image constantly haunts the family sphere. Looking at this intertwined image of housewife and prostitute, it can be claimed that the prostitute, as the radical other of the housewife, is not outside of the family space. If we consider the ideology of family space in the light of Slavoj Zizek’s theory, we can see ideology as part of the social reality rather than as an external manipulator of it. A contemporary study supporting this view is Kingsley Davis’ article, “Sociology of Prostitution,” in which he claims that where the family structure is strong, there tends to be a well-defined system of prostitution as “women are either part of the family system, or they are definitely not a part of it” (755). In this manner, ideological schemas of housework and sex work division are not hiding the facts about sex work, as the logic of false-consciousness in Marxism offers; on the contrary, they serve perfectly and openly “as fantasies that structure our social reality itself” (317).

We find a similar approach to the constitution of family through leaving prostitution as its other in the works of Friedrich Engels, who devoted his work, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, to the analysis of the constitutive role of family in the capitalist way of operation of the state. He looked at the role of
monogamy in the formation of the nuclear family and the subordination of women as properties of men. In his analysis, Engels gives a significant place to prostitution as the constitutive other of the family that is strictly based on monogamy. Engels makes a clearer statement about the resemblance between marriage and prostitution in the following lines:

Marriage is determined by the class position of the participants, and to that extent always remains marriage of convenience. This marriage of convenience often enough turns into the crassest prostitution—sometimes on both sides, but much more generally on the part of the wife, who differs from the ordinary courtesan only in that she does not hire out her body, like a wage-worker, on piecework, but sells it into slavery once and for all. (78)

In his critique of marriage, Engels points to the contractual nature of the wife-husband relationship through comparing the wife's position in the marriage to the prostitute's occupation. Even though it is a substantial work of criticism, the notion of prostitution cannot escape being instrumentalized. Karl Marx's widely-quoted reference to prostitution takes prostitution as a similar metaphor: “prostitution is only a specific expression of the general prostitution of the labourer” (82). Marx's statement at once acknowledges prostitution as work and degrades it as being dishonorable. How does sex work turn out to be such a handy tool to communicate our anxieties about work, sexuality, and gender? In what ways does it constitute the dark continent of labour studies? How does it provide a short-cut for us to talk about morality, work, labour, and body? The prostitute serves as the empty signifier of all these questions. Noah Zatz refers to the Foucauldian concept of the productive role of power in order to understand the association of prostitution with dirty and compulsory labour at the symbolic level. According to Zatz, the separation of
sexuality and economy at the symbolic level (300) is the extension of criminalizing and restrictive regulations in the field of sex work. For him, all ostracizing, excluding, and oppressive regulations that criminalize sex workers provide “a rationale for the patriarchal surveillance and harassment of not only women but also non-white, non-middle-class and poor populations” (299). Shannon Bell’s book *Reading, Writing, and Re-writing the Prostitute Body* is another work that captures anti-prostitution ideology and its different phases in the Western historical context. In this genealogy of the prostitute body, Bell shows how the modern discourse on prostitution turned the prostitute body into a pathological, criminal, and perverted one, an assertion she supports through referring to the surveys on prostitute women in early modern sociology and anthropology (44). These surveys were taken to be evidence of the “genetic and characteristic perversions typically observed” in prostitute women. Susan Buck-Morss, deriving it from Walter Benjamin's articulation of the prostitution for whom the prostitute is "seller and ware in one," extends this point further to explore prostitution as "both emblematic of and threatening to some of the operative tenets of commodity capitalism" (quoted in Schneider 25):

The prostitute is the ur-form of the wage laborer, selling herself in order to survive. Prostitution is indeed an objective emblem of capitalism, a hieroglyph of the true nature of social reality in the sense that the Egyptian hieroglyphs were viewed by the Renaissance—and in Marx’s sense as well: “Value transforms…every product of labor into a social hieroglyph. People then try to decode the meaning of the hieroglyph in order to get behind the secret of their own social product…." The image of the whore reveals this secret like a rebus. Whereas every trace of the wage laborer who produced the commodity is
extinguished when it is torn out of context by its exhibition on display, in the prostitute, both moments remain visible. (Qtd. in Schneider 25)

Hence, prostitution is a symbolic term to refer to any interaction that has an exploitative aspect to it, and it serves as a blank screen onto which all evils of the system can be projected. As I propose to do in this study, it is crucial to de-naturalize easy conclusions about the figure of the prostitute, even as a metaphor.

Because “all productive work—including the production and exchange of women—is recognized, valued and rewarded in a patriarchal society is regarded as men’s business” (Irigaray 799), the prostitute body selling and managing her own time independently interrupts the ‘normal’ circulation of female body in phallogocentric economies. Because paid sex is “sex without desire, sex without identity, sex without sexuality as well as sex without reproduction” (Zatz 300), it falls out of all libidinal economies. To put it differently, a woman who demands a kind of pay-off in exchange for sexual service means that she “removes her body from the stock of male property and male law” (McClintock 78). Basically, the taken-for-granted availability of the female body, which has become the central problem of feminist theatre/performance practice, is the source of anxiety that renders prostitution a threat for the whole social order. In McClintock’s words:

In the sexual commonage of the prostitute, the body fluids and liquid assets of men from different classes and races mix promiscuously. It is, therefore, not surprising that prostitutes are traditionally associated with challenges to rule, with figures of rebellion, revolt, insurrection, and the criminal appropriation

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37 I would like to define phallogocentric economies in parallel to Vicki Kirby’s argument that “brute matter of woman’s embodiment and the immediacy of her lived experience provide the corporeal substratum upon which man erects himself and from which he keeps a safe distance” (5). In what Luce Irigaray calls hom(m)osexual relations among men (1985), the phallic regime of truth takes the ownership of female body for granted.
of property. The scandal of the whorearchy amounts to flagrant female interference in male contests over property and power. (79)

In this way, the prostitute disrupts the public/private distinction. The prostitute body “explicitly carries sex into the public and money into the private” (Linstead et al. 4), and so belongs to neither private nor public domain. In conclusion, common associations between prostitution and dirty/embodied work are a product of historically, politically, and ideologically constructed stereotypes. When seen from a sex work perspective though, commercial sex challenges many assumptions about family and romantic sexuality as its bedrock.

4.4 Sex Work and Feminism

Much of the public and political debate on sex work revolves around whether sex work is demeaning/objectifying to the people involved in it (mostly women), or whether sex work is a form of labour. New ethnographic and interdisciplinary studies (Agustin; Bernstein; Sanders; Stark) have fostered discussion of the possibilities of re-imagining the vexed relationship between labour and sex; understanding the demand for sex work in a way that unfolds meanings and myths of masculinity, desire, and intimacy in the twentieth-first century; and building new political strategies and alliances between women, the transgender communities, and sex workers. The foregoing research implies that the diversity of experiences of sex workers will continue to challenge any taken-for-granted notions of sex, work, and sex work. Firstly, in this section I will introduce two main camps in relation to sex work within feminism.

One of the most widely held feminist stances about sex work is taking it as a form of violence against women, which reaffirms and reifies patriarchal oppression. This view sees the contract between prostitute and client through which sexual
contact is being exchanged with money to be intrinsically violent and humiliating. Radical feminists such as Andrea Dworkin, Susan Brownmiller, and Catharine MacKinnon equated prostitution with utmost objectification and commodification of women's bodies. Radicals harshly criticize all forms of transactional relations between men and women such as marriage, hostessing, stripping, or women's roles in pornography, as they are serving patriarchy, which dehumanizes the feminine gender by turning it into an object (Rich 1980). As MacKinnon states: “Sexuality is to feminism, what work is to Marxism; that which is most one's own and yet that which is most taken away” (qtd. in Scoular 345). It is clear, therefore, for radicals, that what is taken from the prostitute woman is herself as it cannot be alienated from her sexual behaviour. Pateman confirms this view by saying that “when a prostitute contracts out use of her body, she is thus selling herself in a very real sense” (69).

Reflecting the challenge with the entrenched associations of prostitution with slavery, compulsion, forced work, exploitation, extreme sexuality, perversion, and disease, the issue of labour in sex work divides popular feminist thought into two easy camps. On the one side, the abolitionist camp sees all sorts of commercial sex as a form of patriarchal oppression. Engaging in sexual labour has nothing to do with the prostitute women's agency as it is a matter of “organized sexual abuse” (qtd. in Stark 40) in MacKinnon's words. For the sake of either rescuing women from human trafficking or stopping all violence against women (radical feminism), they advocate total abolition of the industry of prostitution. Anti-pornography feminists Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin have famously stated that prostitution is the ultimate form of male supremacy over women. The abolitionist camp has been deeply concerned with the idea of women who are involved in sex work being
reduced to men’s objects of desire, as Sheila Jeffreys describes in the following quotation:

Prostitution is male sexual behavior characterized by three elements variously combined: barter, promiscuity, and emotional indifference. Any man is prostitution abuser who, for the purposes of his sexual satisfaction, habitually or intermittently reduces another human being into a sexual object by the use of money or other mercenary considerations. (Qtd. in Scoular 344)

In this view, sex workers are victims of a problematic and abusive male sexuality. In line with the views discussed by Engels previously (page 64), radical feminists usually discuss prostitution alongside marriage. It was in the eighteenth century when Mary Wollstonecraft declared marriage as “legal prostitution.” The anarchist feminist Emma Goldman said the following: “Nowhere is woman treated according to the merit of her work, but rather as a sex. It is therefore almost inevitable that she should pay for her right to exist, to keep a position in whatever line, with sex favors. Thus it is merely a question of degree whether she sells herself to one man, in or out of marriage, or to many men” (Goldman 720). Goldman rejects women’s dependency on men. Either in the name of love or in the name of wealth, being dependent on a male is not tolerable for her. Moreover, when Adrienne Rich compares domestic violence and violence against prostitutes she concludes that “compulsory heterosexuality simplifies the task of the procurer and pimp” (Rich 645). With these words, Rich not only attacks the prostitution industry but also the nuclear family as the source of all violence and exploitation. Ironically enough, in pointing out the violence and oppression within the family structure, radical feminism just reveals the bonds between ‘the good women’ and ‘the bad women.’ This divide is not without its contradictions felt and recorded by feminists, though. For instance, Josephine Butler,
who led the feminist campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1880s in Britain, expresses the gap between herself as a feminist activist and the prostitute women in her letter to her sister. This letter vividly shows not only the basic anxiety but also a curiosity about prostitute women within the feminist circles: “Even if we lack the sympathy which makes us feel that chains which bind our enslaved sisters are pressing on us also, we cannot escape the fact that we are one womanhood, solidaire, and that so long as they are bound, we cannot bewfarris and truly free” (qtd. in Pateman 59).

The influence of this letter, as well as Pateman’s (2006) and Stark’s (2006) articles, allows me to understand the genuine longing for a more inclusive and intersectional viewpoint on prostitution among radical feminists. These lines written in the warmth of speaking to the sister signify a discomfort with the divide between prostitutes and other women. Incommensurability between the feminist goal to eliminate all prostitution and the need to speak to them deserves to be looked at.

On the other side of the feminist debate on sex work, there are "sex work feminists”38 who critically situate themselves against radical feminists; Scoular states, “In identifying sex more than other bodily mediated activities, such as childcare, nursing or domestic activities, radical feminists ascribe a particular value to sex, which is then used to argue against its commodification” (345). Questioning the essentialist connections drawn between intimacy and sexuality, sex work feminists attack the misogynist imprints in the anti-prostitution view. In response to the radical feminists’ idea that sexuality cannot be separated from one’s self, sex work feminists argue that the inalienable value attached to sexuality reinforces the misogynist ideology that reduces women to their sexuality (Kesler 226). They suggest that

38Borrowed from O’Connell Davidson’s term “sex work feminist” (O’Connell Davidson 2002).
understanding prostitution as labour will help to debunk the view that sex workers are selling themselves (Chapkis 1997). They make a distinction between contracting out one's services and the self as a commodity to offer in the market. Today, current political debates on sex work, too, are stuck in the same impasse where the body is the ultimate threshold. (Nagle) A key term that enters into this discussion is "agency," as the question of what sex workers sell is directly linked to the question of in whose name one works as a sex worker. Sex work feminists believe that women are not always coerced into being sex workers but sometimes choose sex work, while on the radical feminist camp consent is simply out of the question in sex work. Some sex work feminists depart from their own previous experiences in the sex industry in order to develop their advocacy for a feminist stance from within sex work (Kesler 2002; Chancer 1993). There is also a feminist vein within sex work feminism that finds prostitution potentially liberating. Accordingly, prostitution has the strength of empowering women in terms of their own self-confidence (Brewis et al. 229). For instance, Shannon Bell, in her study, which she sees as the “genealogy of the prostitute body,” associates pagan prostitutes’ discourses, such as Diotima’s, with the discourse of postmodern prostitutes, such as Annie Sprinkle (137). According to Bell, porn artists today reclaim the “philosophy” of the prostitute body. Eva Pendleton also sees the sex worker as a powerful figure that “destabilizes heteronormativity as much as lesbian women do” (qtd. in Chapkis 11). According to this view, prostitute women can gain control of the work they do, as they acquire an expertise on male power and sexuality more than any women do. Fostering this view, there are also studies on female sex workers who enjoy their work as a healing and educating practice (Pheterson; Sullivan; Harris; Wark). The important point here is that even though there are women who say that they chose sex work, the general politics of sex
work feminists does not depend on the options but on the current situation where all sex workers are criminalized and exposed to violence. All these points raised by sex work feminists proceed to one political goal, which urgently calls for action to defend legal and political rights of all sex workers, regardless of their reason for engaging in sex work.

This aim gains more importance given the fact that sex workers are still subjected to surveillance, police arrest, forced sexually transmitted infection testing, rejection by society, and detention in almost all countries. As McClintock argues, “where sex work is a crime, clients can rape, rob and batter women with impunity” (McClintock 88). The public health discourse approach to the legal situation of sex work uses the modernist idea that sex work should be regulated, and therefore legalized, by the state, on the grounds that society should be protected from sexually transmitted diseases. The decriminalization approach supports sex workers’ full citizen rights and advocates for decriminalization of sex work, which means abolishing laws that criminalize sex work. To fight against the violence against prostitutes, one of the most urgent agendas addressed by sex worker’s rights organizations is decriminalization of sex work instead of legalization. McElroy states the difference between the two with the words below:

Legalization refers to some form of state controlled prostitution, for example, the creation of red light districts. It almost always includes a government record of who is a prostitute—information which is commonly used for other government purposes. Decriminalization is the opposite of legalization. It

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39 Some of the sex workers’ organizations are COYOTE (Call Off Your Tired Old Ethics), WHO (Whores, Housewives and Others), and WHISPER (Women Hurt in Systems of Prostitution Engaged in Revolt).
refers to the elimination of all laws against prostitution, including laws against those who associate with whores: that is, madams, pimps, and johns.⁴⁰

With an increasing mistrust of these debates at the mercy of binary thinking, some scholars offer new ways to re-conceptualize sex work. For Davidson, not different from radical feminists, sex work feminists misunderstand one’s relation to sexuality, too, in terms of their emphasis on humans' transcendental need for a sexual relationship. In this sense, she indicates that new hierarchies can be created while “destigmatizing prostitution by insisting on its social value” (Davidson 93). Joanna Brewis and Stephen Linstead (2000), in their work Sex, Work and Sex Work: Eroticizing Organization, provide an insightful approach to analyzing the sex and work relationship in the light of a diversity of contemporary theories, which vary from violence to desire. For instance, the term brisure is coined by Brewis and Linstead to define the liminal (in Victor Turner's terms) character of sex work, its in-betweenness through its rejection of authenticity in sexuality and through its illegitimacy in regards to legal work. “[W]e find sex work subject to a double rejection—the first in the discursive construction of ‘normal’ sexuality by virtue of its being commercialized and organized, hence inauthentic; the second in the discursive construction of organizing because it is sexual, and hence illegitimate” (Bernstein and Linstead 1).

A similar approach can be seen in Zatz’s description of bifurcated event to use sex work: “an act that cannot be identified as singularly a market transaction or the realization of private desire” (qtd. in Scoular 346). He argues that organization and unionization of sex workers will change the picture hugely as they will shift the male-dominant balance in the sex industry into women’s control (Zatz 303). In addition to these views, Davidson also defines prostitution as a “space between two worlds,

⁴⁰http://www.wendymcelroy.com/vern.htm
incompletely dominated by the ideology of the free market and yet detached from pre-market values and codes [shame, dishonor...etc.]” (qtd. in Brewis et al. 230). Brewis et al. show the intrinsic complexities of sex work, which are closely related to sexual violence, intimacy, economy of emotions, and disciplining of masculinity. Laura Agustin, an anthropologist and activist, offers a cultural studies approach to look at the issue of sex work together with its intersections with art, ethics, consumption, entertainment, urban space, and so forth. Her statement suggests undertaking this trans-disciplinary stance in our agenda while working on sex work: “An approach that considers commercial sex as culture would look for the everyday practices involved and try to reveal how our societies distinguish between activities considered normatively ‘social’ and activities denounced as morally wrong. This means examining a range of activities that take in both commerce and sex” (621).

This approach sounds promising especially in terms of understanding the central role of the notions of desire and sexuality in the way we organize our time and space. Gheardi says that “all work is sexualized to a degree as people trade on their sexuality in negotiating their paths through organizations” (qtd. in Brewis et al. 1). Here, we are challenged to think about sexuality in a newer way, rather than within the dichotomy of sex vs. work. According to this line of thought, the discursive constructions of both sexuality and work pervade every aspect of our lives.

4.5 Sex Work and Performance in Turkey

In Turkey, sex work has been legal and regulated by the state within the framework drawn by special codes dating back to 1930, but were adjusted in 1961 and 1973 (Zengin 2011). More than 5,000 women work in the state-regulated and licensed brothels. These women pay taxes and receive regular health check-ups. However, only 0.5% of sex work is legal today as the legislation confines legal sex
work spatially to privately owned general houses. It is also known that more than 30,000 women await licenses to work in the brothels. Those without licenses work on the streets or in their private houses, which means they are subject to harassment, police violence, penalties, and extortion. Within the last decade, with the new anti-sex work policies (Yılmaz), dozens of brothels have been demolished, leaving hundreds of women jobless and open to exploitative situations as their records are permanently in their files. In addition to demolition of brothels, transwomen are increasingly denied work as licensed sex workers and are pushed to the streets.

Feminist discussions in Turkey are very much informed by the second wave feminist authors, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. Queer and sex work politics did not have a powerful voice till the 2000s. Engaging in feminist and LGBTQI activism in Turkey in the 2000s, I can attest that the most heated discussions I have had with my feminist fellows have been the ones about sex work. It has always been a challenge to speak about sex work as our issue rather than theirs. In this section, I look at three sex workers who changed the tone of the conversation on sex work within and beyond the feminist movement in Turkey. Their interventions have a commonality that ties them to each other and to this study: performance as a political, artistic, and expressive tool. The performative aspect of their stories is important to include in this chapter as it also demonstrates the limitations of everyday conversations and theory.

Ayşe Tükrükcü worked as a registered sex worker for three years in Turkey. In the 2007 general elections she ran as an independent candidate, and since then she has been engaged in activism to draw attention to the problems of women in the

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brothels. She became a public figure who speaks about the humiliating conditions of working and living in the brothels. She also advocates for the abolition of sex work completely. Feminist groups showed solidarity with Tükrükçü, when she first came forward to speak up. Once, as a group of feminists, we went to the brothel district in İstanbul to support sex workers *behind the bars*, in the words of Tükrükçü. She was defining herself as “the independent candidate of those who are at the bottom,” echoing the statement that “prostitutes are the foot soldiers of women's movement” from the World Whore Congress (Pheterson 67). She gave a speech standing before the huge, gray gate of the brothel street that is under police surveillance. As one of the activists wrote later, “we have seen today that the brothels are very much like prisons.” In this performative moment, *we*, feminists, came together with *them*, sex worker women. Tükrükçü, standing right in front of the gate, asked: “Does normal woman go there? She wouldn’t. It’s infamous there! An indecent street! But the highest decency is there. Nobody knows it though. That’s a different matter.” Ironically enough, with the words "normal woman," she was describing *us* who entered the street for the first time in our lives. It was a performative and embodied moment of stepping into/understanding a common ground and seeing how all women are addressed in the claim that sex workers are “challenges to rule, figures of rebellion, revolt, insurrection, and the criminal appropriation of property” (McClintock 79).

If Tükrükçü's appearance as an activist who retained a victimhood narrative challenged and transformed feminist consciousness in Turkey, Gani Met's unapologetic intervention took this challenge even further. Gani Met, a trans-woman

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42Ibid.

sex worker, sex work activist, and self-proclaimed sex philosopher, explains her position in relation to sex work in the following quotation:

I do not know how you perceive me but I am still a thing that is fucked for a few pennies. White dudes buy me, consume me. I am the excess of white class, fantasy excess. They come, rent, jerk off, satisfy himself physically, or beat me up in exchange of money, spit on me, fuck me. We are toys of white people, don't we? We are consumed. I tell this regarding the labour of sex work. I am also leftist, I have leftist sensibilities. However, I also question what kind of labour is labour in sex work. I know that this work is extremely difficult. I am a pervert but I do not know where to turn. Maybe this should have been the question: is sex work work or not? I do not know; I really don't. I do not have a sex life. If this is work, the thing that I sacrifice in this work is my sex life. You sacrifice something in order to work. I support unionization, claiming rights of sex workers. You know what I mean?44

Her standpoint from within sex work brings an awareness about racial and class-based elements in feminism in Turkey. When she talks about unionization for sex workers, she does not mean to rescue anyone from sex work. This does not mean that she is refraining from addressing the dangerous working conditions for transwomen sex workers or mentioning the rampant murders of transwomen that sex workers have to deal with on a daily basis. Her unrepentant attitude speaking from

inside sex work captures a more complicated picture of sex work, particularly in Turkey. The issues such as grieving or not being able to grieve after the lost lives, confronting the police on the streets, meeting the demands of the clients, personal or collective precautions against a potential threatening situation during the work—all are raised by Gani Met in a straightforward and candid way in her blog posts, social media posts, interviews, and speeches. With her outspoken and humorous manner, Gani Met embodies a politics of sex work that can serve as a site of collective resistance. I suggest that this call finds its addressee in the performance practice of Esmeray, a trans-woman performer, feminist activist, and ex-sex worker.

Esmeray is a Kurdish trans-woman performer, based in Istanbul. Esmeray audaciously brings sex work stories forward in her performances. She was born in 1973 in Kars, in East Turkey. She left her hometown to live in Istanbul in 1989. She worked as a sex worker for five years before she joined the feminist community. She is one of the founding members of Amargi Women's Academy, one of the first independent feminist organizations in Turkey. She engaged in theatre practice during her Amargi years. In 2006, she performed her first stand-up show, Cadının Bohçası (Into the Witch's Bag), which is based on her journey from Kars to Istanbul as well as from sex work to feminist activism. In an interview she states that although she was always against sex work, it was after her experience in sex work that she was convinced that sex work is violence against women. Even though Esmeray does not see sex work as a viable option for herself anymore, the stories about her experience in sex work have been the most poignant part of her performances. In Esmeray's narrative of sex work, the audience's voyeuristic gaze on the lives of sex workers is skillfully bent, as on the flipside of the stories the subjects are always straight men, or in Luce Irigaray's words, men engaged with each other in the economy of
Same/hom(m)osexual economy. In this regard, again, her stories turn the mirror around and break the mimesis in their desire to reveal the hidden truth. In other words, her stories do not bother with political correctness or the missionary aim of enlightening the audiences. Rather, they make the very curiosity of the audience their raw material and play with it. These stories share an embodied knowledge that is not easily transmittable to people with no experience in sex work. It is the lived experience of her encounters with the masculinity in Turkey. This masculinity is the type of masculinity that finds serenity, pleasure, and relief in the skin of a transwoman. If the same man feels that his masculinity is threatened on an existential level, he can suddenly hurt the woman to the point of death. Through reclaiming her stories back on the stage, Esmeray’s performance echoes Vicki Kirby’s argument that “brute matter of woman’s embodiment and the immediacy of her lived experience provide the corporeal substratum upon which man erects himself and from which he keeps a safe distance” (5). The unexpected profiles of male customers and violent conditions of working as a sex worker bring reflective pauses to the audience, which subsequently gives Esmeray an opportunity to direct their attention back to themselves and reclaim her story as her own. Hence, Esmeray performs the masculine secret itself that sustains itself over the bodies of sex workers and transwomen.

The practices of Esmeray, Gani Met, and Ayşe Tükrükçü, both in activism and performance, challenge the mystery of prostitution and disassociate it from a certain type of womanhood. Through the public persona of performative instances, it becomes possible to make the subject of sex work tangible and an indivisible part of the power relations that shape the very daily experiences of sexuality, desire, body, labour, and gender. The next chapter delves into the question of how performance
practice can be useful in understanding sex work in the context of practice as the fourth part of this study. I will talk about my own embodied journey into the relationship between performance and sex work through my exploration and facilitation of collaborative performance workshops.
5.1 On Methodology and Practice

The second, third and fourth chapters provide a historical and theoretical analysis of the figures of the actress and the prostitute in the context of early Republican and contemporary Turkey, the figure of the prostitute in relation to performance of femininity, and labour theory in conversation with sex work debates, respectively. I have been practicing performance-based work and workshops to start and build a conversation around the contemporary reception of the figure of the prostitute and the topic of sex work. This chapter is informed by both the solo and the collaborative practices I pursued throughout my doctoral research. My methodology in this chapter, practice-based research, differs from those in the previous ones. Practice-based research has been developed by many scholars and practitioners in the fields of performance and dance studies under the general category of *performance as research* (Riley and Hunter; Bolt; Haseman). The research value of my practice, then, comes from engaging my academic research within a series of live, and therefore fragile and dynamic encounters with others, as well as with my solo practice. I decipher this value in this chapter through writing and interpreting the ways in which practice has informed and continues to inform my research.

The material covered in this chapter is laid out semi-chronologically and divided into four main sections. The first section outlines the dramaturgical and strategic choices that I made in order to build new bridges between sex-work-related research material and performance practice. I elucidate the influences that first pushed me to put my inquiry into sex work at the center of performance practice. In
addition, in this section, I also highlight the significance of embodied pedagogy and the ways in which it informed my position as a researcher-facilitator. This discussion includes my informed decision not to invite sex workers to my workshops. In the second section of this chapter, I present an account of the relevance of my two solo performances and my preliminary workshop with Turkey-based performer Aslı İşıltan in my investigation of a practice. These two sections demonstrate the stages I traversed as a researcher-practitioner and lay out the strategies that I applied later to the structure of my workshops. In the third section, I present a detailed account of the design, methodology, and content of the three workshops I conducted in Istanbul and the one I conducted in Kelowna. I present the details of the exercises and games that I devised from my research material in conversation with the women who participated. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss the general outcome of the workshops with a special emphasis on the prostitute-personas devised by my collaborators.

According to the paradigm of performance as research, new knowledge is pursued by means of practice and performance, which are employed as both a method of research and a means for the dissemination of information about the research (Conquergood). Having been invested in the liveness of face-to-face encounters in performance and community-based activist environments for the last ten years, I was keen to carry my research on feminism, performance, and sex work into the space of practice/performance. In addition, contemporary discussion of sex work is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary and lends itself to reflecting on the question of performance and gender in various aspects. These theoretical and pedagogical aspirations of my dissertation always anticipated and eventually necessitated physical, live, and stimulating dialogues and togetherness with other
people of interest. To realize this expectation of adding a collaborative aspect to my research, performance-based meetings turned out to be the best opportunities.

Herbert Blau argues that "the performative instinct has been so distributed in art, thought and everyday life that we find it harder to discern the special value of performance as transformation, when transformation seems, moreover, in a culture of signs—with the supersaturation of images in the media—a universal way of life" (159). Blau's remark highlights the ways in which the power of performance weakens as it penetrates our lives through myriad communicative and technological media. Yet, practitioners continue to seek ways to discern that special value of performance as transformation. The assertion that theatre/performance is potentially democratizing and transformative has been pursued by many practitioners and scholars in the field of performance (Dolan; Goodman; Aston; Gainor; Case; Boal). The international performance art troupe, La Pocha Nostra, define performance as a form of vernacular democracy in their artistic manifesto, which has a political undertone in its application and expression. Through the artistic tools that performance provides, they advocate a model of a radical democracy that supports underrepresented and marginalized groups of people while mocking and subverting hegemonic discourses of power such as nationalism, colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism. Another example is feminist theatre scholar Jill Dolan, who cogently reflects on the space of performance as one where utopia-inspired actions, aspirations, and communities can be brought to life and realized. Dolan's theory of utopian performatives has drawn considerable attention in terms of its making a vital connection between theatre and politics of resistance in neoliberal times, especially from feminist and queer theatre makers, producers, activists, and scholars. Her idea is grounded in the potentials of performance practice to enable a vulnerable and
powerful experience of human contact and expression. For her, the "lucid power of intersubjective understanding" ("Performance, Utopia, and the 'Utopian Performative'" 479) in theatre can make a new political agency possible.

My practice-based research investigates the possibility of a refreshed perspective on this task of strengthening critical thinking through embodied practice in the context of contemporary Turkey. We need the tools of radical critical analysis more than ever today, in order to destabilize hard-boiled and seemingly uncompromising concepts, which are labour, gender, and sex work in the context of my research. In the utopian space of performance where we have the full attention of each other and an opportunity to enact our spatial, emotional, and perceptual limits, performance can reveal to us how it "bears the complexities of complicity" (Schneider 16) in our times. As such, the study of performance and the trope of performativity have become integral to a cultural critical analysis that wants to explore "the dynamic two-way street, the ‘space between’ self and others, subjects and objects, masters and slaves, or any system of social signification"(Schneider22). These are the discussions that inform my decision to carry my research questions into a performance context, to discuss sex work as a point of reference to investigate a feminist strategy in performance today.

To be able to craft and better articulate my position as a researcher and facilitator in my workshops, I benefited from the teachings of embodied feminist pedagogy. In order to grasp the underpinning principles of embodied pedagogy, it will be meaningful to take a close look at the concept of embodiment, as it is widely studied from different angles and also stands at the intersection of feminism and performance. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition, to embody means “to give a tangible or visible form to something abstract,” “to give a bodily
form to something,” or “to make something corporeal/incarnate.” The Turkish equivalent of embodiment compounds "body" with “finding" in the phrase beden bulmak, whose direct translation to English corresponds to "finding body." Another word for embodiment that is used in Turkish is cisimleşmek, which can be translated as "objectification" or "becoming an object." In the etymological roots of the word, we can trace the concepts of body and object both in Turkish and English.\(^{45}\) They all bring "tangibility," "body," and "object" together in one way or another, which might be signifying a materialist conception of embodiment. Interestingly enough, it is possible to find another cue by looking at the origins of the word “understand” in Old English: the word "under," coming from the Latin ",inter" meaning "among, between"; and "stand," which literally means to stand in-the-midst of things. In line with its etymological legacy, it can be said that embodied pedagogies reclaim understanding in its visceral meaning, to find body. From my perspective, what is more intriguing is the Turkish equivalent of "understanding", which is anlamak. This word in Turkish has a very interesting reference to the word an, which translates as "moment" in English. The link between "moment"/an and "understanding"/anlamak brings a temporal aspect into the equation. Thinking about liveness and being in the moment in performance, the emphasis on temporality becomes more meaningful. No doubt, the etymological study of these words deserves a thorough analysis from a comparative linguistic standpoint. Yet, juxtaposing the Turkish and English translations of the concepts related to embodiment has been helpful to come to terms with my bilingual engagement in my research process. In other words, looking closely at the roots of words in their own context made my transitions between Canadian and Turkish contexts smoother and also more intriguing for me as a

\(^{45}\)In old Turkish, equivalent words for embodiment ("tecessüm") can take us to Islamic schools of philosophy such as Sufism or Mysticism. This lies beyond the scope of my current research.
researcher. In Clifford Geertz's (1973) terms, it *thickened* my terminology, the linguistic tools of my research.

Embodied pedagogies are concerned with the transition from the ungraspable to the tangible, solid, or visible. The philosophy of embodied pedagogy is concerned with how we physically and affectively interact with our environment and immerse in stimuli that we receive from inside and outside each moment. The idea of body in its immediate experience as the site of knowing and growing is key to the discussions on the phenomenology of presence. Drew Leder's words below summarize charged, eruptive, and sensitive aspects of bodily experience, which is closely linked with the embodied practice of my workshops: “My body is always a field of immediately lived sensation. Its presence is always fleshed out by ceaseless stream of kinaesthesia, cutaneous and visceral sensations, defining my body's space and extension and yielding information about position, balance, state of tension, desire and mood” (21).

In addition to the experience of the lived body, critical and feminist pedagogies (hooks; Freire) address the hegemonic attitudes towards race, gender, class, and sexuality that are prone to be perpetuated in the hierarchy of learner and knower. Feminist writer bell hooks argues that to consider knowledge as deprived of power dynamics that are at work in society at large leads only to an aloof and indifferent state of being in the world, to say the least. Therefore, questioning the learner-knower relationship is the first step towards a new understanding of pedagogy and lived body. On the other hand, the figure who attempts to question might end up turning into a 'saviour' leader figure. In other words, besides their strengths and inspiration, critical pedagogies, too, can easily turn into mantras that we chant in order to transform our working groups into revolutionary communities, ironically again in the leadership of one figure. They also risk reinstating the same dichotomy.
of mind-body through relying too heavily on the understanding of social construction of the body.

At this point, I would like to discuss some pedagogical decisions that I made through my workshops in order to avoid these downsides. Firstly, I refrained from using the term participant—a term invested in the colonial tradition of ethnographic fieldwork in social sciences—to define people who attended my workshops. Instead, I saw every woman who contributed to the process of exploring my research questions through workshops as my collaborator. Their role was essential to the outcomes and process of the workshops, including the writing process. This emphasis on co-creation also fits into the framework where practice-based research plays an essential role in making the arguments rather than supporting them. Secondly, as discussed in Chapter 4, I benefited from ethnographic, anthropological, and sociological studies on sex work, and conducted interviews with sex workers based in Canada and Turkey who are engaged with sex work movement. However, it has never been my aim to work with sex workers in my workshops. My intention, from the very beginning of my research, has been to carry the material I gathered about sex work movement and theory into the sphere of performance—where there is little contact with sex work. As a result, I dedicated my practice-based research to working with women who are interested in exploring the connections between sex work and performance through embodied practice.

The call for the workshop was for woman-identified collaborators: either trans-woman or cis-gender woman. Adrienne Rich calls "a range through each woman's life and throughout history of woman-identified experience" the lesbian continuum (135). I concur with this definition in my decision to work with woman-identified people and borrow Rich's concept of lesbian continuum to talk about women
as a continuum. I made public calls circulated via social media, e-mail lists, and word-of-mouth (The call can be seen in Appendix B), both for the one workshop in Kelowna and the three in İstanbul. As the research aspect and key words of the workshop are stated in the title of the workshop call, which is "Prostitute, Woman, and Performance: A Research Workshop," the common ground on which my collaborators gathered can be considered threefold: feminism, prostitution, and performance. As I could gather from the opening discussions at the workshops where everybody expressed the aspects of their interest in the workshops, the appeal of the call differed for each individual. Some showed great interest in the topic of sex work while others engaged with the feminist tone in the call. Some had a specific idea of what the workshop aimed to explore, while others came with many curious questions regarding the content of the workshop. The group of people I ended up working with, surprisingly, came from a diverse mixture of backgrounds (theatre, music, television, dance, fine arts, and activism) and life experiences. The majority of my collaborators, though, were connected to some form of performance practice (brief profiles of collaborators can be seen in Appendix C). In 2013, I organized my first group workshop with four women in Kelowna, at the UBC Okanagan campus. Three of my collaborators were BFA students from the Interdisciplinary Performance Program, and one of them was a Fine Arts student. In 2014 and 2015 I organized three workshops in İstanbul in two different venues. In total, I had the opportunity to work with 25 collaborators, all of whom made remarkable and unique contributions to this dissertation. One last remark about the call of the workshop concerns my affiliation with a Canadian university, the University of British Columbia. Being marked with an academic institution, my call carries an embedded privilege in its display and
reception, especially considering the common image of Canada in Turkey as a "developed country."

5.2 Why Bring the Prostitute-Effect into Performance Practice?

In one of the first theatre productions of my high school years, the teacher assigned me the role of the woman seen as köyün orospusu, “the whore of the village.” And I completely failed to manage it. I could not respond to the instructions. I still remember my friend's comment about my failed performance: 'you are too good to play the bad girl.'

I had had no acting training, which I thought was the reason for my difficulties with that first experience of acting. This might still partially explain it, but I can now state that my confusion was mostly about my own insecurities as a young woman. The task of performing a whore revealed them in the guise of failing to act. Another performance workshop helped me articulate this feeling in a different light, as this time I could express my disillusionment with a similar moment. During one of the theatre workshops I attended at the University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus, the instructor handed out short excerpts from dramatic texts and asked us to collaborate with our partners to create a physical score using these texts. He completed his direction with the following instruction: “Listen to your partner. Stay with your partner. Do not be a whore!” This instruction reminded me of that old feeling of failure from my high school experience. While I was, back then, told to act like a whore as it was my assigned role in the play, this time I was told not to act like a whore as an acting direction. The instructor, when we later discussed it in a lovely conversation, mentioned that he wanted students not to act out for the

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46 Not to interrupt the flow of the workshop, which was a special one with a special guest artist, I did not ask anything at this moment. We had a very productive conversation about it with the director after the workshop.

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spectator but stay in touch with their partner and that "do not be a whore" was the first thing that came to his mind to address this. What is evident in this anecdote is the immediate availability of this figurative admonishment. The words *prostitute* and *whore* have similar kinds of appearance in the history of theatre practitioners. Denis Diderot and Jerzy Grotowski used the term *prostitute* to address what they do not want to see in actors whom they worked with or wrote about. In parallel to the appearance of the term *prostitute* to describe the condition of labour in the capitalist economy by Karl Marx (as discussed in Chapter 4), in the teachings of acting, too, the term *prostitute* has served to handily explain all that is undesirable in acting. Even though the methodologies and theories of acting these practitioners developed are beyond the extent of this study, it is noteworthy that in all these examples, the term *prostitute* has been convenient as a shortcut to mark the wrong paths down which an actor's journey can lead. Besides echoing the unquestioned place that the term *prostitute* holds in the terminology and history of acting/performance, the anecdote helped me spot a deep-seated memory in my body—which lies behind the dramaturgical framework of my workshop: that is, the proposition to take the phenomenon of prostitution as a serious source of inquiry to expand our embodied knowledge on labour, erotica, and body in performance. A thorough analysis of material, political, and historical connotations of the figure of the prostitute, I argue, will provide us with new tools that not only deconstruct the myth of the prostitute as a moral and punitive category but also instigate a politics of performance that keeps in touch with the intellectual, political, and artistic contours of sex work both locally and beyond.

As discussed in Chapter 3, women's relationship with labour is fraught with the complexities of emotion, care, and body, even when it is not directly embodied
and affective labour. On the other hand, the labour of sex work is demonized and rendered as a threat of exclusion from the entire workforce. In Rebecca Schneider's words, the figure of the prostitute is the killjoy of all: “Making no secret of her relation to the exchange of capital, the ‘out’ prostitute makes a scene (and possibly lands in jail). The political whore, the object who doesn’t wait to be ‘invested’ in order to look back, is a trouble-making whore” (108).

As a result of staying away from trouble as a survival strategy, women's ideological engagement with labour in general bears the marks of a sharp divide between sex worker (as other) and non-sex worker (as me). As I discuss in Chapter 3, this split shows itself most effectively in the visceral, sensual, and material relationship with the figure of the prostitute as a full-blooded being, in other words, the sex worker. I call the effect of this process of women's othering the prostitute/sex worker in the workshop space the prostitution effect. In the hope of tracing the marks of "prostitution" in a woman's imaginary and embodied world, the most significant inquiry of these research-workshops has been how to attain an "embodied criticality" (Kampe 2014) in relation to the notion of prostitution and its associations in one's own imaginaries. The following questions formulate the first inquiries of my research and will be addressed in the end of this chapter, accompanied by the evaluation of the workshops:

• If the prostitute is a historically and culturally invented (Agustin; Grant; Bell) and imagined figure, how will our performance/personas engage with this historicity in the cultural and political context of Turkey? How do we deal with the image of prostitute in our own individual ways, which are historically, culturally, and socially specific?
• How can an embodied and experiential awareness about the material conditions of sex workers change the quality of movement and sensation in the performance work?
• What does the variety in prostitute-personas that each collaborator creates tell us about the particular stereotypes that are shared in collective/societal memories that are grandly racist, sexist, and mostly violent?
• In what ways can the tools of performance help disrupt patriarchal imaginaries of prostitution, in Melissa Gira Grant's terms, “prostitute imaginary” (4), that are deeply rooted in female body images we harbour and perform?
• If the prostitute as ”the Other” is rendered a nonentity in the lived experience of women, how can we even make mention of her without falling into clichés?

This chapter aims to answer the question of how all these questions can be translated into and find a place in the lived and embodied space of performance. In the following section, I start to lay out my practice-based research step by step, reflecting on the place of each experience in the context of my research.

5.3 On the Solo Performances and Preliminary Workshop

This section sketches out paths of my practice-based exploration: two solo performance projects and a preliminary workshop with one performer before the collaborative workshops in groups. This section provides brief overviews of some of these early works.

5.3.1 Would You Pay to Sleep with Me? Installation

In 2011, I worked on an installation piece as part of a Creative Research Methods graduate class. This piece was my first shared practice that was based on my doctoral research questions. The installation was also my first experience of exhibiting a work in a gallery environment, which ended up being an inspiring
experience of stepping into the world of multi-media art and conceptual work. I did not continue with the same format in my later practice, as my practice-based experience is invested in performance and theatre.

The work consisted of two pieces. The first one is a short video that I created out of a film that became influential in my research. The film, *Vivre Sa Vie*, was directed by Jean-Luc Godard in 1962 and shot in Paris, France. It is considered to be one of the classics in the New Wave cinema movement that focuses on the change that public spaces went through in the nineteenth century as a result of urbanization and industrialization. Most directors, as bourgeois male observers, "perceive difference only by sexualizing the street, by perceiving the passing woman or prostitute as 'other'" (Von Osten 224). In accordance with Von Osten's interpretation, *Vivre Sa Vie* tells the story of a woman who ends up engaging in sex work following her failed attempts to improve her economic situation. Everyday and material details of the profession, ranging from the police's treatment to the sex workers to the conditions of hotels functioning as brothels, are presented by Godard from the eyes of a sex worker, Nina. We follow the character as she strolls around the streets of Paris, informed intimately about her emotional well-being through her dialogues with her friends, lover, and a philosopher. Despite its male-centric perspective that instrumentalizes the figure of the prostitute to make sense of city life in the crisis of modernity, the artistic success of the film lies in its ability to contextualize sex as transaction within the relations that are gendered and economic. It helped me make sense of prostitution as a profession and the emotional labour it takes to pursue it. The video I created used seven scenes that I found to be useful for my purposes. My collage video was titled “Seven Theatre Exercises with Some Segments from *Vivre Sa Vie*.” I formulated an instruction for each scene. I have not had the opportunity to try
out these exercises. Nevertheless, as an exercise of reading a cultural text and interpreting it through different lenses, this experience was useful for me. The exercises were as follows:

- Perform a seducing gesture.
- Play being arrested for the first time. Use only your facial expression to express one of the situations women face in the law system.
- Find a partner. Flirt with her/him while at the same time telling her/him that you do not know how to flirt.
- Measure your body with your hand, part by part (eyes, legs, mouth, hands, breasts, feet...).
- Memorize the rules you will hear in the following segment and parrot the rules and observe whether you are the listener or the speaker in this dialogue.
- Reproduce the dance you will watch in the next segment by using only words.
- Feel distracted because of being stared at. Then suddenly turn to those who bother you and ask: would you mind if I look?

The second piece in the installation was a question taped on the wall. The question was “Would you pay to sleep with me?” and the letters were shaped with assembled pieces of different pictures of my biological family, my father, grandmother, mother, uncles, and aunts. A question as inviting as "would you pay to sleep with me?" turns into a reflection of family ties with the help of a collection of images, or one could say memories of childhood. As intimate as it is, this piece has been a revealing practice for me in terms of revisiting the connection between my personal history of daughterhood and my research theme. Presenting the images from my childhood in Turkey to gallery visitors in Canada was more powerful than I had expected it to be. In a sense, I was revealing something very intimate. The
images of childhood and family are like organisms that evolve throughout the years we live. So do the emotions that accompany them. In this example, I was moved by the intensity of the experience as the feeling of being an outsider to Canadian culture multiplied with my deliberate alienation from my own childhood. In other words, this experience made me an exile again—this time from my childhood—while I was starting an exile life in Canada already. I was asked questions about my childhood and family by the visitors. Mostly, the visitors were surprised by the question on the wall and curious to see the pictures closer.

Figure 1: Images from the installation
5.3.2 Your Sound, Your Hate: A Solo Performance

In 2012, I performed a solo piece for the final presentation of an Interdisciplinary Performance studio class. My audience was my classmates. This piece was developed from an exploration of how to embody what whore stigma does to a person on a visceral level. Furthermore, I designed a performance where I could get instant and personal feedback from my audience members so that I could be in contact with my classmates/audience. The night before the performance took place, I sent an e-mail to my classmates and asked them to write me an anecdote about prostitution. I got great answers and brought them with me to the performance. On the day of performance, I asked all my audience members to be outside the changing room where I would be and wait for their turn to get in. I had a voice recorder in the room and a list of words. I was putting lipstick on my lips. When each person came in I showed them the list of words that are all synonyms with or related to the word *prostitute*. The list read "slut, whore, cunt, prostitute, harlot," etc. I wanted each of my visitors to pick one word from the list and say it out loudly while looking at me. Some said it nicely while some yelled at me. I recorded the sound as they said the word they picked from the list. After everyone took their turn to see me in the room, I left the room with the sound recorder and walked towards the corner where I had put speakers before the performance started. I connected the voice recorder with the speakers and the sounds started playing in the background. As the recording was playing the words said by each person while visiting me individually, I lay down, sat, and stood on my feet as I read the anecdotes my friends had sent me via e-mail the night before. The performance ended with me walking back to the small room and leaving the sound playing behind me.
5.3.3 On the Preliminary Workshop: Collaboration with Aslı İşiltan

In 2013, I had the opportunity to try out my first collaborative research workshop with Aslı İşiltan, who started her theatre life in 2004 in a university-based theatre group and has taken part in many plays as performer and director since then. I saw her last performance before she quit the collective. The performance I saw was a solo performance based on a story about a woman who tells the story of her grandmother, written by well-known Turkish author, Leyla Erbil. I asked her about working together after watching this performance. Our collaboration, including a presentation/performance that we showed to our close circle of friends at the end, lasted one month and took place in Istanbul.

We met twice a week for one month. We started by playing with materials such as the law on prostitution in Turkey, interviews with sex workers, and manifestos written by sex workers. We then focused on the representation of the prostitute in popular culture and art. I offered to concentrate on an example from cinema. As we talked, we saw that most of our shared examples were coming from cinema (and a few from theatre, such as Bertolt Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan*, which has been widely staged in Turkey's theatres). This supports the assertion that our imaginaries with regard to the figure of the prostitute is deeply invested in our cinema experience. I picked four films that I thought included a fair consideration of how sex work operates in women's lives. I asked Aslı to choose one film from this list to work on. The list included *Belle de Jour* (Luis Bunuel, France), *Vesikali Yarım* (Lütfi Akad, Turkey), *Vivre Sa Vie* (Jean-Luc Godard, France), and *Kupa Kızı* (Başar Sabuncu, Turkey). She picked *Vesikali Yarım*, *(My Licensed Darling).*

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47 The translation of *Belle de Jour* into Turkish is noteworthy to mention here. The film is originally based on a novel by Joseph Kessel and it is adapted into cinema by Luis Bunuel for the first time. In Turkey, not only the film was shot in Turkey by Başar Sabuncu, the novel was also translated into
Vesikalı Yarım, featuring a “registered” woman who is angelic yet doomed, is a classic melodrama (Lütfi Akad, 1968) best reflective of the ambivalence with which sex workers have been romanticised in Turkish popular culture. I chose this film because of its simple yet resonant plot. The clarity and simplicity of the story leaves more room for the intense and deep emotional exchanges between the characters. The film is a love story between the woman (Sabiha, the female character) who sings at a night club while also working as an escort, and the man (Halil, the male character) who happens to be at the night club one night under pressure from his friends to do something “manly.” They spend the night together at Sabiha's place, yet in separate beds, and feel attracted to each other later on. Even though the woman’s attitude is funny and flirtatious in the beginning, she soon becomes a romantic lover in the most adolescent way. Sabiha quits her job and they move in together. The melodrama begins after Sabiha learns that Halil is already a married man with two children. Sabiha stops seeing Halil and goes straight back to her escort/singer life, which now becomes a place of deliberate performance of prostitution, a power against Halil's betrayal. The film is full of this tension between the two lovers as the night club turns out to be the space for the performance of this passionate tension: Sabiha returns to her job, which brings Halil to the space, angry and restless once again. As the pressure between the two gets more intense, Türkan Şoray, the actress playing Sabiha, embodies her role at the night club more enthusiastically. This is

Turkish in 1955, before Bunuel's film was released. It is a matter of curiosity to me if the film or the novel was the bigger source of inspiration for Başar Sabuncu. Also, it is a high probability that his source was not Turkish translations but French originals, as we know that Sabuncu is a graduate of Saint Joseph High School and studied French Literature in University. Gözde Gayde's article "1980 Sonrasi Türkiye Sinemasında Seks İşçisi Kadınlarının Görünümü" (Sex Workers Appearance In The Turkish Cinema After 1980) provides an overview of the way sex workers are portrayed in the Turkish cinema after 1980s. In light of this text and other available sources on this topic, I am aware of the importance of the films such as Asıye Nasıl Kurtulur? (How to Save Asıye?), Kurtar Beni, Ağır Roman, 14 Numara, Güneş Doğarken, Lekeli Kadın, Vurun Kahpeye, Devlerin Aşığı, Uzaklarda Arama, On Kadın, Seni Seviyorum. However, I decided not to work with films in my workshops except for Vesikalı Yarım, the only film I used.
apparent in her body language at the film's ending scene when she sees Halil from a distance and walks away from him.

Aslı and I watched the film a couple of times. We read the analysis and reviews of the film. Our aim was to come up with a physical score of Sabiha so that Aslı could explore her relationship to the character in her body. We looked at all scenes with Sabiha and studied her emotional highs and lows. Aslı created a physical score and performed this 8-minute piece at the end of the workshop. In one of our conversations, Aslı states that she discovered the absence of the prostitute in herself at the end of our workshop process. She says: “This process helped me realize that I don’t have a prostitute in me. If you have close ties to the feminist world, as I do, you don’t care much about being or not being seen as a whore.”

Aslı’s words are critical for me, as they are indicative of my first "findings" with regard to my research questions. By her emphasis on "feminism," Aslı made me realize that my workshop relies on a feminist politics in its application and reception. While this assures the relevance of feminism in my questions, it also demonstrates a dependency on a certain standpoint that gives a certain tone to our practice. The quote above alarms me in terms of the degree of weight "the prostitute" as "other" takes in the evaluation of Aslı. It did not quite meet my goal to encourage my collaborator to explore her own relation to labour and body in reference to prostitution. On the contrary, Aslı clearly aligned with the radical feminist critique of prostitution, which equates all forms of sex work with patriarchal exploitation and oppression of women. The following dialogue with Aslı took place after our workshop. It captures something similar to the discrepancy between "they as prostitutes" and "we as feminists/performers":

49Except for Evren Erbatur’s quotations, all of the translations from Turkish to English in this chapter was made by Murat Güneş. Evren Erbatur's texts were translated by Özgül Akınç.
Özgül: In what ways do you think the relationship between spectator and performer resembles the relationship between a prostitute and her customer?

Aslı: The actor and spectator don’t intervene much in one another’s space. There isn’t much they can enforce on one another. But I think there’s much more of a power relation between the prostitute and her customer. The actor-spectator relationship is more controllable, and it doesn’t matter much if it isn’t controlled. In prostitution, if the customer sets the rules, that can be dangerous.

The point Aslı is making in this dialogue about the parallels between performer-audience and sex worker-customer alludes to the notions of control and power relations. It is noteworthy that the power dynamic between partners in sex work is more obvious for Aslı than the one in acting. This situation might result from the fact that most of the stories we hear about sex work in Turkey are concerned with violence, murder, and assault.

My last but not least important point with regard to my workshop with Aslı concerns the exercise we applied to the physical score in Aslı’s performance. As mentioned earlier in this section, Aslı devised a physical score departing from the analysis of the character in the film. In this performance, she also kept some vivid lines from the film. In her presentation of this performance to our audience, she repeated the physical score by replacing all the lines either with "I am a prostitute" or "I am not a prostitute." Through this act of using "I am/not a prostitute" as the only statement for a series of different moments in action, the whore-stigma in the body of a performer as well as in the imaginary film character could have been traced.

At the end of this preliminary workshop with Aslı, I questioned my methodology and how I might have disserved a practice-centered workshop plan by
putting too much weight on texts, films, and narratives of others. The cultural value of *Vesikalı Yarım* and the iconic place of the actress, Türkan Şoray, in the Turkish cinema, dominated our conversations and feelings throughout the research. The powerful imagery of the movie and its loaded cultural references turned out to be overwhelming in the way they defined our perspective. In other words, I can say that taking a widely-received film as a point of entrance to a topic that I am yet to develop as a research question was not consistent with a project that claims to be collaborative. In other words, I might have inhibited our imagination by putting a cult film at the center of my workshop. In my role as the facilitator, I came to the realization that my choices of workshop material will hugely influence the outcome of the workshops, even though I consult with my collaborators about them. As I explain in the next section, I did not use film in my workshops after this preliminary one. I only shared my list of films about prostitution with my collaborators. Nevertheless, the collaboration with Aslı has been productive on many levels. Our days had been almost a work-in-residency that was a unique opportunity to concentrate on my early research material. Not having a time restriction, availability of space at my house and in Aslı's university studio, as well as Aslı's generosity in receiving and responding to my inquiries were invaluable aspects of our workshop. At the end of this preliminary workshop, it became obvious to me that the topic of sex work is appealing to women who are involved in performance for its potential to open discussion around gender, body, and the male gaze.
5.4 The Devised Workshops

The conclusions I interpret in this section draw on the group workshops, one of which was held in Kelowna and three of which were held in İstanbul. Each workshop lasted three days, spending 4 hours in the studio per day. The first two days were devoted to the exercises that I devised based on the materials I collected in my research. On the final day, everyone shared her prostitute-persona through a performance or a presentation in another chosen format. Even though the basic structure remained identical for all of the workshops, they were also distinct in their application of some exercises. Changes among the workshops were decided and applied by me based on the feedback I received from the collaborators of the last workshop as well as my corrections and additions to express some instructions in a better way in order to avoid the confusions that we experienced. This section explains the methodological structure of the workshops, looks at each exercise used in the workshops in detail in conversation with the feedback from my collaborators, and concludes with general remarks on the entire process.

5.4.1 Devising the Workshops and Ethical Considerations

The methodology of devised theatre gave me a perspective on how to engage with/in critical concepts such as gender, body, and labour by highlighting their
embodied and relational aspects as interwoven. The legacy of devising goes back to avant-garde traditions of theatre and finds its most complex and interdisciplinary versions in contemporary performance today. It can be traced back to Antonin Artaud's vision in "Theatre of Cruelty," which is a prolific advocate of awakening the senses of both performer and audience through provoking conventions of theatre and language. The tradition of breaking away from realism as well as author-centered conventions of theatre production resulted in avant-garde troupes/artists (Bertolt Brecht, Agusto Boal, Peter Brook, Jerzy Grotowski, Richard Schechner) who sought for more collaborative, politically engaged, and participatory processes of theatre-making. Devising in contemporary performance scene today is multifarious and encompasses a wide range of techniques in acting, directing, and dramaturgy. However, it would not be true to say that devised theatre/performance is inherently subversive or taboo-breaking. The working definition of devising in the context of this dissertation relies on a dramaturgical approach in the sense that it applies the research material in a way that makes sense to people of interest at this time in this place, a definition Michael Chemers posits as “practical application” (3).

As a feminist practitioner-researcher, my concern with ethical issues is central to my practice. Bearing a moral responsibility for the environment I initiate and lead in my workshops does not mean that I will be in control of all the experience my collaborators are going through. However, it is important to highlight key points that I elaborated on over the course of the workshops. One of them is what I call emotional exhaustion with regard to the conversation around sexuality and gender. Politically engaged women might be tired of being the ones who have to embody political agency all the time when it comes to attending a woman-only workshop. This feeling of weariness can easily undermine the workshop atmosphere unless it is
acknowledged, if not completely resolved. Monika Mokre's words below, underlining the importance of singularity as opposed to universalization, provide insight on how to think through our unique presences in the space:

In order to understand how hegemony works for individuals one has not to look for generalizations but—very closely and very precisely—at individuals and individual situations. One has—again in the words of Spivak—an ethical responsibility-in-singularity. Not "a woman," not "a black," not "a poor" is who I am looking at but it is you, with your individual history, individual wishes, interests, and dreams that are coined by being female, black or poor but cannot be reduced to those qualities. ("The Emptiness of the Female Body: On the Projects of Tanja Ostojic")

Mokre's point is useful considering the fact that my workshop call explicitly asks the recipients to respond to the call and come to the workshop firstly as women. Hence, it is imperative not to treat the category of woman as the only bond among us once we come together. Our singularities often appear through emotional and affective states. Sara Ahmed reminds us of the role of social and political structures in making and shaping emotions. Ahmed's approach of unpacking the naturalness of emotions that appear to be instinctual to many, offers to ask what an emotion does instead of asking what an emotion is. By doing, she points to the power of emotions to shape bodies as forms of action (46), which also includes orientations towards other bodies. Bearing this point in mind, I would like to acknowledge that the first and dominant emotions concerning the issues of gender and sex work might block the flow of our bodies in movement, space, and towards others. For the societal and political reasons stated above and in the previous chapters, these emotions are palpable and primarily attached to intense emotions, such as anger, hatred, annoyance, and even disgust and
repulsion. Hence, it is all the more important and necessary for me to have a practice-based methodology that assures a safe yet stimulating environment for my collaborators. Women who come to the workshops are informed about the topics and this in itself adds emotions of productivity and empowerment into the equation. Even then, though, our ingrained habits of always being in defense as women can/will still hold us back from daring to make personal statements on these topics. From this perspective, it would be fair to say that the entire workshop is based on the articulation of this affective economy at work that comes into play in a different way for each person. For these very reasons the workshop is built upon, I devote at least one hour to group conversation when we first meet. I sit us down in a circle, and I ask the people that came to the workshop to speak up, to say why they’re there. Informal and open-ended chats over food, on the other hand, give the chance to those who need to switch off for a short time and stay away from the group conversation. Sharing food, both in the context of Turkey and Canada, is an act of bonding and has an important role in creating a friendly and intimate environment. The aftermath of the workshops is also part of the collaborative process. After each workshop ended, I sent a detailed e-mail to my collaborators in which I made a brief summary of their performances and why they were important, provided the sources of the materials that I was asked about during the workshops, thanked them, and sent them an evaluation form about the workshop consisting of three questions. This communication provided everyone with the contact information of one another, which is significant for the integrity and sustainability of our workshop that also produces a form of solidarity, which is one of the aims of the collaborative workshops.
Before starting to talk about the practice sessions written in conversation with the feedback of my collaborators, I would like to address a limitation in terms of my position as a researcher and facilitator of the workshops. Even though I have tried to trace the most vibrant and reflexive moments that created the most responsive reactions in the workshops in my writing, I am not by any means assuming that I comprehended everything in terms of reception of my workshops. I am not assessing the truthfulness of any moment, feeling, or gesture as I look back to my workshop archive in order to convey them in my writing. This might bring a certain amount of elusiveness to my interpretations. This subjective tone, however, strives for precision, if not for certainty. Likewise, I do not subscribe to any notion of hierarchy that will put a divide between women according to their background and experience in performance practice. I value every contribution from all levels of artistic and intellectual engagement equally and uniquely.

5.5 On the Practice Sessions

As a result of evolving over time, the research material I devised for the workshops contains an interdisciplinary blend of texts, fine art pieces, poems, law documents, interviews by sex workers, as well as manifestos by sex workers to engage with the complexities and intricacies of the figure of the prostitute, the materiality of sex work, and labour of the gendered body. The material that inspired the games, exercises, and tasks brings seemingly incompatible worlds of sex work and performance to attention. Tasks/exercises are based on critical reflections and practical experiments on those main concepts and are tailored to the political and activist agenda in feminism and sex work. Each exercise is already invested in the paradoxes of the theme it investigates and leads us to a place of unlearning and undoing of practice and theory. They are aiming to find body (equivalent of “embody”
The workshop exercises devised from research material can be grouped under three assemblages in terms of their dramaturgical significance. The dramaturgy of the first group concerns the material conditions of sex work today. Exercises that fall into this group aim to share historical information about prostitution, manifestos, and interviews by/with sex workers, and laws with regard to the legal status of sex work. The second group consists of exercises that use parallel concepts in sex work and performance to devise tasks. Exercises falling into this category experiment with juxtaposition of audience in performance and the customer in sex work, sexual contact in sex work, and the goal of entertainment in performance, and seek to explore further connections with regard to shared concepts such as intimacy, body, seduction, affective labour, and care. The third group is concerned with performing gender. This group of exercises aims to revisit gender, the gaze, and erotica, in hopes of claiming an agency in one's own emerging definitions.

One of the technical components in the application of the devised material in the space of performance is improvisation. When I share the material in the form of tasks or exercises with basic instructions, my first suggestion for my collaborators is that they improvise with the material. Improvisation can vary according to the background and toolkit each collaborator has. Based on my observations, I can tell that my collaborators who had a background in dance used different techniques of improvisation when compared to others. Dance scholar Danielle Goldman understands improvisation not as breaking free from all constraints or strictness of the previous structures of thinking but stepping into a new setting that has its own boundaries. She refers to improvisation as "the sped-up, imaginative, expressive negotiation with constraint" (27), which I think also applies to performance and theatre. Her approach is also compelling in relation to the feminist undertaking of my
research, which means that it is crucial to be responsive to the constraints that will come with any gesture of seeking release from existing constraints. In other words, as improvisation is the main way of being and exploring in the workshops, its understanding as a new-constraint-maker is also significant. No doubt, by selecting workshop exercises and framing the sessions with instructions and guidance, I, as the facilitator, played the biggest role in the making of constraints.

The importance of space for a fulfilling experience of the workshops is undeniable. With regard to the venues, two of the workshops (one in Canada and one in İstanbul) took place at university campuses, while the other two were at a dance studio, Çıplak Ayaklar Stüdyosu (Naked Feet Studio), run by the dance collective of the same name in İstanbul. Çıplak Ayaklar Stüdyosu has been a more suitable venue to hold my workshops compared to others, for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the collective spirit of the space is contagious, especially if one is familiar with the experimental approaches of the dancers who run the studio. The space has a very welcoming atmosphere with an open kitchen, which gives the whole space a feeling of being at home. Secondly, it is located in a central neighborhood of İstanbul, Çukurcuma, where there are art galleries, museums, coffee shops, and groceries around. Right next to the studio, there is a car repair workshop and an historical Turkish bath. All these factors played into the collaborative nature of the workshops.
5.5.1 Session 1: Writing Through Moving

Instruction: Please take one paper and a pen from the pile you see in the middle, place them somewhere in the room. I invite you to take notes about the key concept of our workshop, which is prostitution, in relation to your understanding of erotica. What associations do you find as you start thinking about erotica and prostitution? Take your time to move your body in the room at your own pace before starting to write/draw. These notes will be with you till the end of the workshop and serve as your canvas to which you will come back throughout the workshop to add things to it or use it in our next sessions. Let your movement in the space incite a desire to write/draw and your writing/drawing led to a desire to move. Moving and writing are up to your rhythm. Free association is welcome in your writing. There is no suggested format. There will be music playing in the background. Normally, we devote 20-25 minutes to this session.
In the history of feminisms, writing women’s history from women's perspective stands out as one of the most important accomplishments. French poststructuralist feminist writer Hélène Cixous was one of the advocates of reclamation of writing, in her suggestion of “writing from the body” rather than inscribing it:

Personally when I write I write with my body. My body is active, there is not interruption between the work that my body is actually performing and what is going to happen on the page. I write very near my body and my pulsions...there are texts that are made of flesh. When you read these texts, you receive them as such. You feel the rhythm of your body, you feel the breathing and you make love with these texts. (27)

In this session, I argue that such an awareness might be stimulated further through moving in the space. If we take writing as the "spatialization of thought" (Bryant) through which the act of inscription preserves the thought in the making while letting us move on to think of something else, this session departs from a similar premise that the physical act of writing is always already embodied, regardless of the medium (pen or keyboard). If we make the space present to us by inhabiting it, writing can be the act of registering our presence. Free associative writing becomes more experimental once it is challenged by the mobility of the body and willingness to move. In this case, writing is not a "sit and write" activity but an on-going activity that contributes to moving and is informed by moving in the space.

This session follows our first group conversation where we introduce ourselves to each other. After our first face-to-face encounter, it is time to settle and welcome ourselves in the space at our own pace. Secondly, this session is an invitation for my collaborators to make an embodied and performative commitment
to undertake their unique workshop experience and own it in their own way from the very outset. Through asking them to write about prostitution and erotica, I encourage my collaborators to keep track of the transformation of their relationship to the key concepts of the workshop. Recording their very first questions, impressions, and notes hopefully gives a personal tone to their workshop experience from the beginning. Their pieces of writing/drawing will serve as a canvas of their experience throughout the workshop, which can be used for their solo performance piece.

Evren Erbatur, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: Writing always makes me feel good. There was enough room and time in this workshop. I usually made my work with pen and paper. I drew, I folded. When one uses writing as a means or an object, it is always useful. Perhaps because I am a dramaturg.
Figure 4: Images from the Writing sessions

*Top left* An Image of Evren Erbatur’s workshop notes, *Top right* and *Middle right* Images from Mimar Sinan University workshop, *Middle left*, *Bottom left* and *Bottom right* Images from the writing session during Kelowna workshops.
One of my collaborators, Evren, expressed her astonishment about the content of her workshop notes in one of our after-workshop conversations. She told me that her writing was exceptionally erotic. She was surprised at her vulgar language in her notes. This feedback revealed to me that my collaborators met some unexplored versions of themselves during the sessions, and the idea of writing went beyond just recording their experience; it also generated new experiences for them. Another collaborator, Gökçe, shared with me the following excerpt from her notes. In her poignant and raw way of expression, Gökçe emulates the feeling of wilderness in the act of making love with a lover in her writing. Her tone is feral:

Gökçe Deniz Balkan, Istanbul Workshop, 2014: I imagine we could write about the performance of fucking. I'm totally unconscious to these ideas, like a stupid animal, splattering the guts of my sexuality all over the page. Where else does one have the opportunity to talk about the perception of the whole universe collapsing into your partner until there is nothing left but two bodies in need, breathing the same air, fluid, pushing into one another. It's hunger. It's violent.

5.5.2 Session 2: Running Blindfolded: Attending the Fear

Instruction: Everyone will stand in one end of the room. At the other end, I and one more person will be standing. One by one, you will run towards me either with your eyes closed or blindfolded. First take a good look at the distance you will run through. Get your eyes closed. Run until we tell you to stop or hold you. On the second round, everyone will run backwards with their eyes closed or blindfolded again. The task here is not to run but listening to the physical reaction of your body when you leave her without the sense of sight and ask her to run.
I borrowed this session from a *La Pocha Nostra* workshop held by Guillermo Gomez-Peña and Saul Garcia Lopez in 2014 at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. This simple and playful task ignited excitement and a sense of solidarity in the group as it was unpredictably challenging in practice and required each other's support. I kept this exercise in my workshop program because the emotion that it helps bring to the surface, fear, might help us come to terms with what fear does to our bodies and its implications in the act of performance. (Banes and Lepecki) Also, fear stands at a particularly important place in relation to the content of the workshop. The relationship of women with the figure of the prostitute is often governed by fear as well as disgust. In this sense, it is meaningful to embody the emotion that governs our understanding of prostitution. The only instruction Gomez-Peña highlighted as we performed the task was that we needed to be fully attentive to the physical reaction of our bodies to a potentially fearful situation like not being able to see while running. He urged us not to attempt to mask our emotions during the run and let our physical reflexes to a dangerous situation be revealed through screaming, trembling, unintended sounds, or stopping. I used the same instruction in my workshops as well.

New understandings of body and emotions in performance and neuroscience recast affect as an interdependent process of biological and cultural factors instead of seeing emotion as a pure disembodied 'thing.' In her analysis of emotions as culturally and politically constructed effects, Sara Ahmed devotes one chapter to fear. Referring to theories offear in psychoanalysis and the interpretation of the object of fear, she develops a perspective from which she also discusses racial implications of the "society of security" in our age. Her analysis is relevant to the dramaturgy of this
session as it shows how we can still have the fear even if we do not have its object. In her words:

Fear involves an anticipation of hurt or injury. Fear projects us from the present into a future. But the feeling of fear presses us into that future as an intense bodily experience in the present. One sweats, one's heart races, one's whole body becomes a space of unpleasant intensity, an impression that overwhelms us and pushes us back with the force of its negation, which may sometimes involve taking flight, and other times may involve paralysis. So the object that we fear is not simply before us, or in front of us, but impresses upon us in the present, as an anticipated pain in the future. (65)

Even though this game of running with eyes closed is a safe game in the context of the workshop, and positive emotions such as excitement and pleasure are also experienced, the first feeling that makes one hesitate to run can be considered to be fear, in the sense that Ahmed explains above. Sight is a much explored sense in performance and theatre. Being at the heart of modern spectatorship, sight is also a constitutive element of the theatre experience. As performers, shutting down some senses is a common practice in order to push one's limits in her movements and sensations. In this session, creating an obstacle through blocking the sense of sight makes a difference in the way we experience time and space as well as the relation of our bodies to one another. Without our sight, a visual reference to map the space and to distinguish the body from the space, blindness engulfs the body as a dangerous notion. Our bodies counterbalance the absence of sight by activating other senses to feel safe. This, then, creates a certain level (which changes from person to person) of anxiety that leads to slowing down and using one's hands and inadvertently resorting to other senses to navigate the body. In his article "Senses and Silence in Actor
Training and Performance," Philip Zarilli borrows Drew Leder's assertion that there are three modes of embodied experience in performance. The first one is the sensorimotor surface body, which encompasses essential functions that shape our experiential field, such as the gaze. The character of the surface body is exteroception, opening us out to the external world (50). In the ecstatic nature of our corporeality the body is forgotten and constitutes a null point in our perceptual field. This is the reason why we experience the world from the body. If this body of flesh is interrupted in some way, as in the case of this session, the other senses help to maintain the continuity of the world. Blocking the sense of sight and disrupting the sense of linearity in movement and space in this session renders a self-consciousness in our surface bodies, which is normally experienced in the background.

In addition, the issue of trust comes into play in this session. From a feminist point of view, the issue of solidarity has political importance. However, in most groups the manifestations of solidarity and support in the body remain to be explored. During the session, the group's alertness also becomes tangible in acts such as looking each other in the eye, exchanging smiles, and checking one's place in the room. In order to realize the action, one has to trust the group in the case of a potentially dangerous or risky situation. A felt sense of being taken care of by others, as well as taking the responsibility of attending to the safety of others, fosters the feeling of solidarity within the group. This sort of bonding is carried into the next sessions as well.

5.5.3 Session 3: Embodying the Erotica

Instructions for Stage 1: Stand in a circle. Be close to each other. One by one, everyone will choose a spot on their own body without telling the rest of the group where it is. We are going to approach each person one by one and try to
guess where her erotic point is by touching spots on her body based on our guesses. If the person does not want to be touched, we are going to say the name of the spot instead of touching. The erotic point you choose does not have to be a fixed point for you—make your decision spontaneously at the moment.

Instructions for Stage 2: After we played and "found" erotic spot of every person two or three times, we mention the spots that were chosen one by one and imagine a body made up only with those spots/parts. We talk about this new body.

The Turkish word for "erotica" is almost directly adapted from the English. Change the "c" in the English word "erotic" to a ―k‖ and you get the Turkish word: "erotik." The concept of erotica, evoking the notion of libido, has strong and immediate connotations with the sexual contact usually experienced with a partner. The discussion of "libido" in psychoanalytical theory concerns the sex drive as a survival instinct and traces its transformation into a more civilized, thus European-centric, version through the developmental stages in a person's lifetime (such as in Sigmund Freud's book Civilization and Its Discontents, or Herbert Marcuse's book Eros and Civilization). Critiqued, adopted, and revisited by other theorists, libido is still placed firmly at the heart of many inquiries regarding contemporary society, culture, and the arts. One of the most prominent theories of erotica in the context of feminist theory comes from Audre Lorde, who self-identifies as a black lesbian feminist. Her thoughts on erotica relocate sexual energy within a larger understanding of erotica as a source of power and agency. Departing from the prevalence of abuse of sexuality in patriarchy, Lorde argues that women need to reclaim erotica as their "most
profoundly creative source" and not as an energy that only appears as defensive to that abuse. Lorde writes that the erotic is the power that can navigate feminist radical politics if it is acknowledged. She remarks:

I find the erotic such a kernel within myself. When released from its intense and constrained pellet, it flows through and colors my life with a kind of energy that heightens and sensitizes and strengthens all my experience. In touch with the erotic, I become less willing to accept powerlessness, or those other supplied states of being which are not native to me, such as resignation, despair, self-effacement, depression, self-denial. ("Uses of the Erotica")

In his article "Eros and Inquiry: The Feldenkrais Method as a Complex Method" Thomas Kampe also refers to Audre Lorde's formulation of erotica as power and suggests that one can enhance her "sexually potent self" with the help of the Feldenkrais Method as a pedagogical foundation. Likewise, scholars who take teaching activity as an activity of love (Gallop; Pyral; McWilliam; Zajonc) argue that powerful teaching is erotically stimulating. The interrelation between erotica and a feminist politics of a new agency informs this session in a similar way. To take erotica as a radical chaos that upsets the divide between intellect and body can still be a daring undertaking for a woman today. Especially, given the feminist discussions around post-feminism, it can be seen that hypersexualization as a "sexual liberation" appropriated by capitalism renders this feminist task even harder (McRobbie), as erotica is easily conflated with sexual availability.50

50For scholarly work examples on sexuality and gender in the contemporary Turkey, see Gül Özyeğin's book New Desires, New Selves: Sex, Desire, Piety Among Turkish Youth, which was published in 2015, after I completed my workshops. Her work shows how sexual autonomy is experienced among Turkish youth while remaining connected with their traditional family values. Also, Evren Saxe's article "Who Speaks the Language of Queer Politics? Western Knowledge, Politico-cultural Capital and Belonging among Urban Queers in Turkey" demonstrates the limitations of the critique of neo-liberalization of queer movements and insightfully discusses the ways in which class informs queer politics in Turkey.
With these points in mind, this session aims to encourage my collaborators to take their own encounter with erotica as one of the most important steppingstones towards their creation of a persona at the end of the workshop. Furthermore, a self-reflection of what they find erotic hopefully provides them with a refreshed awareness of their own boundaries vis-à-vis the touch coming from outside. As Canadian poet and philosopher Anne Carson suggests, if eros is an issue of boundaries, and "it is only at the moment when I dissolve that boundary, I realize I never can," playing around the notion of eros means concerning oneself with the notion of boundary as well. This boundary, in the case of touching, becomes the skin (covered with cloth or naked). According to Sara Ahmed, skin is the border that feels as it simultaneously separates us from other bodies and marks our lines. In other words, skin affectively opens out of bodies to other bodies as it “registers how bodies are touched by others” (Ahmed 45). While providing an opportunity to play with the notion of boundary, the act of touching also challenges the notion of body in its visual image. It transforms our grasp of the body at a sensory level.

In short, by allowing an embodied exploration of our relationship to touching and being touched, workshop collaborators are encouraged to have a short, self-reflective moment about what their relationship to erotica might be. On the other hand, this attempt is inherently doomed to fail its subject because it is tightly dependent on another's decision to touch. In other words, the question of where my erotic spot is, is simultaneously a question of where I might want others to touch my body right now and it is continuously shaped by the touch of the other over which I have no control. The doubling of a subject’s agency with another’s intervention establishes the foundation of the encounter to come. At the end of the session, collaborators addressed a sense of futility in their expectation of the other people's
touching on the right spot. They stated that every time a touch "failed" to spot the right place on their body, it also made the "failed touch" desirable. This might explain that the pleasure of this interaction lies in the unexpected satisfaction from a "wrong guess." In the postponement of a final decision of where one's erotic spot is, we can argue that erotica fulfils its potential and shines: “A politics of touch calls forth a democratic movement toward justice that releases judgment indefinitely. In practice, this means experiencing justice as the opportunity of postponing a final decision even while engaging fully in an act of reaching-toward” (Manning 115). In this statement, Manning relates the concept of touch with the concept of democracy. Touch is an intimate sense of ours. Even pronouncing the word "touch" renegotiates the distance at work between a group of people inhabiting a space. This was clearly evident in the workshops as this session immediately changed the dynamic in the group. Giggles were easy to hear, eyes looked more curiously, movement became cautious yet vibrant as a sign of checking with the others. Erik Erikson posits intimacy as a threat to identity and vice versa (25). When one opens herself to a contact based on touch, the identity-centeredness stops governing the process and bonding starts to occur on a larger level. In her words below, Evren talks about the collapse of some of the distinctions during the session on a visceral level:

Evren Erbatur, Istanbul Workshop, 2014: I was not involved a workshop like this before. It was interesting. I realized that I did not perceive my body or other's bodies from this perspective until now. Nor did I think that erotic spot can be anywhere. It was entertaining. I asked to myself: does body work with mind when it comes to erotica? Or did it have a separate memory? Touching was subjective and sensual. It was experiential. In other words, women seemed to be touching according to their own experiences. Each touch
invoked memories for me. Not only my touches on someone else or the one who is touched but also while I watch others' decisions where to touch. There was also an uneasiness. There is a taboo and intimate space where touch and being touched meets erotica. This space has different boundaries marked for everyone. It is a space shaped by everybody's experience, mental and bodily experiences.

Our sense of touch is intricately linked to our relation to mimicry as well. Michael Taussig theorizes the internal/sensuous dynamics of mimicry from a post-colonial viewpoint and emphasizes the sense of tactility in its operation (As referred in Chapter 3). According to him, the law of tactility has an essential function in the law of similarity as it blurs the boundaries between object and subject while letting one blend into the environment she is in. The strong connotations of touch/intimacy with sex work/prostitution come into play at this point. Sex workers are usually considered to be generating "counterfeit intimacy" with their customers. This notion of feigned intimacy rests upon the assumption that there is true intimacy of a particular kind. Similarly, the actor has always been suspected of being inauthentic and fake. By exploring the interdependent, in-flux, and context-based nature of touch and intimacy, this session invites the collaborators to leave their taken-for-granted evaluations in regard to sex workers and performance.
At the second stage of erotic touch exercise, we pronounce out loud the names of the erotic spots that were mentioned. We end up with an imaginary body that takes one of its parts from one member, such as a body composed of just lips, wrist, left foot, neck, and one breast. This collective and imaginary assemblage simultaneously disengages the notion of body from its anthropocentric and ableist connotations.

The general feedback on this session informed me about the bonding effect of touching more than anything else. The way women were open to each other during this session was surprising for many, as they noted the newness of the experience of talking about the issue of erotica in the performance space. The following testimonies about this session emphasize the sense of solidarity that is elicited and stayed through touching:

Kate Janus, Kelowna Workshop, 2013: The erotic touch exercise stayed with me and it felt quite intimate to share with the other girls there but I enjoyed

51Deleuzian model of embodiment can be used to conceptualize this exercise further.
that. The conversations we had were really helpful for me and definitely inspire me to be more open about sex and sexuality and being comfortable with my own. The conversation was so casual that it created a safe place to talk and discuss the things we did. I’ve not really had that so it was a comforting thing to know that what we talked about applies to more people than I thought.

Şebnem Deniz, Istanbul Workshop, 2014: Especially the touching part turned out to be more than I expected as nobody restrained herself from touching another. There was the friendliest and closest atmosphere which is not easily found in a workshop.

There were also women who hesitated to take part in this session. I was told by one of my collaborators, Evren Erbatur, that the erotic touch session made her anxious to the extent that she decided not to take part in the group if the session is repeated. The session happens only once in one workshop. Yet, Evren let me know about her experience and she also added that the concept made more sense to her at the end of the workshop. This feedback is revelatory for me as not knowing where the session is sitting in the context of our workshop might cause disturbances on the side of my collaborators. Also, a solid suggestion to develop this session further comes from Evren Erbatur's feedback notes:

Evren Erbatur, Istanbul Workshop, 2014: I have a suggestion to continue this session. If we end up with a body with "erotic touch" session, I am very curious about this body. How can we make this body visible? How can we use this in our creation of persona? How can this body with specific spots marked gain physicality? Paint it onto a big page, with different materials. Giving it a
physical body through different objects and movement devising. Pursuing this would be a fruitful work, I imagine.

Another noteworthy remark on the erotic touch session concerns a slight difference between the Kelowna group and İstanbul groups, even though the session was received positively overall by both groups. The Kelowna group was a bit more reluctant in their engagement with the ideas of touch and erotica. Comparing the level of feminist engagement between two groups, I suggest that the feminist consciousness and political awareness in the İstanbul groups reflected in their more accepting attitude in this session. Having at least three or more women who came from feminist and queer activist circles in the group immediately changed the way the session was received by the whole group. That is to say, the heterosexist, oppressive, and male-centered underpinnings in the issues of trust, intimacy, and body were already questioned by these women, which could then be felt in their comfort with the task of touching and talking about erotica. The second difference between the Kelowna and İstanbul groups concerns my researcher identity. In Kelowna, I was asked questions about my background by my collaborators. These questions were about the condition of women in Turkey and the influence of Islam in women's lives. This naive curiosity can be said to be carrying Orientalist implications in its manifestation, especially when we consider that the associations between Turkey and Islam, misogyny, and mistreatment of women are usually based on the idea that Western women are progressive and liberated. The incongruity between the stereotypical impressions of Turkey my collaborators had in their minds and the valiant session on erotica, I felt, playfully affected the relationship between me and my collaborators in Kelowna.
5.5.4 Session 4: Gender-Bending Gaze and Embodying the Audience

Instructions for Stage 1 - Stand. Imagine that there is an audience in front of you. They see you as a woman. Now turn around. There is another audience in front of you and they see you as a man. As you move in-between, let them see you as man and woman. Observe the reactions that your body gives to each audience-effect. What happens in your body (to your arms, legs, gaze, attitude...etc.) when you are seen as a woman and what happens when you are seen as a man? Continue to move between these two audiences until you are sure how your body stands in front of each.

Instructions for Stage 2 - In the space between the two audiences, try to find the spot with the right angle where you are in tune with your gender and audience. Imagine what kind of audience can make you feel at home with your body. As you can find your ideal spot only through finding your ideal audience, be ready to answer our questions about your audience. (Do you know anyone in your audience? Are there children among them? etc. How do they look at you? Can you tell us about them?)

This session engages with three inter-connected critical concepts in two stages. The notions of gaze, gender, and audience are first explored in their conventional meanings and within the binaries. Secondly, these concepts are re-imagined in a new way according to their ideal versions for the person performing the session.

Our relationship with the audience is of paramount importance in performance. It is also important to explore one's encounter with the audience as it can be thought of vis-à-vis customers in sex work in the context of the workshops. In its operation in the session, the notion of audience is firmly linked with gender. This session encourages my collaborators to explore the intertwined relationship between
gender and performance in relation to gaze and audience. Judith Butler posits that visuality is not neutral but a "racially saturated field" (17). We can argue that visuality is also a sexually saturated field. Asking my collaborators to imagine an audience that can literally make them a man and another that makes them woman is based on the postulation that we always already are responding to the gaze, especially the male-gaze, in Laura Mulvey's words. By literally taking/making gender a mere effect of the audience's gaze on the performer, the task of this session is to estrange the concept of gender and end its governance in our minds as if it is inherently part of our identity. At the end of this session, it became apparent that we encode masculinity and femininity in implicit metaphorical schemas. Masculine sides are hard, rational, real, serious, and somewhat aggressive. Feminine sides are soft, emotional, unreal, frivolous, and fragile. Emotion and its open expression have long been associated with femininity and the corporeal. Because it reproduces these categorical divisions, the power of the gaze of the audience can arguably be overwhelming. However, as I will discuss, the second stage of the session gives the agency of the performer back to herself.

Elizabeth Grosz asserts that sexual difference exists only in virtuality "in and through a future anterior." This understanding of sexual difference speaks to the dramaturgy of this session as it argues that sexual difference is always in-the-making rather than being imposed:

All the work of sexual difference, its labour of producing alternative knowledge, methods, and criteria, has yet to begin. Sexual difference is entirely of the order of the surprise, the encounter with the new, which is why Irigaray invokes the emotion of "wonder" as its most sensible attribute; it is an event yet to occur, an event strangely out of time, for it does not yet have a
time; and it is clear that its time may never come (Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power 176).

Hence, if sexual difference is yet to occur, it is meaningful to invent one's own gender identity in the context of our workshops. In alignment with the view that sees subversion in performance in its ability to invoke utopias, the second stage of this session invites my collaborators to imagine their ideal audience. The feedback about the second part of this session shows that the diversity of experiences in the group enriched everyone's imagination in terms of what gender can look like when one is given a chance to re-imagine and re-embody it. As Merve states in the following:

Merve Akaydın, Istanbul Workshop, 2015: The “gender-bending gaze” exercise was the most interesting for me. It was nice how we could talk to our partners afterwards and tell of their work as well. We had the opportunity to see many different ideas and the different effects they had on everyone.52

Gasia's feedback about this session is particularly interesting as she shares a very intimate discovery about her gender. From the group discussions in the beginning of the workshop, I also know that Gasia did not associate herself with the woman-only atmosphere of the workshop. In this sense, this session seems to have given her the opportunity to articulate her personal reluctance in terms of categories of gender: "In performing the man-woman audience exercise, I once again saw that I do not feel like woman at all. Even though I think that it is a phase, this was a profound experience." Similarly, pushing the boundaries of comfort was a shared feedback of the Kelowna group. Kate, below, states that this session challenged her in a productive way:

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52 Kadın-erkek çalışması ilgincı oldu benim için sonrasında partnerlerimizle konuşup onların çalışmalarınmatlamanız da güzeldi bir çok değişik fikir ve herkesin üstünde yaratığışfarklıktıkları görmüşolduk.
Kate Janus, Kelowna Workshop, 2013: The ideal audience was also a very interesting part of the workshop. At first I wasn’t sure that I fully understood, but after a few different audiences and being different genders it became clear to me when and where I felt the most comfortable and the most uncomfortable. It was really helpful for me to try to push the boundaries of comfort.

Rüya, in her words below, mentions the challenge of dividing one's attention between two tasks, one observing one's own sensations and the other one actively imagining/inventing an ideal audience to react to:

Rüya Nesrin, Istanbul Workshop, 2014: I liked the changes that occurred in our bodies as we performed it. I was imagining the audience, and I was controlling my own feelings and my body. Therefore, it was a bit difficult, yet it was an exercise I could easily get into.

Rüya's remark is taken further by Evren Erbatur as she records the questions provoked in her during the session. She reflects on a series of binaries as well as the complex interaction between mind and body in the following lines:

Evren Erbatur, Istanbul Workshop, 2014: This session seemed important and valuable in the general context of the workshop. Especially with the ideal audience practice. It was about the binaries of looker-looked, constructed-constructer, watcher-watched. I realized once again that our decisions to take positions, forms and locations are shaped by the gaze. I realized how body and mind influence one another and mind is embodied, in what ways we house contradictions, but also differences. Even though the gaze makes me a woman or a man, what kind of man or woman was that? The ways in which body stands, eyes look, attitudes change in between two states of gender were
obvious. But am I still under the influence of the woman and the man shaped by my experiences?

As a result, embodying the gaze of the audience, reflecting its gendered dynamics again through bodily reactions enacted towards that gaze, and finally, daring to imagine an ideal audience/gaze made this session an opportunity to fire our imaginations about what a feminist performance practice and its politics of gaze would look like for us. Evren's following words define her own ideal audience experience, which I find informative in terms of showing the ways in which this session can be experienced:

Evren Erbatur, Istanbul Workshop, 2014: I found a state of balance in this session. An interesting middle point. A garden open to all people, with spectators from all ages, I am at the stage which is egg-shaped or a full circle. Both the spectator and my positionality was balanced and from different backgrounds. I was standing at a point which is acceptable for everyone. What kind of upsides can this spot have? Is it too safe? Without any risk? It also signifies a holistic peace, external and inner balance since this point necessitates a peaceful state for all. Accepting and being accepted open a space for expression.
5.5.5 Session 5: Seducing the Audience

Instruction: Appear in front of the group and try to seduce them for their attention.

This session was inspired and informed by a clown technique that I was introduced to in the workshops I attended in İstanbul. The ability to seduce an audience with no other instruction is a challenging and also rewarding characteristic of a funny clown personality. The clown is desperately dependent on the reaction she incites in the audience. In other words, she breathes only through the contact she maintains with the audience. This relationship, then, necessitates seducing the audience. The question of how to seduce one's own audience is extremely personal and intimate as everybody is radically unique. It is at this point where I deliberately choose the word "seduction" in order to facilitate this session. Seduction has
immediate associations of femininity, prostitution, feigned affection, or sexuality. However, this session gives seduction its subversive power back through making its kinship with performance explicit within the audience-performer relationship. Ironically enough, the techniques and tricks of seduction are not to be invented from scratch but are waiting to be discovered as we are already always embodying them in our manners of engaging with the world around us. This is to mean, the very first principle both to be funny as a clown or seductive as a performer is to be radically in tune with all the flaws, awkwardness, and insecurities we have. Seduction, according to Jean Baudrillard, "exists on the surface, denying absolute anchors in meaning and self-definition" (12) in contrast to "absolute, unwavering and orderly" things such as sex and capital. This, when applied to performance, means not to be dependent on any causality or representational logics for the sake of any kind of realism in front of the audience.

This session requires my collaborators to be in front of the rest of the group one by one. I invite the queued person to confront the rest of the group and seduce them, while I encourage the group to behave as a difficult audience who is not easily satisfied and teases the performer by interrupting her with questions, commentary, and audible reactions. The person who confronts the audience can perform something, tell a joke, or just react back to the audience. She needs to seduce the audience in order to have their full attention and please them. Some collaborators asked the audience members what they wanted to see and negotiated the desired performance with them in their own way. One example that fascinated the whole group was the response of a performer who was asked to take off her clothes. She approached the audience member who made the request, looked her in the eyes, and whispered (loud enough for everyone to hear): “Now, as you look at me, I am taking
my pants, you see? My panties are red. I am taking off them, too.” This performance was seductive enough for everyone as the performer perfectly demonstrated that it is actually a matter of belief that operates at the heart of performance and the usually realist bedrock of this belief is remarkably fragile. According to Roland Barthes, the logic of striptease hinges upon the assumption of nakedness as a vesture that "naturally" belongs to woman:

The end of the striptease is then no longer to drag into the light a hidden depth, but to signify, through the shedding of an incongruous and artificial clothing, nakedness as a natural vesture of woman, which amounts in the end to regaining a perfectly chaste state of the flesh. (45)

Along these lines, one can argue that Ceren, by using words to perform a striptease, actually rejected the very logic of striptease, which assumes nakedness of a female body as the ultimate object of audience desire.

On a different remark, this session brings forward the gender-related conventions, presumptions, and habits of flirting. Rüya's testimony below addresses the differing dimensions of seduction for non-heterosexual women:

Rüya Nesrin Kılınçkını, Istanbul Workshop, 2014: There was something like a confrontation. When you like someone, how do you seduce them, how do you flirt... Seduction is in fact a form of flirting. It’s only a higher dose, greater in magnitude, in a way. I noticed that I’m bewildered at such times. Of course, it’s different for everyone. And when everyone tries it, it becomes apparent that everyone has different tendencies and approaches. Homosexual women, bisexuals, lesbians, they’re all different.
Rüya also talks about how she was challenged as a seducer rather than as the one who is seduced. She mentions that she had to lose her sense of confidence when it is her turn to seduce, even though she would imagine herself to be "cooler":

To be honest, I was slightly upset to see myself like that. I expected myself to act cooler... That’s not how it turned out to be. When you’re being seduced, a bit of indifference brings you an advantage. Your ego is caressed. I could not enact that feeling inside me while seducing; yet when I want to seduce, I can predict how it has to be. It’s rather difficult to seduce the audience in front of me.

Evren Erbatur’s reflection on this session proves her careful dramaturg’s eye as she draws parallels between the performer and the seducer, which can be read in reference to the long history of the anti-theatrical prejudice that relies on the suspicious assumption that the actor lacks authenticity:

Evren Erbatur, Istanbul Workshop, 2014: I am not exactly sure whether or not I seduced the audience. But this session was extremely helpful for my persona. Seduction does not have to be just sexual or erotic. Where should I look for the potentials to seduce someone? How can you make someone be attached to you? Eventually, isn’t attention something you have to buy? Isn’t it the case with acting, too? You have to gather the attention of the spectator in your hands so that they won’t get bored, they will stay tuned, love you, want to come back and watch you again. What is more they will agree to pay for it!

Wow, I can now see that this very helpful part of the workshop was not addressed enough during our conversations.

This session was not received in the same way by everyone. In particular, members of the group who had not experienced being in front of an audience before
felt a little bit uneasy in the beginning. On the other hand, the fact that those who had audience experience also had to step out of their safety zone (through confronting audience interruption) ensured an atmosphere where everybody was equally challenged in terms of exposure and vulnerability.

Figure 7: Images from the Seducing the Audience session

*(Left)* Gökçe Deniz Balkan and Burcu Eken
*(Right)* Mimar Sinan University group

5.5.6 Session 6: Affective Labour of Intimacy

Instructions: Find a partner. You and your partner, by turns, will be in a customer-provider relationship. The material of exchange will be personal services. Money is not involved. You are free to decide what you would like to provide as well as what you are looking for when you approach to a provider. Negotiate all the details with your partner. What they ask from you, what you can offer to them, how long time you are going to spend together, what exactly your partner wants to get with your service (Releasing emotional tension? Having a good company? Learning something specific from you?)
When you talk thoroughly about the conditions and agree on your exchange and its value, switch roles.

Performing can be considered a form of immaterial labour that “produces or manipulates affects” (Negri 108). Drawing on the strands of affective labour theories, this session explores the notion of value and labour in relation to interpersonal interactions. More specifically, the idea that gave birth to this session departs from the affective labour commonly shared by sex work and performance. This shared labour is often the feminized labour of care, listening, responding, and understanding. It is built upon a promise of having smooth and pleasurable time together. Brewis et al. defines the prostitute-client encounter as an \textit{empty space} where "both participants attempt to inscribe in some way, and within which the incommensurabilities between the different selves at play produce, whether implicitly or explicitly, a struggle to be able to control time within the interaction" (285). Involving at least two parties in their execution, both sex work and performance entail minimum skills to communicate the particularities of each encounter either implicitly or explicitly within a limited period of time. These intangible aspects of work are not usually subject to any value-measurement. They are fugitive and usually pass as \textit{natural} capabilities of women. The sides in performance can be encapsulated in the couple of audience-performer, even though the audience does not need to be present all the time. The sides in sex work include the sex worker and the customer. Both the customer in sex work and the audience in performance are endowed with their desire to be entertained and pleased. From the side of the performer and the sex worker, what matters is a fair sense of control in the setting of the "show" (be it a performance or sexual contact) so that they can maintain minimum conditions of safety for themselves. This session aims to make these implicitly managed qualities of
physical encounters, both in sex work and in performance, visible. In this fashion, I encourage my collaborators to recognize the contours of their personal boundaries as well as their habitual reflexes in an encounter as such. I invite them to actively reflect on their availability to another person on emotional, affective, and inter-subjective layers of interaction. This also means reflecting on their capabilities. Spinoza's question of what a body can do, here, changes into what a person can offer or demand. Put in different words, the scope of responses we can give another person on the level of affect is at the center of this session. The services are not meant to be performed during the workshop but only to be agreed upon. In this sense, the services two parties discuss with each other are imaginary and can extend the time and space of the workshop. It is the performance of negotiation that occurs during the workshop. This is reflected in the variety of services my collaborators came up with, such as giving/receiving massages, spending a relaxing day together in the woods, storytelling, reading poems in exchange for kissing, escorting one another at hot-springs hotel, etc. For example, the following was one of the deals:

Gülsüm will dance for Özlem in exchange for a poem Özlem will read for Gülsüm. Gülsüm's dance is an exotic and erotic dance. It will take place in Gülsüm's place which is a forest house on the street called "Street of Snakes". Gülsüm will not provide any kind of sexual service.

Some services that my collaborators came up with included sexual services like "fucking in a dirty toilet of a bar":

Özlem provides service for Rüya. They will first fuck in a dirty toilet of a bar and then go and sleep at Özlem's place. Rüya will pay $250 to Özlem. They will sleep naked.
This example failed not to use money in exchange of personal service. Even though the instruction not to use money as a tool of exchange was emphasized by me, the coupling of sex with money came into play. While some agreed services were detailed as above, others were not specific in any way. In the following example, partners only decide on how much time they will spend together:

Rüya and Damla provide service for Ceren. Ceren wants to spend 24 hours with them. They will decide to have sex or not during their time together.

Ceren gives service for Damla and Rüya: She will striptease for them. She will also be their naked jongleur.

I think that the stereotypical gender roles between a prostitute and her client might have haunted the session and slightly shaped the relationship between partners. Yet, the detail that challenged this structure was that the session was not suggesting my collaborators be in a sex worker-client relationship, nor asking them to exchange just sexual services. Based on these examples and my general observation regarding this session, it is noteworthy that women did not choose to switch genders when they were negotiating their services with one another. Negotiations happened between women although the way a woman associates herself with the spectrum of gender varies enormously as my session on gaze and gender demonstrated. In this case, one of the conclusive discussions regarding this session is that the heteronormative connotations and habits of flirting/negotiating personal and affective needs were challenged in a playful and stimulating way.

Another point that deserves to be underlined is the satisfying feeling of being treated by another person. This feeling is often not experienced by women as they internalize the duty of taking care of others more than being taken care of. This was
mentioned as a gift of the session by some collaborators. Ceren, in her following words, states this:

Ceren Taşçı, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: I found all the exercises helpful for a performer. What helped me most on the way to forming personas was the task of providing/ receiving service. Roughly speaking, it was nice to see myself in a state of selling something, or myself, seeing the methods I use and discovering the limits I could reach. And as the recipient of service, I had the occasion of thinking of what I want, through what the person I’m facing is affecting me and how I’m persuaded, and possibly using the outcome in the context of performance.53

At the end of the session, everybody had the opportunity to listen to what the partners agreed upon. Each couple gives a brief summary of their negotiations and agreed-upon services. This also leads to a group chat on the impressions and experiences of the collaborators about the session. As a result, everybody gets to hear personal stories about each other, which creates a sense of intimacy among collaborators.

As a result, through this experience, the workshop experience becomes simultaneously individualized and collective for each collaborator as personal tastes, boundaries, hesitations, desires, and attitudes come into play and get shared. This way, hopefully, my collaborators use their opportunity to explore what it looks like for them/their prostitute-persona to make concessions without being too dependent, balance oneself between flexibility and firmness when it comes to negotiating

personal boundaries of affective labour, and come to a mutually arrived agreement to share a time/space that is quite intimate and personal. They experiment with the questions of what trust means for them, what happens if they get too intimate with someone else, how they express themselves when they are offended, disturbed, or enjoyed by another person's demands, attitude, and questions. Ultimately, this session informs the prostitute-persona in the sense that it activates and devises her potential working principles.

Figure 8: Images from the Affective Labour session

5.5.7 Session 7: Collective Memory

Your perception, however instantaneous, consists then in an incalculable multitude of remembered elements; in truth, every perception is already memory. Practically, we perceive only the past, the pure present being the invisible progress of the past gnawing into the future.

Bergson (150)
One thing I learned through working with the body is that you can’t think of it in terms of an object. I’m not interested in body as a sculptural thing at all. The body is not just there in relation to other things and to other physical spaces. The body is there in relation to memory, to all kinds of learning processes. There are all sorts of interconnections and connotations.

Acconci (quoted in Kaye 160)

Instruction: You see a paper on the wall. We are going to brainstorm and think out loud about what comes to our minds when we think of prostitute. We are going to write the words to the paper on the wall.

One of the challenges with the topic of sex work/prostitution is that its accompanying connotations and implications are hugely loaded with hard-boiled ideological constructions. In my workshops, too, I underline the fact that every time I use the word “prostitution” I mean all cultural and political mythologies attached to the concept of prostitute. All of these theoretical and practical approaches deconstructed the notion of prostitution in one way or another and emphasized its intertwined relation with memory on many levels. Our societal and cultural legacies on work, sexuality, and prostitution play a paramount role in the formation of these memories. These connotations, once fleshed out, disclose how the prostitute functions as a myth in popular culture as well as in cultural memory. In order to highlight these collective mnemonic functionalities of the notion of prostitution, I invite my collaborators to brainstorm on the associations of prostitution and write down the words that come out onto a large piece of paper. In this way, we develop a conceptual map of associations. It became evident from looking at these maps that
the figure of the prostitute functions like a myth in our memories. If we take myth as a “meta-language,” as Roland Barthes asserts, we can see that this system of myth also "enables the language to speak of itself" (32).

In this way, each workshop group gains an insight into what the members of the group share as a result of cultural and political backgrounds. The results were mostly entertaining as the cultural references to movies, books, popular media, and history evoked a strong feeling of familiarity and belonging to a certain cultural legacy, which was followed by a sense of freedom from these references as well. (Taylor) The experience of collective remembering renders the workshop experience more tangible, collective, and collaborative for everyone.

Figure 9: Images from the Collective Memory sessions

5.5.8 Session 8: Historical Prostitute Figures

In this session, I bring pictures and stories of historical or/and famous prostitute profiles to the workshop and ask my participants to pick intuitively one of the profiles without giving too much thought to it (The list of characters can be seen in Appendix D). Before everybody picks their character, we all have a conversation about all the characters. This conversation gives everybody an idea of the diversity of the characters. Their diversity reflects the diversity of historical periods, occupation, type of clients, working conditions, cultural stigma, sexual fantasies, desires, and
spaces where commercial sex takes place. A common question that is addressed with regard to this session is whether or not I am suggesting that they imitate the character of their choice. I respond that I do not expect them to imitate/perform the character they picked. Rather, they are encouraged to initiate some kind of dialogue with the character and engage with her in their own way as they create their performance at the end of the workshop.

The stories of the prostitutes always sparked the attention of my collaborators. In Evren Erbatur's words, "the characters from history seemed to me as super heroines." Some stories do not really fit into a definition of prostitution while others draw a completely different picture of what sex work is. The figures usually were strong characters who at least found a place in history. For instance, in the context of Turkey, the story of an Ottoman citizen stood out as a very interesting case. This woman, Fatma, has tattoos on her arms displaying the names of her lovers and this detail always gained the empathy of my collaborators.

5.5.9  **Prostitute-Persona Examples and Conclusions**

Every collaborator devises short performances that are enacted through their prostitute-personas in the last session of the workshop. They explore, craft, and give body to their personas by using their personal notes, group conversations, the figure they picked from the pile of historical prostitute figures, the list/map of words that came out of collective associative recollections of prostitution, and other materials they engaged with during the workshops. Also, everyone brings some objects and props to this session to be used in the performances. The objects are gathered together and open for everyone to access. For forty-five minutes/one hour all collaborators work on their own performance piece. The performance to be shared with the group does not have to be composed of a series of movements or physical
scores. It can come with a variety of styles and formats ranging from characterization to performance art, from poetry to stand-up, from dance to storytelling.

The dramaturgy of the workshops centered around confounding and resisting socially prescriptive terms of prostitution, yet utilizing the practical knowledge coming from our embodied critical reflections on sex work, labour, seduction, gaze, gender, and erotica. The subversive power of owning the word "prostitute" or "slut" in the woman-only environment of my workshops is understandably the first engagement one can think of as a feminist. In practice, though, working with a heavily loaded phenomenon such as prostitution as a source of devising performer-personas brings its own handicaps and drawbacks. Roland Barthes, in his book *Mythologies*, claims that myth has the power to always "signify the resistance which is brought to bear against it" (3). Similarly, the political or artistic gesture of owning the term or figure of the prostitute can immediately be co-opted by the project itself. The politics of reclaiming sluthood (Easton) has been critiqued on parallel grounds, for reproducing the insult that the word *slut* means, especially for women of colour and lower-class women.54 From a similar standpoint with this critique, I encountered a similar resistance to the word *orospu* in Turkish and *slut* in English from some women in my workshops. One of my collaborators in the Kelowna workshop stated that she found it painful to utter the word *slut* out loud in the beginning, even though that was not the case for her later on. In one of my workshops in Istanbul, one of my collaborators remarked that the word *orospu* (*slut* in Turkish) was a strong word for her to reconcile because it reminds her of her father's aggressive attitude towards her

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way of life. Therefore, reclamation of sluthood falls short for an embodied practice where our attitudes around the issue of prostitution and sluthood are not always black and white, as expressed in the following, stated by Evren Erbatur:

Evren Erbatur, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: For a performer, this is a very liberating space. Everything is possible but of course, what is this everything? I think theatre has seen enough of prostitute cliché. Mini-skirt, garter, boots with heels, messy hair, fishnet stocking, shiny lipstick, flat speech...No, no. One has to come to an understanding that there is a personality of the prostitute. This is what I realized in this workshop, research. When we say persona, it means an in-depth understanding of identity, its local and global histories, culture and mentality shaped by all of these.

![Image of Evren Erbatur's performance](image)

**Figure 10:** An image from Evren Erbatur’s devised performance

Reflecting on the outcomes of the workshops manifested in the prostitute-personas of my collaborators, I suggest that the labour of dealing with this
complexity of the question at hand concurs with José Esteban Muñoz's articulation of disidentification, a survival strategy for artists from marginalized groups to navigate themselves in the hegemonic culture. For Muñoz, disidentification differs from two other ways of adapting to hegemonic hetero-normative culture, which are counter-identification and assimilation/identification. For him, both assimilation and counter-identification replicate the hierarchical relationship between minority and majority, notwithstanding the reversal of their places in the order. Disidentification bears no desire to fit into a category of identity nor taking a counter position that speaks back to the mainstream. In Muñoz's words:

It neither opts to assimilate within such a structure nor strictly opposes it; rather, disidentification is a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology. ... This 'working on and against' is a strategy that tries to transform a cultural logic from within, always labouring to enact permanent structural change while at the same time valuing the importance of everyday struggles of resistance. (11-12)

Muñoz imagines disidentification as a mode of performance that deliberately "captures, collects, and brings into play various theories of fragmentation" (31). The prostitute-persona workshops aim to open the space for this kind of collection and capturing of different manifestations of the figure of the prostitute. The figure of the prostitute serves as a channel that discloses the ways in which women manage their identities and counter-identities (as not-prostitute) on many layers from social life to personal realms. When the codes of hegemonic ideology are traced in the collective and personal memories of women, the prostitute appears as victim, a typical dress code, a fatal attraction, a diseased body, an aggressive trans-woman, a disposable commodity, or rarely powerful legendary figure. Adding full-blooded personalities of
sex workers, performers, and activists to the picture makes the figure of the prostitute more nuanced instead of a universal type, standing (truly or falsely) for a stereotype. Hence, the complexity of the topic at hand calls for a close study of one's own counter-identification with prostitution on many levels, in particular labour, sexuality, whore stigma, and gender. In Muñoz’s words, once again:

A mode of performance whereby a toxic identity is remade and infiltrated by subjects who have been hailed by such identity categories but have not been able to own such a label. Disidentification is therefore about the management of an identity that has been "spoiled" in the majoritarian public sphere. This management is a critical negotiation in which subject who has been hailed by injurious speech, a name or a label, reterritorializes that speech act and the marking that such a speech act produces to a self. (185)

In the context of the workshops, I hope, this sort of critical and embodied negotiation to manage our fragile relationship with prostitution can occur during/through the workshop process in the creation of a persona. This process can be seen as a meeting taking place between "I am not a prostitute" and "I am a prostitute" as an embodied statement. From a similar standpoint, Richard Schechner discusses "the way in which ‘me’ and ‘not me,’ the performer and the thing to be performed, are transformed into ‘not me .... not not me’ through the workshop-rehearsal/ritual process" (Between Theatre and Anthropology 111-112). For this process to happen, the figure of the prostitute that is "spoiled," not only in the public sphere but also in the psyche of each woman, first needs to be recognized, which is the purpose of the practice sessions and group conversations as I discussed in the previous sections in this chapter. This process is also a personal process of confronting the fact that the prostitute as such does not exist. She is always a product of
material conditions blended with personal stories. Next (or at the same time), the prostitute-persona needs to be devised and crafted. According to Rebecca Schneider, the feminist performance artists who converge their sex work identities with their artistic works act like dialectical images that "loudly voice their own interpretations" (36) as they are materialist philosophers and sex commodities at once. Echoing Schneider's thoughts, the devised pieces during the workshops demonstrated that once such subversive potential is discovered and unleashed, the theme of prostitution provides the performer with her own politics of performance. Schneider continues with what these dialectical images spoil:

Put another way, these dialectical images bear dialects of their own, coming out with their secret(ion)s and making a mess across a number of high holy divides—not only the divide between art and porn, reality and fantasy, desiring and desired, but perhaps even more compellingly the divide between theorized and practiced, historian and historicized, materialist and materialized. (108)

In parallel, the following words of Gökçe, one of my collaborators, reveal how the deliberate performance of prostitution wakes one's consciousness in relation to the psychic workings of power in our lives:

Gökçe Deniz Balkan, Istanbul Workshop, 2014: For me, the idea of willingly selling my body to another person is liberating. I believe that our bodies are already sold and abused and misrepresented starting from the moment we were born. By consciously objectifying my body I experience this "power" which operates at a subtle level in everyday life in a way that I can grasp, observe and see. An act of thinking, a moment of intense reflection on power
and the ways in which it operates bodily, sensually, mentally and in relation with "others."

Gökçe's feedback actually defines what I call, “the prostitution effect,” by addressing the need to articulate the commodification and fetishization of the female body in everyday life. This space opened up through prostitute persona is empowering for similar reasons for Evren as well:

Evren Erbatur, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: The space that opens with the prostitute persona is subversive, and cleaned off prejudices and assumptions that we learned about prostitutes and conditioned to believe. The prostitute speaks her mind in this space. She is there, in-your-face. Like the brave messenger of a history who cannot be commodified. She is present and demands our attention.

Figure 11: An image of Şebnem Nazlı Karalı during the Seducing the Audience session

The performances at the end of the workshops reflected the multi-faceted relation between prostitution and performance. Firstly, the powerful, positive, and
empowering traits such as being in control of one's life, high self-confidence, and assertiveness were taken to devise their personas by my collaborators. This is a remarkable conclusion as the predominant image of the prostitute is fraught with victimhood, dirt, disease, poverty, and addiction. Many women associated positive traits with the properties that they always aimed for in their artistic endeavors as well. Aslı İşıltan, for instance, talks about this overlap in the following lines:

Aslı İşıltan, Istanbul Workshop, 2013: My persona performance showed me that the sweetest thing about prostitution is the comfort, the openness. That comfort is also beneficial to actors on the scene. This workshop was a door opening to that comfort. Even the most suffering of prostitutes has some independence. You feel more at ease, as you get rid of questions like “what will I say? will I disgrace myself?”

The convergence does not occur only between the performing self and the prostitute self, but apparently between the prostitute self and the idealized version of one's self as well. Some women mentioned that they realized the best version of themselves through their prostitute-persona. In this sense, the prostitute-personas serve as a springboard to speak one's own mind. The type of sex work one wants to pursue, then, turns out to emulate the ideal conditions in which the person can realize her potentials to the fullest. Mifa describes this in the following way:

Mifa Suzuki, Kelowna Workshop, 2013: I wanted to be a person that can make other people happy and myself satisfied. I am strong and independent and I want to be caring. That is the ideal sex worker I created. Strong and confident. We could see it in her posture and her gleaming eye that she won’t

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55Fahişeliğin en tatlıgelen kısmı rahatlığı, açıklığı. O rahatlık sahne üzerindeki oyuncu için de faydaholur.” Bu çalışma yani o rahatsızı açılan bir kap doluyor. En mağdur fahişede bile illa ki bir bağımsızlık var. “Ne diyeceğim, rezil olur muyum olmaz muyum sorgulamalarından kurtulduğunu için kendini daha rahat hissediyorsun.
break down that easily. This persona was someone I always dreamt of becoming and she has been slowly developing ever since I wished for her strength, ever since I wished for more power to say what I need to say so, it wasn't much of surprise how I finally produced her.

Mifa openly states that her ideal persona comes close to her ideal self as a strong woman. Similarly, Melisa notes that she found her prostitute persona to be her perfect self-image. Her insight also implies her coming to terms with the lack of knowledge she had about prostitution, which is exactly pertinent to the aims of the workshop:

Melisa Hernandez-Paccagnella, Kelowna Workshop, 2013: During the workshop when we were asked to create our sex worker persona, I realized that I was describing a perfect version of myself. I don’t think there is enough education for girls/women about what is involved in being a sex worker, why people choose that profession, and why it shouldn’t really be a big taboo subject for people who do choose that profession.

Kate Janus, along similar lines, comments on her persona through reflecting her affinities to her own personality. She says that she could not have come up with this persona unless she carried the prostitute-persona's aspects in her. This remark Kate makes is especially important in terms of addressing the peace that she made with the topic, which was a cold and distant topic for her in the beginning:

Kate Janus, Kelowna Workshop, 2013: My persona was a woman that meets with a sort of suitors or clients. That is a kind of companion for them. I have the power to choose who I want to be with and who I can say no to. I am open to different desires and needs that they might have and try to accommodate those as often as possible. I definitely feel that I would carry the
power and have control of what is going on at all times. I would have a welcoming and relaxing space that would be meant to feel comfortable. I would be open to men and women, married or not. I’m not sure if she was already in me or not. I have wondered before what it might be like, and what drives women to do what they do, and who. I feel like this persona would have a lot of my qualities in her and be cautious about who I choose and why and what I would do for them. I’m sure though that there are aspects of her in me because otherwise I don’t think I would have been able to come up with her.

Figure 12: An image from Melisa Hernandez-Paccagnella’s devised performance

Another pattern in the devised performances was the appearance of historical figures as characters. Şebnem Nazlı Karalı created a Greek prostitute character who lived in İstanbul in the 1920s. She said that she chose this character because of her own family roots in Greece. In her words:

Şebnem Nazlı Karalı, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: I’m a girl of Greek origin. I need to sell myself to make a living. I’m tired of it, but not too bothered. I
speak with an accent. My customers like that. And I’m here to tell you the story of my life. I live in Beyoğlu.56

Figure 13: An image from Sebnem Nazlı Karalı’s devised performance

Şebnem's performance, as can be deduced from the pictures, had a heightened sense of dramatic characterization. She had an accent to her speech and carefully chosen costumes with bright colors. Hers was the most theatrical prostitute persona devised. Another woman who embodied a historical figure in her devised performance was Rüya Nesrin Kılınçkını. Rüya's performance was inspired by the historical prostitute

figure she picked in the Session 8, Ms. Lulu. As a musician herself, Rüya saw a detail that links her persona with one of her favorite jazz singers:

Rüya Nesrin, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: I felt an affinity for her as she was a prostitute from New Orleans. Because back in that time, jazz music was born in the night clubs of New Orleans. Many pianists used to play in brothels; many musicians came out of brothels. That’s the reason. And I like that time, the nostalgia of that time. With reactions from the audience, I felt “this must have been good, it was well received.” But I wasn’t sure what exactly she wanted to do, why she gave such answers. With the reactions, I felt good...Arrogant, reckless, witty, and most giving...

Figure 14: An image from Rüya Nesrin Kılınçkınlı’s devised performance

In the last session, Nehir Eroğlu chose to read the story she wrote during the workshop. The story is based on an intimate experience of her with a man. In the story, she reflects on the unspoken details of emotional and sexual labour in an affective relationship. Considering the labour in sex work explicitly for the first time,
she told us, made her rethink this past experience in a different light. The emotions she thought she owed the man in their relationship were in fact what she was made to believe were the duties of a woman in a heterosexual relationship. The invisible and unspoken details of the sexual contract (as Carol Pateman discusses in her book, *The Sexual Contract*) that govern the dynamics of heterosexual relationships, predominantly based on the duty of women to fulfill men's desires, became apparent to Nehir through the story she wrote in the workshop.

![An image from Nehir Eroglu’s devised performance](image)

**Figure 15: An image from Nehir Eroglu’s devised performance**

There was also a queer sensibility to some performances. In her utopian performance, Damla imagined a world only with women where she would be able to live her perfect version of life. She matched many qualities of her women’s utopia with the prostitute-persona:

Damla Gürkan, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: The persona I created turned out to be something I wasn’t expecting myself, but the connection it had with me
wasn’t surprising. First of all, it was a very energetic and spontaneous character, which probably signified a resistance to what would come out, and then there was a downturn... I thought of a house, in which we could live as we liked, that would provide an environment of freedom to prostitute women (whatever that means) ... Where they could prostitute as they liked? I thought of myself only as a lover to these women. There were no men in this world.  

Figure 16: An image from Damla Gürkan’s devised performance

Another example to the queer element in the prostitute personas came from Gasia Papazyan. Her persona, also matching her self-image, does not conform to gender norms at all:

Gasia Papazyan, İstanbul Workshop, 2015: Sexless, and very much content with that. At peace with herself. A character that doesn't fit into the world. But she needs more courage, to better establish her identity. She could have been performed much better.  

Figure 17: An image from Gasia Papazyan's devised performance

Animating prostitute-related objects in the performances was another way some of my collaborators devised their performances. Gülsün Odabaş used a mini-sculpture of a human head and spoke to her during her performance. She notes, below, that only this way she could speak up for herself:

Gülsün Odabaş, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: My persona was an outcast. A persona that has taken up a mascot and voices all her objections over it.  

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59Toplum tarafından dışlanan biri.kendine bir maskot edinmişbütün itirazlarınıonun üzerinden dillendiren bir persona.
Figure 18: An image from Gülsün Odabas’ devised performance

Gülsün's sculpture in the performance stood for a partner to whom she could complain about things in relation to her unfulfilled fantasies, desires, and confusions. When she asked the mascot why he did not teach her things like women's sexuality, she received good laughter from the audience. Gülsün, coming from a traditional acting education, used the most familiar method (characterization) to enact her new persona.

Another performance exemplifying the discovery of the persona in the making of the performance also relied on the use of an object. In her statement below, Ceren eloquently describes her creative process that led to her persona:

Ceren Taşçı, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: Looking back at my notes, I noticed that most of what I wrote on the erotic and prostitution was redundant, or similar. The erotic, for me, was the inaccessible and the distant, and at first, I made use of that in my persona. After choosing Sada Abe, I can say I noticed that things I saw as distant to myself were in fact deep inside me, and I fell
right into them. Power, potency, fearlessness... The state of acting is very close to my heart, and it's a state of discovering the limits and transgressing them...

Trust was important for my persona, as it is for me, and so is death, which I'm always close to, which appears right under my nose, whose smell I always breathe and am strengthened by, was also part of the fiction that my persona set up. The life of my persona depended on a candle staying lit.  

Ceren's performance can be seen as a self-referential performance because of the role she attributed to the candle. The duration of the performance being strictly dependent on the duration of the candle staying lit immediately made the performance a live act. In addition, Ceren wanted her audience to promise that they wouldn't tell anyone what they heard on the stage that day. This promise also rendered her performance quite intimate and performative. Another collaborator, Zinnure Türe,
used her own object she brought to the workshop to create her persona, which was a night dress belonging to her mother. Her performance was moving to watch as she animated the night dress, through the movement of a hat held over the dress. Her neutral face throughout the act seemed to be the face of a puppeteer, which created an uncanny feeling for the audience as we knew that this was an intimate object. Zinnure's piece demonstrated the tension of mother-daughter relationship which resonates with my narrative about my mother discussed at the beginning of Chapter 3 (pp. 31).

Figure 20: Images from devised performances
Zinnure Türe (Left) and Sultan Ulutas (Right)
Gökçe Deniz Balkan's performance (in the Figure above) is the most transgressive one and closest to Munoz's performance strategy of *disidentification* in terms of its rejection of any kind of framing of her presence. The only bond between her and us, the audience, besides her written personal manifesto is her reacting back to our reactions. As can be seen in the picture above, Gökçe held a dildo in one hand and a sheet of paper in the other. One of her breasts was out of her t-shirt. She wore stockings underneath, but nothing else. Her physical presence had no readily-available codes to itself. It was incomplete, half-naked, erotic, parody-ridden and casual all at once. In his articulation of performance taking place in the "not me .... not not me," Schechner puts forward the idea that the performer is always caught up in the impossible desire to include all to the field of "between" (between performers, texts, audience) that is invented through the performance, or, as Schechner borrows from Victor Turner, the *antistructure*. He concludes that "the field is the embodiment
of potential, of the virtual, the imaginative, the fictive, the negative, the not not. The larger it gets, the more it thrills, but the more doubt and anxiety it evokes, too" (113). On similar grounds, through her performance, Gökçe makes this field of between visible and precarious at the threshold of collapse. Victor Turner's conclusive remarks in his book, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, defines this area with its openness to risks:

We have to go into the subjunctive world of monsters, demons, and clowns, of cruelty and poetry, in order to make sense of our lives, earning our daily bread. And when we enter whatever theatre our lives allow us, we have already learned how strange and many-layered everyday life is, how extraordinary the ordinary. We then no longer need in Auden's terms the 'endless safety' of ideologies but prize the 'needless risk' of acting and interacting." (122)
Evren Erbatur devised a persona (as in the figures above) by making use of the shared properties of dramaturgy and sex work, which turned out to be a clown-like tailor. In her own words:

Evren Erbatur, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: I found a personal connection with the workshop, which was the tailoring. I wanted to relate the nature of my work as a dramaturg in real life to my potential prostitute-persona. My performance, in this sense, turned out to be interesting and helpful. My motive in this performance was to be able to grasp one of the questions of the workshop practically and mentally. To better understand the essence of a commodity that has an exchange value in the context of the art of performance. The place of my labour in the general context of performance seemed to me important to ponder about.
The way Evren developed her own persona gives me insights about how I can guide my collaborators towards the devising of their persona in a better way. The connection between one's occupation or most involved labour type in social life and the labour in the prostitute-persona can be emphasized in the beginning of the session. This might give a good idea on where to start devising one's persona. Also, Evren's persona, as she mentions below, differs from her regular performance tone. Her reflection informs me about how the process of workshop generated a new practice for her:

Evren Erbatur, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: I had a clown-like funny persona. She is clumsy yet pretend otherwise. She drools on purpose, she is sexy and hilarious. When I improvise for my projects I usually have dark, sad and tense performer personas. So I wanted to work on a comical character at this workshop. There were coincidences that brought me to this persona, too. A colourful suspender and a wooden folding screen, for instance.

Based on the feedback from my collaborators, most of them had a positive workshop experience. In the last workshop that was held in Mimar Sinan University Dance Department, Gasia Papazyan and Nehir Eroğlu stressed that they have never experienced that much feminine energy in a workshop space before, even though the faculty and students in their department are predominantly female. When I inquired about what they meant by 'feminine energy,' they said that it was the deliberate woman-exclusive nature of the group that made the experience unique for them. Their feedback was also eye-opening for me, as I had not engaged with modern dance students before in a similar context. It made me think about the changing interpretations and reception of feminist discussions among different groups in Turkey. Damla used the term "welcoming" to define her feeling about the
atmosphere of the workshop and highlighted her contentment with participants having had enough time to pace their own rhythm during the sessions:

Damla Gürkan, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: There was a very welcoming and suitable rhythm of the workshop for me. It was great that we did not rush ourselves for anything and could be on our own pace.

Differing from Damla’s experience, Ceren thought that there was not enough time to explore at one’s own pace during the sessions:

Ceren Taşçı, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: I certainly think that the workshop should last longer. There is no exercise that I did not enjoy. On the contrary, I would suggest to take more time on some of them next time. If we have more exercises and improvisations, it might be easier for people to get into doing things and own them. In this way, there can be an authentic experience of understanding.

Figure 23: An image from Özlem Aslan’s devised performance
Some of my collaborators carried their workshop experience onto their future works. Zinnure Türe stated in one of our after-workshop meetings that she applied the erotic touch session in one of her performances. Similarly, Şebnem used her prostitute-persona as a pivot figure to develop in her other projects:

Şebnem Nazlı Karalı, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: Gender, Sexuality and their obligatory performance in the society have always attracted me. I made use of some of the experiences I gained in the workshop. The Prostitute-persona session has provided me a lot of ideas which I acted out on the stage. I had role as a transsexual in the play 90’larda Lubunya Olmak (Being LGBT in the 1990s) by Mekan Artı for a year. Seducing the Audience session served me well in that play as in my graduation performance.

Both Rüya Nesrin Kılınçkını and Evren Erbatur stated that my instructions were at times too vague. They suggested that I should be more direct and assertive in my attitude as a facilitator. In Rüya's words:

Rüya Nesrin Kılınçkını, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: You were very gentle, you left too much to us. There was a feeling that you didn't know what to do, and you would figure out what to do depending on us. If you approach it like “you will do this, and I want this,” it would be motivating, and that’s what participants want: they want to let go. When you leave them too much to their own, participants end up not feeling confident. It would be nicer if you had an attitude like “I will now show you something, which you haven’t seen anywhere else...” And it would be impressive if you revealed to us your own prostitute persona while doing that.

Evren Erbatur, İstanbul Workshop, 2014: I think we could have been guided more in general. At the end of each session, we could have talked about how
sessions are linked with each other and where they stand in the general plan of the workshop. We could have had conversations on our personal notes.

These remarks address my limitations as a researcher-facilitator throughout the process of designing and conducting the workshops. Even though the title highlights the "research" aspect of my workshops, and I had the general instructions before the practice sessions, my instructions have never been as clear as they appear in this chapter as they were in-the-making throughout the workshops. Now, I can say that my flexible and research-centered attitude during the sessions sometimes elicited feelings of confusion, vagueness, or hesitation on my collaborators' part. This feedback is valuable not only because it addresses the incongruity between my perspective as a researcher and others' perspectives as the subjects of practice, but also because it reveals a more fundamental lack in the whole process of workshops: the absence of my prostitute-persona as mentioned by Rüya Kılınçkını above. In order to act upon this missing aspect of my own process, I started to devise my prostitute-persona in the last workshop I held at the Mimar Sinan University’s Dance department.

Figure 24: An image from Ö zgül Akıncı’s devised performance
Based on the images I had in my mind that day, I worked on my appearance for a while. For instance, I played with the idea of having a prosthetic leg through skinning my leggings. The performance that I shared with my collaborators was an interactive piece about the stages in my practice-based research. Each vibrator I used (which can be seen in the picture) was a stand-in object for one person who became influential in my research. I told my audience their name and why they have been important to me. I asked them to choose one of the objects and I told the story of the person that object represented. I chose to talk about the research I have done in my pursuit to come to terms with a practice-based workshop methodology. I needed to explain myself as a researcher and hoped that in this way I was also going to reconcile my absence as a performer in the workshop. However, I can now tell that my desire to explain my research was a result of my feelings of insufficiency and uncertainty, not only with regard to my research goals and methodologies but also with regard to my prostitute-persona. Even though my devised piece gave me useful ideas to further explore and my performance was appreciated by my audience, it was not developed through a process of an embodied exploration based on the sessions of my workshop, like those of my collaborators. In contrast with Evren Erbatur's statement about her prostitute-persona's relation to her dramaturg identity, I was not able to find a body for my prostitute-persona through an exploration of what my relationship to labour is as a performer and a researcher. My positionality as workshop facilitator was shaped in dialogue with my collaborators' feedback and commentary during and after each workshop. Considering the fact that my meeting with my collaborators in the workshops coincided with my first practice in my home country after leaving Turkey for my doctoral studies in Canada, the affective labour entailed in my practice-based research was fraught with personal insecurities to a
greater extent than I had imagined. That is, my position as a research facilitator put me in a new relationality with the performance practice with which I related as a practitioner before. My affiliation with a Canadian university also added to this novelty, as it addresses the colonial imaginaries that are at work in Turkey. Canada, by signifying the remote land of democracy in the public discourse in Turkey, brought its own effect into the workshop space and relations that I had to embody and converse with as the facilitator. In this sense, I hope that mentioning my workshop experience in Canada to my collaborators in İstanbul, talking about anecdotes, interviews, and narratives of Canada-based sex workers, and the issue of murdered and missing Aboriginal women significantly changed the superficial image of Canada that might have lurked in my collaborators' minds. One of the most lasting learning experiences for me from my workshop practice was that the contexts from which we speak to others matter enormously, both in the practice and in its interpretation. In other words, the process of my practice-based research provided me with the embodied and affective knowledge of positionality in the intersection of activism, scholarship, performance practice, and intellectual labour.

This practice-based research generated its own terminology and methodology as it proceeded. In this sense, instead of treating the conclusions as findings, I see them as sources of inquiry that need to be explored further in different contexts and spaces. The motive of the workshops to bring the prostitute-effect into the performance practice constitutes the most important conclusive discussion. Even though the connection between sex work and performance seems pertinent to many women at first glance, how to engage with sex work related material in the space of performance remains a mystery. The voices of sex workers and conditions of sex work in Turkey remain unfamiliar to women, even to those who are engaged in
various types of activism and political art. My collaborators openly stated that they were inspired to hear about the sex workers’ rights movement. The ongoing struggles of sex work in Turkey crisscross many fields of struggle, such as urban-based activism around gentrification, self-defense activism against police violence, feminist activism against violence against women, and LGBTI activism. Political consciousness around sex work also gives feminism trans-feminist tools through which we can re-formulate body politics, which is often ignored by Western-centric and liberal notions of feminism. Performative praxis has the potential to re-connect us to a lively and responsible politics of feminism.

As a result, I argue, an embodied and critical awareness around sex work in one's own surroundings is crucially important for feminist performance practitioners to navigate the complex paths of body, desire, fantasy, masculinity, femininity, and labour today. This is possible only through a fresh, dynamic, and reflexive connection with the sex workers’ rights movement, feminist history, and contemporary performance practice. In connection with the last point, the tradition
of acting is very much influenced by the modernist project of the actress in the context of Turkey (see Chapter 2). These workshops, hopefully, also served to question the text-centered, modernist, and director-centered theatre traditions in acting through reconfiguring embodied thinking and feminist performance models in the context of practice-based performance research. They showed that an exploration of one’s relationship to the figure of the prostitute is always endowed with confusion and surprise as I describe in Afterword (Appendix A).
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Afterword

I pursued my dissertation research with a political and pedagogical urgency in understanding the manifestations and effects of the figure of the prostitute that live in/haunt our local neighbourhoods, (un)told histories, everyday lives, popular imaginaries, and contemporary modes in our femininities. Throughout the research, my prostitute stood quietly by me. Like a ghost. With no sign or intention to change even a bit after all this study I have done for her. All the research on the historical, socio-cultural, performative, and artistic legacies and implications of prostitution meant nothing to her. I looked at the field of sex work to seduce her. She was not there, either. She mocked my attempts to grasp her. She escaped the testimonies of the history, materiality of the labour, performance of femininity. She gently told me that she cannot stay because she has to be everywhere at the same time. What do you mean everywhere, I ask. She responds: at the funeral of a sex worker friend who was murdered by her customer who asked her to do something she would not do, in the closet of a teenager who is too anxious about what to wear, in the forgotten desire of a woman who carries it as a guilt within herself all along, in a transsexual's fantasy of being seduced by a stranger, or in a woman's fear of being named as slut. I ask her another question: would you help me to work on a map on which we can place all these locations, senses, instances? She laughs, again. Her laugh is still chilling. Yet much more intimate, this time. Now, I know: she won't co-operate. She never did.

Nevertheless, something changed in her attitude as soon as I found an intimate space with other women who were either in touch with or after their own prostitutes. My prostitute, although still distant, started to ask questions, talk to another one, touch and connect. We might have been lost in the mists of evocative
abstractions, clichés, and metaphors sometimes. Yet, it was obvious that the prostitute can be embodied and felt only when one looks for her both in the ways she hurts and in the ways she invites us to revolt. Sex work and performance both have their being "within a play-ground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course" (Huizinga 12). Either isolated and forbidden - as in sex work - or allowed and public - as in performance - the playground has its own rules that create temporary worlds. Both sex work and performance take place between at least two parties in a temporary world and time. Within this playground that is informed with one's awareness of the local working conditions of sex workers, women start to share their personas with each other. There, we can witness a variety of performances and temporary worlds in which the prostitute persona speaks for herself or moves in her own time. For some, performing one's prostitute persona is a dark play - with high stakes. Or, it is a survival strategy - a shield for self-protection. In each situation, it is striking to see that every single person has a unique journey that will reveal something distinctive not only about how we make sense of sex work today but also how we relate to performance and femininity. This sort of playfulnesproved to be the thread that delineated and entwined the different paths I explored in my study.

Further study might delve into the embodied knowledge felt and lived in this performative and liminal space that opens itself in its own time with movement, not with an entitlement to identity. It makes its way into the confrontational and performative space where one is challenged by her own assumptions. Most likely, one's prostitute will still refuse to play along and laugh at you - which might not be a bad thing.
Appendix B: Workshop Call in Turkish

Tarihler: 12-13-14 Aralık (Cuma: 17:00-20:30, Cumartesi ve Pazar: 13:00-17:00
Yer: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Bomonti Yerleşkesi, İstanbul
Kontenjan: 10 kişi
Ücretsiz.

Feminizm, performans ve seks işçiliği üzerine yürütüştüğüm doktora çalışması kapsamında kadınlara yönelik bir atölye daha gerçekleştireceğim.

Kadını “orospu olma!”, oyuncuyu “orospu gibi oynama!” diye uyaran ahlaki reflekslerin bedenlerimizdeki izlerini sürme fikri ilginizi çekiyorsa sizi de atölyeye beklerim. Fahsiyelikle oyunculuk arasındaki bağlanılar, kopukluklar, olasılıkları araştırmak için feminist tiyatro tekniklerinden ve farklı alanlardan (resim, sinema, fotoğraf, kadınların direniş modelleri, performans sanati, popüler kültür, edebiyat, şiir) derlenen çalışmalar yapacakımız atölye sonunda her katılımcının kendi fahişe/oyuncu personasını kurmasını amaçlayacağiz.


Atölye; hareket, performans ve tiyatro alanlarında deneyimli ya da deneyimsiz konu ile ilgilenen bütün (natrans/trans) kadınlara açıktır. Katılmak isteyenler ozgulakinci@gmail.com'a e-mail atabilir (kendilerini kısaca tanıtırlarsa harika olur).

Özgül Akıncı
British Columbia Üniversitesi
Prostitution-Effect in Performance: 
A 3-Day Workshop for Women 
by Ozgul Akinci 
PhD Candidate in Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies

“I was not really naked. I simply did not have clothes on.”
-Josephine Baker

Are you curious to look at (co)incidences connecting prostitution and performance in cultural, historical and popular venues? Are you interested to see the ways in which an in-depth exploration of your outlook on prostitution can provide a fresh perspective in your performance?

This workshop explores images, associations and assumptions about prostitution for the purpose of deepening an actor’s relationship with her body and enriching her acting practice. The material will be based on exercises developed through my PhD research, and participants’ own interests, experiences, questions, and connections around prostitution. Each participant will explore her own way of working with cultural images of the prostitute in embodied and performative ways.

This 9 hour workshop will take place over 3 days (3 hours per day) on the UBC Okanagan campus. Exact dates will be determined according to the availability of the participants. The workshop is free, open to all women at all levels who are interested in performance and acting.

This workshop does not offer a methodology of acting. For further questions, comments, information and sign-up, please e-mail pefecttheater@hotmail.com

Thank you!

a place of mind
Appendix D: Collaborator Profiles and Statistical Information

Preliminary Workshop in collaboration with Aslı Işıltan
March, 4-5-11-12-18-19-25-26-30, 2013
İstanbul

1st Group Workshop
Number of Collaborators: 4
February, 7-8-9, 2014
Kelowna, UBC Okanagan Campus

2nd Group Workshop
Number of Collaborators: 7
August, 22-23-24, 2014
İstanbul, Çıplak Ayaklar Kumpanyası

3rd Group Workshop
Number of Collaborators: 5
August, 29-30-31, 2014
İstanbul, Çıplak Ayaklar Kumpanyası

4th Group Workshop
Number of Collaborators: 7
December, 12-13-14, 2014
İstanbul, Mimar Sinan University Dance Department

Burcu Eken. 26 years old. Performer. Writer.
Ceren Taşçı. 26 years old. Performer. Acting Student.
Damla Gürkan. 33 years old. Psychologist. Feminist Activist.
Evren Erbatur. 37 years old. Dramaturge, dancer. Teaches dance classes at Mimar Sinan University.
Gasia Papazyan. 22 years old. Student at the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Dance Department
Gökçe Deniz Balkan. 32 years old. Performer, Painter.
Hilal Eyüpoğlu. 32 years old. Psychologist. Feminist Activist.
Holy Farris. 18 years old. Student at UBC Okanagan in the Fine Arts Department.
Kate Janus. 19 years old. Theatre Student at Interdisciplinary Performance Program at UBC Okanagan.
Melisa Hernandez-Paccagnella. 18 years old. Theatre Student at Interdisciplinary Performance Program at UBC Okanagan.
Merve Akaydın. 29 years-old. Performer. Graduated from Anadolu University Conservatoire
Mifa Suzuki. 18 years old. Theatre Student at Interdisciplinary Performance Program at UBC Okanagan.
Nehir Eroğlu. 22 years old. Dancer
Özlem Yılmaz. 35 years old. Script Writer for T.V.
Zinnure Türe. 35 years-old. Director, Trainer, Performer.
Appendix E: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator: Dr. Virginie Magnat. University of British Columbia Okanagan Creative Studies. T: 250.807.8441
Co-Investigator: PhD Candidate Ozgul Akinci. University of British Columbia Okanagan Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies. E-mail: ozgulakinci@gmail.com

Purpose: Exploring the Prostitution-effect in Theatre is a doctoral research pursued by Ozgul Akinci, supervised by Dr. Virginie Magnat. The goal of this project is to explore the relationship between prostitution and performance. The final outcome will be a dissertation thesis.

Participation: You have read the information about the workshop. You signed up for this theatre workshop which will take approximately 18 hours over two weeks (three days each week.) Your participation as an artist, performer or theatre/acting/dance student will contribute to the workshop in a unique way.

Documentation: The workshop will be videotaped, audio-recorded and photographed by Ozgul Akinci or someone who will help with visual documentation, unless you express your disapproval with being documented. Participants who are not consenting visual documentation of themselves are still welcome to participate in the workshop. The main priority is to make sure that your work is respectfully represented according to your wishes.

The visual material (as long as the participants are given consents) and analysis of those materials are going to be used only for thesis purposes. There will also be a Consent to Use of Image Form which you are kindly asked to sign if you agree with the conditions stated in the form.

The names of the participants will appear in the research documents. However, if any of the participants has problem with her name appearing in the documents, we will use a pseudonym instead. Please let us know if you prefer pseudonym.

Results: The results of this study will be reported in a dissertation thesis and maybe also published in journal articles and books. Also, if the participants agree, an open public discussion (where theatre practitioners and scholars are going to be invited) about the outcomes of the workshop might be organized. I am planning to send a copy of the dissertation to each participant when it is finished.

Potential risks: Minimal risks that would usually apply to physically-based theatre practice, live performance and other related artistic activities.

Potential benefits: Opportunity to explore a feminist theatre language through one’s own artistic and creative interests, as well as opportunity to work with others and learn more about prostitution, victim-blaming and woman-hating issues through embodiment.
Confidentiality: The research data will be stored in password-protected computerized files for at least five years after the publication. Participants can consent to one aspect of data collection. For instance, participants can consent to being video-taped but not to an interview. Or participants can consent to an interview but not being photographed/video-taped. Please indicate if you are not agreeing any of the data collection, in the end of this form.

Payment: We will not pay you for the time you take to be in this study.

Reimbursement: Beverages and snacks can be provided in the first meeting.

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:
If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 1-877-822-8598 or the UBC Okanagan Research Services Office at 250-807-8832. It is also possible to contact the Research Participant Complaint Line by email (RSIL@ors.ubc.ca).

Consent:
Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time. There will be no adverse affects to this refusal or withdrawal. Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this project.

I am giving my consent to: Yes No
Being video-taped during the workshops ☐ ☐
Being interviewed by the researcher ☐ ☐
Being photographed during the workshops ☐ ☐
Being audio-recorded during the workshops and interviews ☐ ☐
Submission of my personal narrative about the workshop ☐ ☐

If a participant does not give consent to any of those data collections, she will not be included in group photos, audio recordings, video recordings. There will be no adverse affects to this decision of the participant.

Subject Signature Date

Printed Name of the Subject
Appendix F: Consent to Use of Image

Consent to Use of Image

I hereby give Ozgul Akinci, doctorate student at UBC Okanagan, permission to use images of me (including motion picture, still photographs or audio recordings) for her dissertation research purposes.

I understand that my personal information, including Images of me, is being collected pursuant to section 26 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 165 for the Purposes. I consent to my name and any other information provided by me to Ozgul Akinci being displayed in connection with the appearance of my Image.

Any questions about the videotaping, photographing and audiotaping should be directed to the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 1-877-822-8598 or the UBC Okanagan Research Services Office at 250-807-8832. It is also possible to contact the Research Participant Complaint Line by email (RSIL@ors.ubc.ca).

I am 19 years of age or older and am competent to sign this contract in my own name. I have read and understood this form prior to signing it, and am aware that by signing this consent I am giving permission to Ozgul Akinci to use my image for the Purposes.

Shoot date

Shoot location

Name

Signature

Email address

Name of photographer
Appendix G: Workshop Material: Infamous Sex Workers\

The material in this Appendix is derived from internet sources. The language is offensive and vulgar at times. I kept the material in the way it appears in popular media in order to use it to help prompt workshops.

Calamity Jane

Career choices are never easy, but you really have to learn to play to your strengths. Martha Jane Cannary Burke, commonly known as Calamity Jane, wasn’t really cut out for full-time prostitution, mainly because she looked like a man. Thankfully, Calamity turned out to have a gift for scouting and killing Indians, saving countless frontier drunkards from an unpleasant waste of money. Wild Bill Hickok, however, wasn’t so lucky…

Sada Abe

Born in 1905, Sada Abe looked destined to become a respectable geisha. She made it to the lower levels of geishadom, but a bout of syphilis scuppered all that. Turning to out-and-out whoring, Sada took up residence in the brothels of Tokyo. She was a reckless and rebellious little minx, but

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Taken from the website: http://studioknow.com/2011/05/top-12-famous-prostitutes-in-history/
eventually left the trade to shack up with a man called Kichizo Ishida.

To cut a long story short, Sada strangled Ishida to death before chopping off his penis and balls. She kept them in her handbag until her arrest a few days later.

**Sally Salisbury**

She'd walk the streets of 18th century London “selling pamphlets” – and if any of the local lads happened to have half a crown, she’d happily lift her skirts for an hour-long shag session. At 14 years of age, she entered a high-class brothel where her clientele included aristocrats and lords.

Her temper got her into trouble on various occasions, most notably when she stabbed a customer in the chest over an argument about opera tickets. Having nearly killed the guy, she was fined 100 pounds and sentenced to a year in prison where she died after only nine months – from syphilis.

**Veronica Franco**

A prim and proper high-class courtesan, Veronica Franco was the type of woman to elegantly suggest retiring to the boudoir before quite literally sucking both the money and the life out of her clients. Despite earning cash on her back, Franco was an educated do-gooder of some note in 16th century Venetian society.

At the age of 20, she was listed in the 1565 edition of *Il Catalogo di tutte le principale e piùonorate cortigiane di Venezia*, a guidebook to the top
tarts in Venice. When she wasn’t whoring around with arty types and dodging the plague, the shrew-like Franco wrote poetry and did stuff for charity.

**Lulu White**

If you were passing through New Orleans in the early 1900s, the Storyville district was the place to be. A red light zone to rival those of Europe, it was a great place to spend all your hard-earned cash. Lulu White ran the top-end Mahogany Hall bordello, a place where high-rolling clients could bed a bit of top-totty. Lulu saved herself for men of power, but her girls were always on hand for a bout of jazz-fueled jizzery.

**Nell Gwyn**

Buxom, bubbly and fond of the King’s balls, Nell Gwyn started life in her mother’s brothel before taking a slight step upwards into the seedy world of the theater.

Before getting her first break as an actress, Nell sold oranges and lemons to members of the audience, often giving those members extra-special attention for a small tip. She eventually found fame as an actress, at which point she caught the eye of King Charles II of England. Charles took her as his mistress. When the King died in 1685, he uttered the famous words, “Let not poor Nelly starve.” Nell died a couple of years later – from syphilis.
Rahab

There's something strangely sexy about Biblical whores, and Rahab comes straight out of the Book of Joshua. Rahab flirted her way to safety during the siege of Jericho, avoiding death by helping two enemy spies hide from the soldiers of her own city. This little act of treachery gave her safe passage after the fall of Jericho. Apparently, Rahab was so sexy that saying her name twice would cause an immediate ejaculation.

Aspasia

Modern scholars claim that Aspasia was not a prostitute, but what they hell do they know?

Back in c.470 BC, Aspasia was tarting around Athens like a right old trollop, running her own brothel and banging Pericles.

Cora Pearl

Cora Pearl was a classy little temptress. Born in England in 1835, she received an education in France before returning to London in pursuit of wealthy men. Not your average
gutter whore, Cora had the looks and social skills to draw the gaze of some of Europe’s wealthiest gadabouts.

Of course, dancing naked on beds of orchids, bathing naked in champagne and turning up to dinner parties covered in nothing but whipped cream was a good way to be noticed. She boned half of Europe’s royalty, earning herself a small fortune in the process.

**Phryne**

Phryne was a hetaera, or courtesan, of Ancient Greece. Educated, sophisticated and aromatic, she didn’t accept payment directly but – let’s not kid ourselves – some poor bastard always has to pay in the end. Her mesmerizing beauty made men throw themselves at her feet, plying her with “gifts” and making her a wealthy woman in the process.

Things took a turn for the worse when she ended up on trial for profaning a religious ceremony. Her lawyer was struggling, but then he had a total moment of inspiration: he ripped open her robe, her tits fell out, the judge was delighted and promptly set her free. Genius.

**Theodora**

Few women, if any, can match Theodora’s rise from cheap slut to empress and eventual saint. Born c.500 AD, the young Theodora started out servicing members in a
Constantinople brothel. She soon became an “actress,” delighting crowds with weird sex-shows complete with rampant after-parties.

One of her greatest crowd-pleasers was sprinkling barley on her bush before having a flock of lucky geese peck her clean. Weird.

Anyway, she started travelling around with various men of power before ditching her “acting” career and shacking up with Justinian, heir to the Byzantine throne. He became Emperor, she became Empress, everyone was happy, and then she died and became a Saint.

**Catherine Walters**

![Image of Catherine Walters](image)

Sexy, smart, elegant and discreet, Catherine Walters was a truly sensational courtesan. Born in 1839, she became one of the great fashion icons of Victorian London, so much so that crowds would gather to watch her ride her horse through Hyde Park.

Her professional demeanor and stunning looks made her highly sought-after amongst the philandering aristocracy of Europe, and her doting clients included the future King Edward VII and Napoleon III. She retired as a wealthy and well-respected woman, and died at the age of 80.
Zehra

A police document. Above the picture reads: Name: Zehra Offense: prostitution

Source: http://immoraltales.tumblr.com/post/35722240668

Gani Met

Sex worker and activist. Lives in Ankara, Turkey.
**Ayşe Tükrükçü**


**Matild Manukyan**

She was the owner of the Brothel District in Turkey in 1990s. She is famous for making the highest tax payments to the state. (1914 - 2001)

**Terri-Jean Bedford**

Ex-sex worker, Dominatrix, Activist, Canada.
Appendix H: After-workshop Questionnaire (English)

Your Full Name:

Age:

Are you a performer/acting student?

Would be interested (apart from time concerns) in a similar workshop with different exercises?

1- Why did you participate in this workshop?

2- What do you think stayed with you after this workshop? Could you please specify what, in the workshop, has been useful or inspiring for you?

(Friendly reminder: Warm-up, Writing, Erotic touch Exercise, Gender-bending Gaze/Ideal Audience Exercise, Historical Prostitute Figures, Conversations, Your Sex Worker Persona…)

3- Can you explain your Persona that you created during the workshop? Who is she? (You can either type your notes here or reformulate them in your own way.) Do you think she was already with you or were you surprised to find her last weekend?

4- What do you think did not really work for you in this workshop? Is there something (that we have done) you would change and do differently?

5- Please do not hesitate to write if you have any other feedback about your experience of the workshop.
Appendix I: After-workshop Questionnaire (Turkish)

Adınız Soyadınız:
Yaş:
Tiyatrocu/Oyuncu/Dansçı mısınız?
Benzer bir atölye düzenlenirse tekrar katılmayı düşünür müsünüz?

1-Bu atölyeye neden katıldığınızı yazınız?

2-Bu atölyeden sonra aklınızda kalan ve daha sonra da sizin düşündüren bir çalışma oldu mu? En ilham verici bulunduğunuz çalışma/an hangisiydi?

(Hatırlatma: Erotik Dokunma, Kadın/Erkek Yapan Seyirci, İdeal Seyirci Noktasını Bulma, Tarihsel Fahişe Karakterlerinden Yararlanma, Seyirciyi Bastan Çıkarma/Seyirciyle Uğrama, Fahişe Persona’sını yaratma, Gözler Kapalı Koşma, Yazma, Hizmet Alan/Veren Çalışması, Sohbetler…)


4-Size göre atölyede yaptığınız ama çalışmayan/verimsiz bir egzersiz/กระบวน olduğu mu? Hangi gibi olursa olsaydınız onun yerine ne yapardınız? Genel olarak, atölye ile ilgili “şunu değiştirdim” dediğiniz bir şey var mı?

5-Yazmak/eklemek istedikleriniz var mı?