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A Reading on the Intervention of the Grotesque Body in Urban Space: Box Man

Grotesk Bedenin Kentsel Mekana Müdahil Olması Üzerine Bir Okuma: Kutu Adam

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Abstract
This study explores the spatial production of the grotesque body in urban space, questioning its temporary, provocative and unusual being. It analyzes how it intervenes in space by challenging everyday routines and social forms, making other ways of life visible, triggering change and opening space for creative formations. It constructs interpretative research by evaluating the potential for spatial experimentation offered by the presence and creative agency of the grotesque body in urban space. It offers a new perspective to the existing literature by emphasizing that the grotesque body should be considered as an experimental spatial production tool.

Considering the psychological, social, and cultural expansions and the imaginative power of a literary narrative for reconsidering space, the novel "The Box Man" is used as a case study to explore the interventions of the grotesque body in urban space. Through the analysis of the literary narrative, the research constructs an open conceptual framework in which the interventions of a grotesque body are analyzed regarding its characteristics and the spatial experimentation it carries out, supported by excerpts from the novel. The framework aids in understanding, discussing, and reimagining the grotesque body as an experimental spatial production tool. Ultimately, this study lays the groundwork for further research into the role of the grotesque body in the production of urban space, revealing its potential to challenge conventional spatial production practices and to inspire creative, unique ways of reproducing urban space.

Keywords: Production of Urban Space, Grotesque Body, Experimental Spatial Production Tool, Spatial Experimentation

Genişletilmiş Özet

Grotesk bedeni kentsel mekân bağlamında ele alan bu çalışma, onun deneysel bir mekânsal üretim aracı olarak kullanımı üzerine araştırma temelli bir tartışma açmaktadır. Mikhail Bakhtin'in bahsettiği üzere grotesk, beden ve onun sınırlarıyla ilgilidir ve bu sınırların ötesine geçme arayışıyla şekillenir. Bilinen dünya ile yeni ilişkilenme biçimleri geliştiren grotesk beden, bedenin sınırlarını sürekli olarak yeniden kurar (Bakhtin 1984, 23-25). Alışılmışın dışına çıkan, bedensel bir uzantı olarak evrilen bedensel/mekânsal oluşlar yaratır. Bunu yaparken de mekânın olağan durumlar ve eylemler bütünlüğünde kesinti yaratır. Geçici, kışkırtıcı, alışılmadık mekânsal durumlar ortaya çıkararak ötekilik anlatıları kurar. Grotesk bedenin mekâna müdahalesi ile ortaya çıkan ötekilik anlatıları, yerleşik değerler ve rutinlerin dışında kalan yaşam olanaklarını düşünmeyi tetikler. Mekânın gerçek ile gerçek dışı arasındaki sınırlarda bir yer bulmasını sağlar. Böylece katı gerçekliğe direnç oluşturur ve pek çok olanağın düşünülebildiği, yaratıcılığı harekete geçiren düşünsel ve eylemsel bir alan açar. (Ramirez 2015, 11-17) Kentin gündelik hayatının akışına ötekiliklerin dahil olması, kentlinin etkileşimine açık olması sebebiyle kolektif oluşlara evrilebilir. Grotesk bedenin kentteki varlığı değişim katalizörü olarak görev üstlenerek, mekânın değişkenliğini ve akışkanlığını besler. (Lehtovuori 2016,149-177) Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma grotesk bedenin kentin olağan akışı içindeki varlığını araştırır. Sahip olduğu geçici, kışkırtıcı ve alışılmadık varoluşu sorgular. Öteki yaşam biçimlerini görünür kılan, değişimi tetikleyen ve yaratıcı oluşlara alan açan yapısını irdeleyerek, kente nasıl müdahil olduğunu inceler. Grotesk bedenin kentte gerçekleştirdiği müdahalelerin, kentsel yaşamın sürekliliğinde direnç yaratarak açtığı eylem alanını ve sağladığı mekânsal deney(im)leme olanaklarını inceleyen yorumlayıcı bir araştırma yapılandırır. Bu araştırma doğrultusunda, grotesk bedenin, kentsel mekânın üretiminde deneysel bir araç olarak kullanımını önererek, sağladığı mekânsal keşif olanaklarını tartışmaya açar.

Grotesk bedenin kentsel mekân bağlamında ortaya çıkışında, gerçek ya da gerçek dışı kurgularla şekillenen, festivallerdeki ya da sanatsal etkinliklerdeki performansa ya da görsel imgelemeye dayalı sanat işleri ile betimlemeye dayalı edebi işler temel örnekleme alanları olarak ortaya çıkar. Bu alanlarda grotesk bedenin temsili ya da temsili olmayan şekilde inşa edildiği görülür. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma, edebi bir anlatının mekânı yeniden düşünmeye yönelik sağladığı psikolojik, sosyal ve kültürel açılımları ve imgeleme gücünü göz önüne alarak, Kobo Abe'nin "Kutu Adam" romanını örnek alan olarak inceler. Üç bölümden oluşan çalışmada, ilk bölüm grotesk bedene ilişkin bir kavramsallaştırma sunmaktadır. Kavramsal analiz yoluyla literatürde grotesk beden üzerine yapılan araştırmaları incelemekte, grotesk bedenin karakter özelliklerine ve müdahalelerine ilişkin bir kavram dizgesi oluşturmaktadır. İkinci bölüm "Kutu Adam "ın anlatısını ve grotesk varoluşunu açıklamakta ve onun kendine özgü grotesk yönlerini yorumsal analiz yoluyla ortaya koymaktadır. Üçüncü bölüm, grotesk bedenin varlığına ve yaratıcı eylemliliğine odaklanarak, Kutu Adam'ın kentsel mekâna nasıl müdahale ettiğinin eleştirel bir analizini yapmaktadır. İlk bölümde oluşturulan kavramsal dizgeyi kullanarak, romandan yapılan alıntılara referansla Kutu Adamın kentteki mekânsal deney(im)lemelerini incelemekte, yarattığı direnç ve açtığı deneysel eylem alanları üzerinden bir tartışma kurmaktadır. Böylece deneysel bir mekânsal üretim aracı olarak grotesk bedenin kentsel mekâna müdahalesini anlamak, tartışmak ve yeniden yaratmak için açık bir bilgi yapısı oluşturmaktadır.

Grotesk beden farklılaşan müdahale biçimleri ile, mücadeleye dayalı çatışma örüntüleri yaratarak, kentsel mekânın üretiminde sorgulayıcı ve yaratıcı oluşumların rol alabilmesi için alan açar. Ancak grotesk bedenin neden olduğu öngörülemezlik ve belirsizlik sebebiyle, bu alandaki üretkenlik önceden kestirilemez ve deneysel bir nitelik taşır. Bu nedenle, grotesk bedenin kentsel mekâna olan müdahalesini doğrudan fayda beklentisiyle değil, ortaya çıkardığı ötekilikleri, kentsel mekân üretimi hakkında esinlendiği düşünceleri ve açtığı tartışma alanlarını değerlendirerek ele almak önemlidir. Grotesk bedenin kentsel mekân sorunlarını ele almak ve mekânı yeniden üretmek için deneysel bir araç olarak kullanılması, sadece mimari ve kentsel tasarım pratiklerinde değil, aynı zamanda çeşitli tasarım pratikleri ve disiplinlerarası uygulamalar için de yeni bir yaklaşım sunar ve bu alanlarda yenilikçi pratiklerin gelişimine katkı sağlar. Grotesk bedenin kentsel mekân üretiminde deneysel bir araç olarak kullanımına dair çeşitli pratiklerin araştırılması, bu alanda henüz yapılandırılmış bir araştırma alanı olmadığından, alternatif kentsel üretim pratiklerini desteklemek açısından önemli bir rol oynar. Bu anlamda bu çalışma, grotesk bedenin geleneksel mekânsal üretim pratiklerine meydan okumasını ve kentsel mekânı yeniden şekillendirmek için sunduğu alışılmadık ve benzersiz yöntemlerin sağladığı mekânsal deney(im)leme olanaklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, grotesk bedenin kentsel mekân üretimindeki rolüne ilişkin bir tartışma geliştirerek, gelecek araştırmalar için zemin oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kentsel Mekanın Üretimi, Grotesk Beden, Deneysel Mekânsal Üretim Aracı, Mekânsal Deney(im)leme*

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Introduction

Addressing the grotesque body in the context of urban space, this study opens a research-based discussion on its use as an experimental spatial production tool. As mentioned by Mikhail Bakhtin, the grotesque is related to the body and its limits and is explained by the quest to go beyond these limits. The grotesque body, which creates new ways of relating to the known world, constantly redefines the limits of the body *(Bakhtin 1984, 23-25)*. In doing so, it creates disruptions in the usual flow of everyday routines of space and establishes narratives of otherness via its temporary, provocative, unusual being. The narratives of otherness that emerge from the intervention of the grotesque body in space trigger thinking about other ways of living outside established values and routines. It allows space to find a place on the borders between the real and the unreal. In this way, it creates resistance to a rigid reality and opens an intellectual and action space in which many possibilities can be considered, thus stimulating creativity. *(Ramirez 2015, 11-17)* The inclusion of otherness in the flow of the city's daily life can develop into collective formations, as it is open to the interaction of any city dweller. The presence of the grotesque body in the city acts as a catalyst for change, nourishing the variability and fluidity of the space. *(Lehtovuori 2016,149-177)* In this context, this study investigates the grotesque body's presence and creative agency in urban space. It inquires about its temporary, provocative, and unusual being. It examines how it intervenes in urban space by questioning its characteristics, challenging daily routines and social forms, making other ways of living visible, triggering change and opening space for creative formations. It builds interpretative research by evaluating the potential of the grotesque body's interventions to create resistance and open experimental action fields in the continuity of urban life. In line with this research, it opens the rich prospects that the grotesque body offers for spatial exploration to discussion and further analysis.

In the emergence of the grotesque body in urban space, artworks based on actual or unreal fiction, performances or visual images in festivals or artistic events, and literary works based on description emerge as the main exemplary fields. In these fields, the grotesque body is constructed in representational or non-representational ways. In this context, this study analyzes Kobo Abe's novel "Box Man" as a case study, considering the psychological, social and cultural openings and imaginative power of a literary narrative to rethink space. Kobo Abe describes grotesque existences by transforming subjects into objects in order to confront the existential situation of the novel characters. In his novel Box Man, the physical metamorphosis that the character undergoes to become an anonymous box also narrates a grotesque existence in urban space. *(Hock Soon Ng, 2009)* The choice of such a narrative as a case study presents a fiction constructed in the context of urban space to analyze the spatial productions of the grotesque body. In this sense, using the revelation of unique cultural aspects, experiential richness and critical perspectives inherent in the literary narrative, an understanding of the grotesque body's spatial experimentation can be constructed considering multiple aspects. Accordingly, the study consists of three parts; the first part presents the conceptualization of the grotesque body. It examines research on the grotesque body in the literature through conceptual analysis, forming interrelated conceptual strands for the characteristics and interventions of the grotesque body. The second part explains the narrative of "The Box Man" and its grotesque existence. It reveals its unique grotesque aspects in relation to its spatial existence through interpretive analysis. Focusing on the existence and creative agency of the grotesque body, the third part critically analyses how the Box Man intervenes in urban space. Using the conceptual framework established in the first chapter, it analyses the Box

Man's spatial experimentation in the city with reference to the excerpts from the novel and constructs a discussion of the resistance he creates and the experimental spaces of action he opens. It thus creates an open knowledge structure for understanding, discussing and recreating the intervention of the grotesque body in urban space as a means of experimental spatial production.



Figure 1. *The Grotesque Body in Urban Space -1-2 Kasie Campell-"We Are Revealed?", 3-4 CocoonNYC "Cocoon", 5-6 Ieva Misevičiūtė - "La vie en Rose"*

Grotesque and Grotesque Body

The emergence of the grotesque as a conceptual expression is dated to the cave wall paintings found during Renaissance excavations, but its origins go back much further. It is stated that forms of grotesque imagery are found in mythological and archaic art *(Bakhtin 1984, 4,30,31,54,55,70)*. Various theorists analyze the content of the concept using examples from different fields such as art and literature, different historical periods and different geographies, defining different characteristics and describing different types of grotesque. In line with the changing definitions, the content of the grotesque is constructed as polysemous. On the other hand, it is also accepted that the concept has an unexplainable, ambiguous side. *(Bakhtin 1984; Kayser 1957; Harpnam 1976; Harpnam 1982; Mazzocut-Mis and Rozzoni 2018)* As Mikhail Bakhtin notes in his research, the grotesque was formed in the Renaissance as a carnivalesque formation associated with popular culture, with a collective content and based on the principle of laughter. In a content dominated by pleasure, worldly structures emerged in contact with material and everyday life. Despite all this worldliness, the creative liberation of the carnival spirit opened up the possibility of creating a new order beyond the established and accepted. In the Romantic period, the relationship between the grotesque and popular culture was weakened, and the grotesque was placed in an autonomous realm characterized by individual content, and with the transformation of the principle of laughter, it became a formation in which elements related to the horror found more space. In this period, "ordinary, familiar, daily" things suddenly became "meaningless, suspicious and hostile". Fear of the world gave rise to forms of individual isolation, and the relationship with the world moved into a mystical space. Nevertheless, the power of the grotesque method, which leads to discovery by "liberating from completion and limitation", was also seen in this period. In the modern period, two different lines of the grotesque developed, one in relation to the tradition of realism and popular culture, reflecting the influence of carnival, and the other under the influence of existentialism in relation to the tradition of romanticism. *(Bakhtin 1984, 1-59, 303-368)* It has been said that the grotesque has been shaped with satirical or fantastic elements, creating laughter or horror, in accordance with its different

content shaped in the Renaissance, Romanticism and Modernism *(Harpnam, 1976, 463; Kayser 1957, 16-18,42)*. According to Geoffrey Harpham, the grotesque has been defined in every age in terms of things that threaten the basic sense of humanity of that age and has created situations that bring human existence into crisis. In doing so, it has realized itself on the assumption that the existing order has collapsed. *(Harpnam 1976, 463)* According to Bakhtin, the grotesque's escape from the established order has opened space for thinking about other orders. The method of the grotesque, which is set in motion in order to come to life again, to destroy in order to be renewed, has formed creative cycles *(Bakhtin 1984, 9 - 51, 75- 99, 214 - 250)*. The creative cycles established by the destruction of logic and the regression into the subconscious, although they shake the existing strongly, do not destroy it completely, but open up space for rethinking it. Although the grotesque reveals something alien, transforms the known and familiar into the uncanny and alien, it is far from establishing an alienated world *(Harpnam 1976, 463)*. On the contrary, it becomes a tool for confronting the known world. The grotesque establishes a space of becoming through interventions such as the unusual combination and inversion of elements found in the known world.

The grotesque characterizes a bodily formation that makes visible the otherness within the existing. However, the grotesque body, which is not completely detached from the world in which it exists, shows an incomplete, ambiguous structure that opens outwards or takes in the outside, as Bakhtin also mentions. With reference to Bakhtin's "body in the act of becoming" and Davos's "perpetual metamorphosis", Shun-Liang Chao defines the grotesque body as a "dying and procreating" formation, "physically in-between and trans-formal", and explains it as a poetic structure. *(Chao 2010, 1-22)* A set of characteristics is evident in the definitions of the grotesque body. Although some of these characteristics vary according to different approaches, they provide an insight into the grotesque body. The characteristics of trans-formal, metamorphic, asymmetric, exaggerated, formative, playful, festive, permeable, sudden, open, repulsive, obscene, distorted, multiple, mad, ironic, perverse, ambiguous, other, incongruent, strange, eerie, uncanny, in-between are prominent in descriptions of the grotesque. And the interventions of the grotesque body are crucial in molding these characteristics. Forms of intervention such as nomadizing, mirroring, masking, giving personal qualities to objects, discrediting, mocking, surprising, exaggerating, deforming, subverting, inverting, fusing, establishing duality, bringing opposites together, transgressing boundaries, anonymizing are frequently found in studies explaining the grotesque body and the grotesque method *(Figure 1)*. Moreover, the characteristics and interventions of the grotesque body lead to emotional states of dissolution, fragmentation, bewilderment, aimlessness, meaninglessness, alienation, and discontentment beyond laughter or fear. *(Bakhtin 2005; Chao 2010; Harpnam 1976; Harpnam 1987; Kayser 1957; Thompson 2009)* In the light of the analyses, the concepts that emerge regarding the interventions and the related characteristics provide an understanding for the recognition, the reading, the understanding and the evaluation of the grotesque body in the context of the spatial experiments that it carries out *(Table 1)*.

The Box Man as a Grotesque Body Narrative

The grotesque body is constructed not only in performance-based artistic works, but also in narrative-based literary works. These works offer diverse experiences related to the experimental field they open. In this sense, this study focuses on the construction of the grotesque body within a literary narrative by examining the grotesque body fiction in the novel Box Man. As Vincent Gélinas-Lemaire mentions, a literary narrative that includes a variety of spatial descriptions or

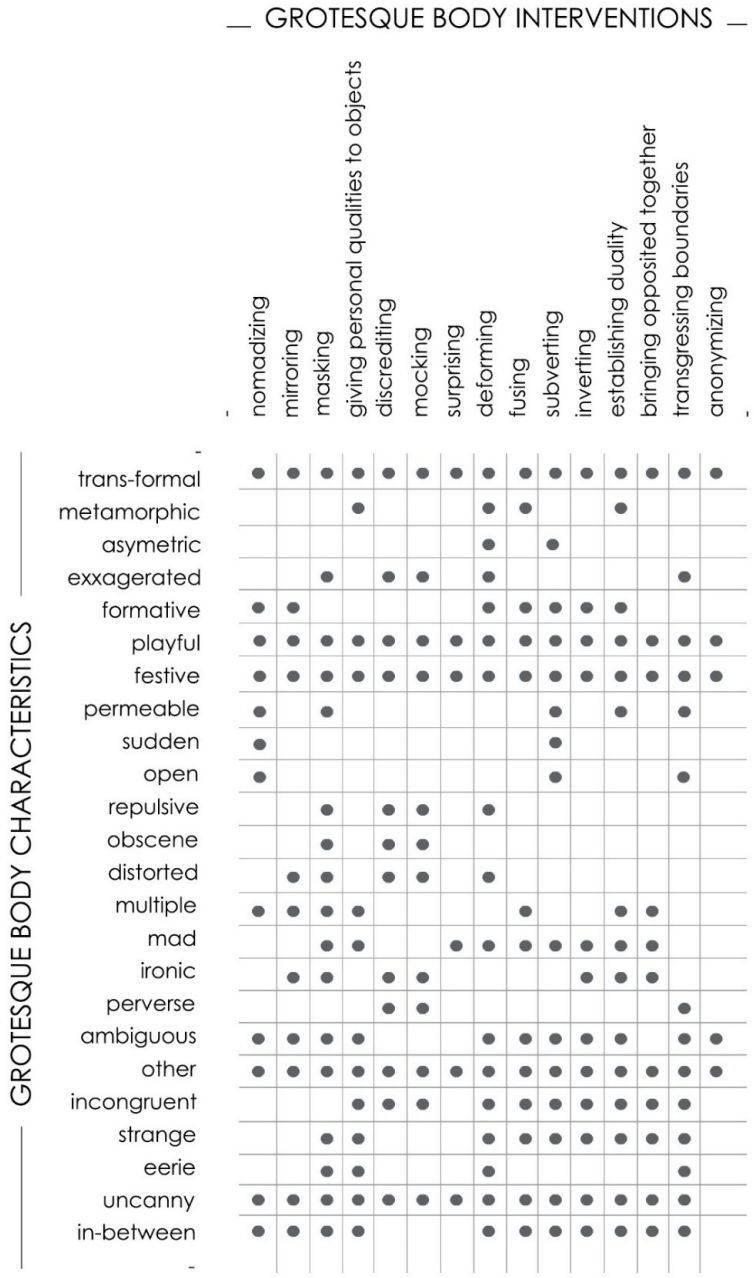


Table 1. *The Interventions and The Related Characteristics of the Grotesque Body*

experiences, even if it talks about real or fictional spaces, reveals the unique and complex aspects of space. It expands the definitions of space through the unique spatial fragments it provides. Thanks to its "ambiguous, subjective and unstable" nature, literary narrative offers a concept of space that can be continuously and infinitely reproduced with the reader's own sensibilities. In this way, the reflection on the sensory experiences of the characters can lead to a multiplication of experiences and the construction of new concepts of space *(Gélinas-Lemaire, 2018)*. Alberto Perez-Gomez also mentions that the imagination unleashed by a literary narrative can open a diverse and inspiring field of thought and research for understanding and discussing an architectural issue. *(Perez-Gomez, 2018)* Furthermore Angeliki Sioli and Yoochun Jung emphasize literary narrative's capacity to imagine situations of life. According to them, literature paves the way to grasp "poetically-described and meticulously-captured situations of life" *(Sioli and Jung, 2018)*. Likewise, Zeynep Tuna Ultav, Nur Çağlar and Bahar Drinkwater suggest that literary narrative allows for a deeper understanding of the psychological and sociological effects of spatial formations. The use of literary narrative in architectural or urban research enriches the discourse on the production of space by providing a critical view of space. As they discuss, a more holistic view that links the emotional and psychological aspects of spatial living with the physical structure and design of space is provided by using literary narrative as a tool in architectural and urban research. *(Ultav, Çağlar and Drinkwater, 2016)* With this understanding, this paper offers an analysis of the literary construction of the grotesque body in Kobo Abe's novel The Box Man. Unlike a work of art or a performance that is experienced directly in an urban space, this kind of analysis allows one to consider the complex aspects of space in the light of emotional and psychological inputs. It also allows for the development of deeper intellectual processes by providing an implicitness that reveals the reader's sensitivity and stimulates the imagination.

The discovery of the self is a significant theme in Japanese literature. Homelessness and loss occupy a vital place in contemporary Japanese culture. The extensive absorption of foreign culture from Europe and America and modernism created a fusion in which the distinction between self and other disappeared. In

this sense, Japanese modernism creates a reactionary attitude towards foreign culture and outdated forms of culture. In this context, Abe's novel The Box Man focuses on losing a sense of home and self, presenting a vision of an anxious modernity. It presents a narrative that conveys alienation concerning urban experience. The Box Man threatens the urban order with his uncanny existence. It is a confrontation with a degenerated self in the urban landscape. The urbanized self is problematized. The narrative, which treats turning inwards as a trauma of modernization, problematizes the subject's incompatibility with space *(Hock Soon Ng, 2009)*. It explores themes of alienation and loneliness in a society shaped by the capitalist system, as well as the protagonist's quest for re-existence, driven by a desire to escape the anxieties that surround him. In essence, it deals with the modern individual's journey towards self-discovery in the face of loneliness and anxiety *(Hardin and Abe, 1974)*. This journey is marked by the grotesque transformation of the body. The narrative intertwines with the themes of 'alienation', 'liberation' and 'change/transformation'. Unable to find solace in any living space, the protagonist attempts to confront the threats to his existence by constructing a box for himself. Disguised by the mask of a portable cardboard box, he wanders aimlessly through the city, adopting a nomadic existence. Observing the outside world from inside the box, the Box Man captures glimpses of the external reality that seeps through the box's holes, while constructing his inner world within its confines, creating an alternate reality. Meanwhile, the Box Man disassembles himself and the city he inhabits, reconstructing them through his creative agency. In other words, the individual, alienated from both himself and his living space, expands his basic living space as a bodily extension, seeking liberation and solutions to his crisis through creativity.

In "The Box Man," Kobo Abe presents a narrative of grotesque transformation leading to individual isolation and opening a space for intellectual experimentation through the intervention of the grotesque body in the city. The story unfolds through an open-ended, anachronistic narrative, blending real and surreal elements, with sections taken from an ongoing cycle arranged in a jumbled manner. As often is the case with conceptualizations of the grotesque body, life and death are depicted as cyclical, rather than linear occurrences. The grotesque transformation of the body is triggered by the fear of life rather than the fear of death. Additionally, the Box Man is portrayed as a multiplicity, and multiple Box Men are included in the narrative. The box that forms the grotesque body of the Box Man serves as a tool that merges with his body, leading to a spatial and temporal expansion, causing the city's sense of direction and time to dissipate. In this manner, the box is metaphorized as a gateway to another possible world. The Box Man's box creates a spatial extension of the body, where creative activities such as photographing, writing and drawing coexist with everyday actions like eating, drinking, sitting, and reading. Both the Box Man's agency inside the box and the agency of the city and its city dwellers outside the box, along with environmental conditions, exert their effects on the box. Abe explains the box as a fragile, organic structure in a state of continuous becoming, never complete, and even attributes human qualities to it. Moreover, he describes the actions taking place inside the box, whether connected to the outside world or not, as generating numerous folds, transforming the box into an increasingly complex labyrinth *(Abe, 2020) (Guest, 2004)*.

Anthony Vidler defines space as the product of subjective projection and introjection in works that address the modern subject's problem of alienation and anxiety through space. Concerning the body, he discusses this in terms of reformulating the conditions of interiority and exteriority. Vidler demonstrates that the body's relationship to space has become problematic by explaining the spatial anxieties generated by modernity

in the context of the perception of architectural space as claustrophobic and urban space as agoraphobic. While struggling with the sense of loss, he mentions that new and extreme forms of expression emerge and explains the space created in this way in the context of the concept of 'warped space'. Vidler discusses "warped space" as a conceptual framework for spatial productions in which the formal and the psychological are intertwined in the face of the anxiety and alienation created by modernism and deals with it concerning the uncanny. He states that warped spaces create uncanny effects such as blurring boundaries, mirroring, shadowing, loss of face. He mentions that the aesthetics of uncertainty, movement and the psychology of anxiety develop in the face of aesthetics based on rationality and transparency. Explaining that psychoanalytic theory's emphasis on the observer opens space for the existence of differentiated subjects, Vidler discusses warped space in the context of differentiated subjects and distorted forms. By problematizing the relationship of space to bodies



Figure 2. *The Grotesque Body Of the Box Man - Photos by Ihor Dudnyk Inspired by Kobo Abe and his novel "The Box Man"*

and objects, he explores forms of spatial warping *(Vidler, 2000)*. It is possible to situate Kobo Abe's literary character of the Box Man in the context of Vidler's understanding of warped space. The creation of a grotesque body by a subject alienated within the existing spatial orders created by the capitalist system of the modern world, who takes refuge in the fragility of an ordinary, anonymous box in order to question himself and his existence in space, creates forms of spatial warping by establishing a body-space unity. The forms of spatial warping created by the Box Man

in urban and architectural spaces are shaped by the way he intervenes in space. It provides extraordinary confrontations with alienation and the problem of self. In this sense, Box Man, with his existence in space and his intervention in space, exhibits a fear-based becoming that can be understood within the modern grotesque understanding developed under the influence of existentialism.

The Box Man is a grotesque form created by existential crises in the face of alienation that threatened the basic sense of humanity of the time it was written. The Box Man, whose grotesqueness offers an escape from the existing order, opens an intellectual space for the possibilities of other orders. By presenting an uncanny depiction of existence, it establishes a creative intellectual cycle for destroying and reproducing the existing. In the novel, the box, a well-known and familiar object of everyday life, is transformed into an uncanny and alien body to shake the existing reality of the time. In addition to establishing an utterly alien reality, this situation creates resistance to the existing reality by interjecting something alien into it to free it from its established bonds.

In this sense, it is possible to understand the Box Man as a tool for confronting the existing order and to evaluate it as a grotesque event caused by fear. However, evaluating the characteristics of the Box Man concerning its forms of urban spatial intervention while assessing its grotesqueness provides a broader understanding of analyzing its impact on urban space.

The Box Man's Grotesque Interventions and Spatial Experimentations

By intervening in the urban space with his grotesque existence, the Box Man suggests the possibility of an alternative life, contrary to the established values and routines of society. The Box Man, who distances himself from the urban environment through the box despite its temporary nature, causes an interruption in the normal flow of reality through the spatial-temporal distance he creates. In this sense, Abe expresses the specific spatio-temporality of the Box Man by describing it as a "moving tunnel" or "labyrinth" *(Abe, 2020, 83)*. The Box Man, wandering through the city immersed in the reality of his box, upsets the established order and confronts both himself and his surroundings with a dissolution that is difficult to avoid in the way he intervenes in the city. In this way, the grotesque nature of Box Man's existence creates a rupture in the spatial and social fabric of the city, opening new possibilities for both the individual and the space itself. His interventions, while unsettling, serve to question the boundaries between the self and the environment, and the norms that govern everyday life.

By analyzing The Box Man in the context of the relevant excerpts from the novel, it has been determined which of the interventions in the conceptual framework established in the first part concerning the interventions of the grotesque body are found in the narrative of The Box Man. These interventions are tabulated in relation to the corresponding characteristics and quotations from the narrative, and the spatial experiments they perform are explained and discussed. In this sense, The Box Man is characterized by the grotesque body interventions of giving personal qualities to objects, fusing, establishing duality, transgressing boundaries, inverting, mirroring, anonymizing, nomadizing, subverting, discrediting, and the creative interventions of looking and photographing, writing and drawing. Accordingly, it reveals characteristics of transformation, metamorphosis, asymmetry, exaggeration, formation, playfulness, festivity, permeability, suddenness, repulsion, distortion, multiplicity, madness, irony, perversity, ambiguity, otherness, incongruity, strangeness, eeriness, uncanniness and liminality. Examining Box Man's interventions in relation to the novel's narrative provides a point of reference for understanding the spatial experimentation he creates in urban space, and for discussing the possibilities of spatial experimentation offered by the presence of a grotesque body in urban space.

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
giving personal qualities to objects trans-formal • metamorphic • asymetric exxagerated formative playful • festive • permeable sudden open repulsive obscene distorted multiple • mad • ironic perverse ambiguous • other • incongruent • strange • eerie • uncanny • in-between •	**Spatial Embodiment:** The intervention challenges traditional notions of space by transforming an ordinary object into a personalised, expressive environment. Box Man experiments to build an unique spatial configuration that reflects his inner world by adding personal qualities and altering the box. **Spatial Expression:** The spatial existence created by the Box is experimented with through various physical modifications to transform it into a means of personal expression. These modifications allow the Box Man to project his thoughts and feelings onto his surroundings, giving the Box the image of a living entity. This process personalizes the space and reconstructs it as a dialogue tool between the inner self and the external environment. **Existential Exploration:** Box Man questions the interactive formation of individual and spatial identity. Through the conscious creation and occupation of the box's space, he confronts fundamental questions of existence and social interaction in urban space. This existential process of exploration investigates the role of space as a tool for self-discovery, transforming the box into a microcosm where life and identity are interrogated.	"For a box man, the slit in the vinyl is comparable, as it were, to the expression of the eyes. It is wrong to consider this aperture as being on the same level as a peephole. With very slight adjustments it is easy to express yourself."(14) "Once it had leap up, the box, again in response, showed signs within of an extremely slow movement"(Abe, 2020, 19) "Is some transformation beginning to take place in my box? Perhaps so. On reflection, after wandering about this town, I have the feeling that the surface of my box has become fragile and terribly vulnerable. Certainly the town bears me some ill will." (Abe, 2020,26)

Table 2. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: 'Giving Personal Qualities to Objects' and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*

-giving personal qualities to objects

It is a form of intervention used to shape The Box Man's grotesque body. The Box Man places his body inside a cardboard box, organizing it as a shell to live in and framing his intimate personal space. Initially "an ordinary, familiar, and daily

object", the box acquires "a meaningless, suspicious, and hostile character" when it transforms into a shell enveloping a body. It becomes a secondary body or bodily extension. It is constantly reshaped by the presence and actions of the body within it. In the case of Box Man's grotesque body, giving personal qualities to objects allows for spatial experimentation that can be discussed under spatial embodiment, spatial expression and existential exploration *(Table 2)*.

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
fusing trans-formal ▪ metamorphic ▪ asymetric exxagerated formative ▪ playful ▪ festive ▪ permeable sudden open repulsive obscene distorted multiple ▪ mad ▪ ironic perverse ambiguous ▪ other ▪ incongruent ▪ strange ▪ eerie uncanny ▪ in-between ▪	**Spatial Synergy:** By fusing the living presence of the body with the inanimate presence of the box, this intervention questions the fluid and dynamic relationship between internal states and external spaces, exploring physical and psychological boundaries in the context of space. **Spatial Ambiguity:** It transforms the box into a liminal space that defies clear boundaries between inside and outside, public and private, creating an ever-changing spatial experience. This ambiguity allows for the constant redefinition of boundaries, fostering a space where multiple realities coexist and interact. It questions the complexity of personal and social identities and how they are influenced and affected by the spatial contexts in which they live. **Existential Exploration:** Using the box as a space for existential reflection, Box Man confronts fundamental aspects of his existence and his relationship with the world around him. The box becomes a spatial structure in which the boundaries of self and space are constantly questioned and redefined.	"That is to say, at this juncture the box man is me. A box man, in his box, is recording the chronicle of a box man." (Abe, 2020,10) "Anyway, as soon as anyone gets into this simple, unprepossessing paper cubicle and goes out into the streets, he turns into an apparition that is neither man nor box. A box man possesses some offensive poison about him.I suppose there is some degree of poison even in a picture of the snake lady on a billboard or the bear man in a circus sideshow, but even so that can be canceled out by the admission fee. But the poison of a box man is not that simple."(Abe, 2020,16) "The fake me becomes something not at all myself when I put on the Box" (Abe, 2020,53) "A box man can't very well take off his box and simply return to the ordinary world. When he takes it off it is to emerge into another world just as an insect metamorphoses." (Abe, 2020,58) " So many times I have thought how I would like to strip off my own skin including the box the way one peels off the skin of a fig. "(Abe, 2020,163)

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
establishing duality trans-formal ▪ metamorphic ▪ asymetric exxagerated formative ▪ playful ▪ festive ▪ permeable ▪ sudden open repulsive obscene distorted multiple ▪ mad ▪ ironic ▪ perverse ambiguous ▪ other ▪ incongruent ▪ strange ▪ eerie uncanny ▪ in-between ▪	**Spatial Intimacy:** Establishing a duality between the Box and the man, this intervention explores creating an intimate space through the concept of the secondary body. The dichotomy created here blurs the lines between the self and the surrounding space and opens up a debate to redefine intimate space and construct it as an identity-forming flour in urban space. **Spatial-Temporal Duality:** This intervention delves into the profound nature of spatial and temporal boundaries, challenging the distinctions between reality and illusion, self and other, interior and exterior spaces. It probes the very existence of the Box as both a protective shell and a vulnerable space. The unique spatial-temporal reality of the Box offers a nuanced exploration of the sense of self and reality.	"Anyway, as soon as anyone gets into this simple, unprepossessing paper cubicle and goes out into the streets, he turns into an apparition that is neither man nor box. A box man possesses some offensive poison about him.I suppose there is some degree of poison even in a picture of the snake lady on a billboard or the bear man in a circus sideshow, but even so that can be canceled out by the admission fee. But the poison of a box man is not that simple."(Abe, 2020,16) "The fake me becomes something not at all myself when I put on the Box" (Abe, 2020,53) "Is some transformation beginning to take place in my box? Perhaps so.On reflection, after wandering about this town, I have the feeling that the surface of the box has become fragile and terribly vulnerable. Certainly the town bears me some ill will." (Abe, 2020,26)

Table 3. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Fusing"' and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*
Table 4. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Establishing Duality"' and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*

-fusing

It is a form of intervention that, in the case of Box Man, works to integrate the body and the box. As Box Man shapes the box around him, almost as an extension of his body, he fuses his body with the box and becomes an inanimate object.

However, this fusion is not unidirectional. The box is also transformed into a fragile shell that bears the traces of the living body and comes closer to the living body. Accordingly, this intervention allows for spatial experimentation, which can be discussed under spatial synergy, spatial ambiguity, and existential exploration *(Table 3)*.

-establishing a duality

It is a form of intervention that creates a separate but interconnected relationship within the integration of man and box, blurring the lines between the self and the surrounding space. As the Box Man moves through the urban space, the Box takes on a sometimes protective and sometimes fragile character. This duality enables the Box Man to move between states of concealment and revelation, questioning the boundaries between inside and outside, self and other. The duality created through the Box, the fluid transition between different spatial and temporal situations, allows for experimentation with a complex interaction that challenges traditional concepts of space and identity. This intervention realizes spatial experimentation that can be discussed under spatial proximity and spatial-temporal duality *(Table 4)*.

-transgressing boundaries

This form of intervention helps to struggle with the insecurity of the Box Man, who feels that his boundaries are being violated. He protects his boundaries by violating other boundaries. The Box Man's sudden appearance in the urban space and his observation of the outside world from within, using the invisibility shield provided by the box, creates a sense of border violation and invasion of privacy for the city dweller. This intervention realizes spatial experimentation that can be discussed under spatial boundaries *(Table 5)*.

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
transgressing boundaries trans-formal • metamorphic asymetric exxagerated • formative playful • festive • permeable • sudden open • repulsive obscene distorted multiple mad ironic perverse • ambiguous • other • incongruent • strange • eerie • uncanny • in-between •	**Spatial Boundaries:** This intervention explores the disruption of private and public spaces by the presence of Box Man. It challenges traditional spatial boundaries and questions the effects of boundary violation on the interaction between individuals and spaces. Box Man positions himself in unexpected places, forcing to rethink the spatial boundaries creating a resistance. This act of transgression challenges the social structures that define ownership, accessibility, and spatial boundaries. Moreover, it questions the fluid and negotiable nature of these boundaries. By occupying private and public spaces, Box Man reveals the fragility of established spatial norms and reflects on how space is controlled, experienced and perceived.	"Without exaggeration, this is one of the few self-defences an unprotected box man has. I should like to see the man capable of returning this look with composure." (Abe, 2020, 14) "One day a box man took up residence directly below the window of A's apartment. Though A tried his best not to look, he did. No matter how he struggled to ignore the box man, he was very much aware of his presence. The first feelings that assailed A were anger and abhorrence toward a foreign body that has imposed itself, irritation and perplexity at having his territory encroached on illegally." (Abe, 2020, 17)

Table 5. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Transgressing Boundaries" and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
inverting trans-formal • metamorphic asymetric exxagerated formative • playful • festive • permeable sudden open repulsive obscene distorted multiple • mad • ironic • perverse ambiguous • other • incongruent • strange • eerie uncanny • in-between •	**Power Dynamics:** This intervention explores the power dynamics inherent in spatial interactions by reversing social roles. Box man, who reverses the relationship between the observed and the observer, becomes unobservable by hiding inside the box and upsets the balance of power. It questions who has the power in space and how this power changes direction when traditional spatial arrangements are disrupted. **Spatial Boundaries:** Intervention allows the Box Man to create a space of liberation rather than being trapped within the box's confines. So, the box becomes a set of surfaces that frame the city rather than a set of surfaces that confine the box man. Inside the box, it is possible to explore the possibilities of a spatiality that can accommodate many other worlds and be endlessly reconstructed with the images leaking out of the city and the imagination of the box man.	"I personally feel that a box, far from being a dead end, is an entrance to another world. I don't know to where, but an entrance to somewhere, some other world."(Abe, 2020, 29) "I am now looking around the inside of the box… A cube slightly more spacious than my own capacity…cardboard walls tanned by sweat and sighs…graffiti inscribed with a ballpoint pen all over in small letters…reverse tattooing… a not very prepossessing pilgrim." (Abe, 2020, 35) "In seeing there is love, in being seen there is abhorance. One grins, trying to bear the pain of being seen. But not just anyone can be someone who only looks. If the one who is looked at looks back, then the person who was looking becomes the one who is looked at." (Abe, 2020, 36) "Instead of leaving the box, I shall enclose the world within it. Now the world must have closed its eyes." (Abe, 2020, 201)

Table 6. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Inverting" and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*

-inverting

It is a form of intervention that attempts to reverse established spatial dynamics, as in the case of Box Man. By hiding inside the box, Box Man becomes unobservable and questions the traditional roles of the observer and the observed in urban space. By investigating the traditional balance of power created by social interactions in urban space, he experiments with how that power changes when typical spatial arrangements are disrupted. The box transforms from a confining structure into a space of liberation, becoming a series of surfaces that frame the city from within, allowing Box Man to dream of other spatial possibilities and create new worlds. This intervention offers a spatial experiment that can be discussed regarding power dynamics and spatial boundaries *(Table 6)*.

-mirroring

It is a form of intervention that uses reflection to explore and question the relationship between perception and reality. Box Man projects his surroundings inside the box, creating a paradoxical space that blurs the line between the real and the imagined. This intervention

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
mirroring trans-formal ■ metamorphic asymetric exxagerated formative ■ playful ■ festive ■ permeable sudden open repulsive obscene distorted ■ multiple ■ mad ironic ■ perverse ambiguous ■ other ■ incongruent strange eerie uncanny ■ in-between ■	**Spatial Paradox:** Mirroring creates a paradox that challenges the relationship between real and unreal. The reconstruction of the city in a box, through the eyes of the Box Man, reveals a spatial paradox with the complex interaction between perception and reality, blurring the line between what is observed and what is imagined. **Reflective Dynamics:** In a seemingly ordinary everyday object, the Box Man embarks on a profound journey of self-questioning, inviting the city dweller to do the same. This reflection is not merely about self-awareness but also about the intricate dynamics between self and others. Mirroring through imitation becomes a powerful tool for introspection and social critique. By challenging the acts of looking and being looked at, unusual reflective processes are created in urban space. **Creative Reconstruction:** The Box Man creatively reconstructs the self and the city by reflecting and reinterpreting what he sees and thinks about his environment inside the box. The box becomes a place where dreams and reality intersect, and the Box Man can experience different identities and scenarios, creating new narratives within the box's transformal and metamorphic spatial intimacy.	"The fake me becomes something not at all myself when I put on the Box" (Abe, 2020,53) "Perhaps it is I who I am going on writing as I imagine you who are writing as you imagine me.(Abe, 2020, 124) "He looked playfully at the street beyond the mirror. And the street returned the smile of the amorous boy. Just by looking at it, the world was happy for him. In his imagination, he put his signature to a peace treaty between himself and the world." (Abe, 2020, 168)

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
anonymizing trans-formal ■ metamorphic ■ asymetric exxagerated formative playful ■ festive ■ permeable sudden open repulsive obscene distorted multiple mad ironic perverse ambiguous ■ other ■ incongruent strange eerie uncanny in-between	**Psychological Displacement:** Anonymization within the box challenges the perception of identity and belonging, allowing the Box Man to navigate urban space as an unseen presence. The box becomes a tool for exploring the mental and emotional effects of anonymity. Anonymity radically changes the Box Man's interaction with urban spaces, turning him into a virtually transparent person and redefining his ties with his environment. It provides him with both freedom and alienation. Moreover, the spatiality provided by the box allows research into creating a kind of psychological shelter. **Existential Exploration:** Anonymization intervention also serves as a tool for existential exploration. The Box Man questions his existence and identity by using the box to hide his existence. Anonymization transforms the box into a research area where the boundaries between self and other, visible and invisible, are constantly examined and questioned.	" As far as I know, most box men utilize this quarto box. For if the box has any striking features to it, its special anonymity will suffer." (Abe, 2020, 12) "Once a day, I would put on the box and go out into the town. Wandering about the streets like a transparent person, I would go around collecting miscellaneous items for daily use, principally foodstuffs." (Abe, 2020,196) "Here is a town for box men. Anonymity is the obligation of the inhabitants, and the right to leave there is accorded only to persons who are no one. All those who are registered are sentenced by the very fact of being registered."(Abe, 2020,173)

encourages self-reflection and social critique, as Box Man's mirrored reality encourages city dwellers to question their identities and perceptions of the city. The box becomes a tool for introspection, where the acts of looking and being looked at create unusual reflective dynamics. Additionally, this process of reflection allows Box Man to creatively reconstruct his environment, merging dreams with reality and exploring new spatial possibilities. This intervention offers spatial experimentation that can be argued regarding a spatial paradox, reflective dynamics and creative reconstruction *(Table 7)*.

-anonymizing

It is a form of intervention that transforms a specific, easily recognizable singular identity into a collective identity that establishes multiplicity. The Box Man tries to exist anonymously due to the alienation he experiences in adapting to certain social norms. Behind the "simple, unattractive" appearance of the box, it intervenes in the urban space by becoming anonymous in a "standardized form" that is "difficult to distinguish" from other cardboard. The Box Man's identityless, unknown existence under the box makes him uncanny and ambiguous and provides him with a space of experimentation where he can establish multiplicity. It is

Table 7. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Mirroring" and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*
Table 8. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Anonymising" and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*
Table 9. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Nomadizing" and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
nomadizing trans-formal ■ metamorphic ■ asymetric exxagerated formative ■ playful ■ festive ■ permeable ■ sudden ■ open ■ repulsive obscene distorted multiple ■ mad ironic perverse ambiguous ■ other ■ incongruent strange eerie uncanny ■ in-between ■	**Spatial Fluidity:** Nomadizing transforms Box Man's environment into a dynamic and fluid space. The Box Man's constant movement through different spaces challenges the notion of fixed, static spaces and experiences the ephemeral nature of his existence and the spaces he inhabits. By embodying a constant state of movement, Box Man redefines his relationship with the city and experiments with a liberating and challenging spatial fluidity. **Urban Exploration:** Box Man's nomadic existence leads to an unconventional experience of urban spaces. This intervention changes the interaction between the individual and urban space, revealing the city's multiple layers and complexity. Box Man's exploration of the city is not only physical but also reveals hidden aspects of urban life and questions social norms of behaviour. This exploration allows the Box Man to gain insight into the urban environment and his place within it, creating a complex narrative of movement and discovery.	"Is some transformation beginning to take place in my box? Perhaps so.On reflection, after wandering about this town, I have the feeling that the surface of the box has become fragile and terribly vulnerable. Certainly the town bears me some ill will." (Abe, 2020, 26) "And then not getting meant to write: "A box man is different from a vagrant," or something like that. Of course, as far as society is concerned they apparently don't distinguish very clearly between the two, as much as box men do. Indeed, they have not a few points in common. For example, not having an I.D. card, or a profession, or an established place of residence, or indication of name or age, or a set time or place for eating and sleeping." (Abe, 2020, 28) "Since I am a box man walking around with a waterproofed room on my back like a snail, there is no need to worry about mere rain blown sideways or the height of girders."(Abe, 2020, 30) "When I think about it, I fancy I have become a box man just to go on being a voyeur forever. I want to spy on all sorts of places, and the box is a portable hole that accurred to me under the circumstances, it being impossible to punch holes throughout the world."(Abe, 2020, 64) "If I tear the box up into three of four pieces and fold them up, it will be ordinary trash. That will take scarcely five minutes at the most. Even if I liquidate my possessions in any case, there are articles of daily use for a life on the move, and they won't amount to much." (Abe, 2020)

possible to discuss the spatial experiments created by the Box Man by becoming anonymous in urban space under psychological displacement and existential exploration *(Table 8)*.

- nomadizing

It is a form of intervention that transforms the Box Man's existence into a state of constant movement, emphasizing the fluidity and transience of his spatial experience. The Box Man adopts a nomadic lifestyle to challenge urban spaces' fixed and static nature, exploring the city through continuous movement. The Box Men are defined by "not having a set time or place for eating and sleeping". "A moveable house of cardboard" can appear anywhere at any time. The items used to maintain basic life activities inside the box are of little material value. The Box Man, therefore, intervenes in the city by living as "lightly" as possible with "no possessions". In this way, he introduces a surprising, uncanny formation in the city's streets, abandoned spaces, under bridges or at the foot of walls, suddenly appearing in unexpected places. He wanders aimlessly around the city "without having a job" or "needing almost no money to live". However, wandering through the city hiding in a box involves coincidences and encounters. The unexpected and ambiguous movements of the box can even lead to playful situations. This nomadic existence disrupts conventional spatial arrangements and highlights the dynamic interaction between the individual and the urban landscape. The Box Man's journey through different urban spaces uncovers multiple layers and complexities of the city, allowing him to experiment with new spatial configurations and relationships. The spatial experiments created by the Box Man through nomadizing can be discussed under the themes of spatial fluidity and urban exploration *(Table 9)*.

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
subverting trans-formal • metamorphic asymetric • exxagerated formative • playful • festive • permeable • sudden • open • repulsive obscene distorted multiple mad • ironic perverse ambiguous • other • incongruent • strange • eerie uncanny • in-between •	**Temporal and Spatial Duality:** By subverting the urban space through and within the box, a unique time and space, shaped by the psychological, emotional and perceptual state of the box man, is experimented with alongside the city's own reality. **Psychological Displacement:** Subverting space creates a sense of psychological displacement, where familiar environments become strange and disorienting exploring and revealing the deep connection between space and psyche. **Power Dynamics:** Subverting conventional spatial arrangements challenges the power dynamics inherent in the control and organization of space. **Creative Reconstruction:** Through the act of subverting typical uses of space, the Box Man liberates the imagination, encouraging a creative reimagining of how spaces can function. This experimentation not only fosters innovation but also invites individuals to envision alternative possibilities for the spaces they inhabit, sparking a sense of freedom and exploration.	"Paralysis of the heart's sense of direction is the box man's chronic complaint. At such times the axis of the earth sways, and one suffers a severe nausea resembling seasickness. But for some reason there is absolutely no relationship with the consciousness of being a social dropout. Not once does he feel guilty about the box. I personally feel that a box, far from being a dead end, is an entrance to another world. I don't know to where, but an entrance to somewhere, some other world." (Abe, 2020, 29) "Paralysis of the sense of time is one of the chronic ailments of a box man."(Abe, 2020, 39) "But a box man's eye can not be deceived. Looking out from the box, he sees through the lies and secret intentions concealed behind the scenery." (Abe, 2020, 41) "But it does provide a good opportunity to get accustomed to the town which you really have to do in order to enjoy life as a box man among the crowds. When he's used to the town, wherever he is, time begins to describe concentric circles around the box man as the center."(Abe, 2020, 166)

Table 10. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Subverting" and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*

-subverting

The Box Man's intervention of subverting stems from his existential disorientation with a detachment from the expectations and norms of society. This condition extends into a "paralysis of the sense of time," where conventional measures of time lose their meaning, underscoring a radical departure from the rhythms of everyday urban life. From his unique vantage point inside the box, the Box Man gains an unobstructed view that pierces through societal facades, seeing past the "lies and secret intentions" that the city conceals. His presence in urban spaces, whether in crowded streets or secluded corners, disrupts the usual flow of city life. As he becomes accustomed to the town, time itself begins to warp, forming "concentric circles around the box man as the center," thus recentering the urban experience around his transient, boxed existence. This not only challenges the typical city dweller's engagement with time and space but also suggests a radical reimagining of what it means to inhabit a city. The Box Man, through his minimalist and mobile dwelling, effectively turns the city into a place of endless possibilities and perspectives, making the familiar seem strange and the mundane, extraordinary. The spatial experiments created by the Box Man through subverting can be discussed under the themes of temporal and

spatial reconstruction, psychological displacement, power dynamics and creative reconstruction *(Table 10)*.

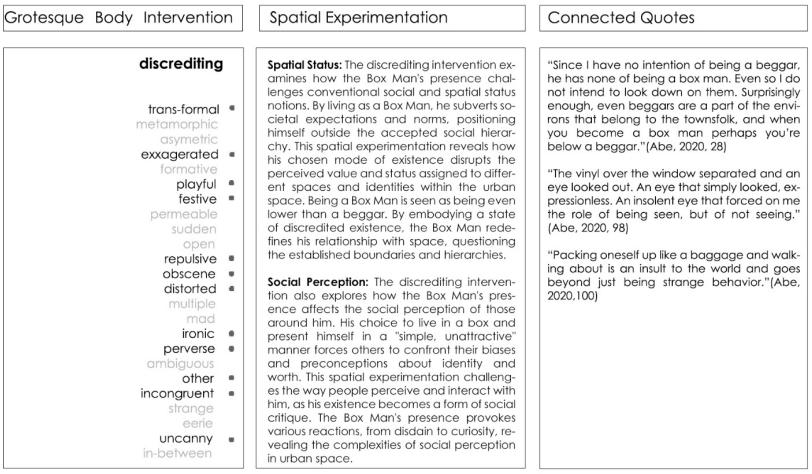


Table 11. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Discrediting" and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*

.-discrediting

It is a form of intervention that challenges the established social and spatial hierarchies by positioning the Box Man as an entity below even the most marginalized individuals in urban society. The Box Man's discredited existence, marked by his choice to live in a box, subverts societal norms and exposes the fragility of social status. The Box Man adopts a "simple, unattractive" appearance, deliberately presenting himself in a manner that provokes discomfort and forces a reevaluation of societal values. This intervention disrupts the conventional expectations of identity and belonging, making the Box Man an unsettling presence in urban space. His expressionless yet insolent gaze compels passers-by to confront the discomfort of being seen, challenging their preconceptions about worth and visibility. By "packing oneself up like baggage" and moving through the city, the Box Man's existence becomes an act of defiance against established norms, questioning the very foundations of how identity and social acceptance are constructed. The spatial experiments created by the Box Man through discrediting can be discussed under the themes of spatial status and social perception, revealing the complexities and tensions within urban identities *(Table 11)*.

- gazing[1] and photographing[2]

These interventions arise from the desire to create a different vision of the city, dissolve and reassemble it. The Box Man uses gazing and photographing as a means of self-expression, aiming to capture the essence of urban life while remaining inconspicuous and hidden. As the Box Man gazes to capture visions, he strives to remain unnoticed, blending into the urban fabric. Meanwhile, city dwellers often react with indifference or neglect towards the Box Man, discontented by the boundary violation caused by being observed. He fragments and reassembles the city by taking photographs, creating an intervention that challenges conventional perceptions of urban space. The spatial experiments created by the Box Man through gazing and photographing can be discussed under urban exploration, creative documentation, and creative reconstruction *(Table 12)*.

- writing and drawing[3]

It is a form of intervention that arises from the need of the novel's protagonist, who has difficulty relating to the space in which he lives and does not feel a sense of belonging, to express himself and to establish a relationship. The writings and drawings inside the Box Man's box allow him to externalize his inner thoughts and feelings, transforming the box into a dynamic space for self-expression and identity formation. It also creates a creative documentation that allows the Box Man to record his emotional and psychological states, as well as his interactions with the environment, and to continually reconstruct the space through layered narratives. These are creations that not only reconstruct the outside, but also shape the world inside the box, making visible the myriad possibilities of other realities outside. As Box Man intervenes in the city by writing and drawing inside his box, he reimagines and rebuilds it and himself each time. These interventions

1. *Gazing is an act performed by the observing eye, which constantly shifts roles in the dynamic relationship between observing and being observed. The observing eye is reminiscent of a hidden eye, watching outside without being seen or noticed. Rooted in Renaissance perspective studies and continuing to be shaped by the Modern emphasis on visuality, it plays a crucial role in shaping the spatial and urban experience and interaction. However, it is not only related to aesthetics, but also to issues of surveillance and security in urban space. Without being noticed, the gaze it builds on the city influences citizens' behavior. (Whybrow, 2015). It can affect the way space is organized, the way power works, and the way people feel about each other. Accordingly, physical layout, control and social interaction can be interrelatedly shaped by the observing eye. (Koskela, 2000) But the effect of the gaze depends on how and by whom it is produced. Moreover, the way in which the observing eye occupies space is crucial in terms of the bodily movements it creates. In this sense, the grotesque body of the Box Man's intervention of gazing can be understood in relation to its spatial occupation, the uncanny threading of alienation, and its sense of being threatened and insecure.*
2. *The fact that the novelist Kobo Abe's previous practice was photography has been effective in defining the character's creative agency through photography and the relationship between looking and being looked at constitutes one of the main axes of the novel.(Hock Soon Ng, 2009)*
3. *The author Kobo Abe constructed the creative agency of the protagonist in relation to his own creative agency. Just like taking photographs, writing and even drawing are the author's creative acts of self-expression.(Hock Soon Ng, 2009)*

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
gazing and photographing trans-formal ■ metamorphic asymetric exxagerated ■ formative playful ■ festive ■ permeable sudden open repulsive ■ obscene distorted ■ multiple ■ mad ironic ■ perverse ambiguous other incongruent strange eerie uncanny ■ in-between	**Urban Exploration:** By gazing and photographing, Box Man explores urban spaces. Exploring the city from the confined perspective of the box, he uncovers the hidden layers and subtleties of the city. He challenges traditional notions of urban exploration, emphasizing a detached yet intimate interaction with the urban fabric. **Creative Documentation:** Gazing and photographing serve as a creative form of documentation, capturing the ordinary and turning it into a subject of introspection. It enables the transformation of everyday scenes into snapshots that reflect Box Man's inner journey and his relationship with urban space, providing a reflective, personalized, and experimental expressions of urban space	"However, as soon as one looks out of the box's observation window, things appear to be quite different. The various details of the scenery become homogeneous, have equal significance." (Abe, 2020, 60) "If I set my camera up here and now, I would be tacitly recognizing a life in common with the box man."(Abe, 2020, 110) The second time he continued watching in defiance of the vista that bore down on him from the eyepiece. When he once tried returning the pressure, his tension too simply began to slacken. When he realized that there was no reason to fear anyone's looking back at him, his sense of guilt vanished at once, and the vista began to change before his eyes. He was vividly aware of the change in the relationship between himself and the scene, between himself and the world." (Abe 2020,168)

Table 12. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Gazing and Photographing" and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*

Grotesque Body Intervention	Spatial Experimentation	Connected Quotes
writing and drawing trans-formal ■ metamorphic asymetric exxagerated ■ formative playful ■ festive ■ permeable sudden open repulsive obscene distorted ■ multiple ■ mad ironic ■ perverse ambiguous other ■ strange eerie uncanny in-between	**Spatial expression:** Through writing and drawing, Box Man externalises his inner thoughts and feelings and places them in the physical space of the box. This intervention questions the interaction between the inner self and the external environment, allowing the box to become a space for self-expression and identity formation. **Creative documentation:** Writing and drawing inside the box documents the Box Man's emotional and psychological states, thoughts and interactions with his environment. This documentation on the surfaces of the box allows the experimentation of creating an expression of the spatial effect of the box. By repeatedly reconstructing the space through the continuous processing of its surfaces, it becomes possible to investigate the appearance and effect of complex, overlapping narratives in space. **Creative reconstruction:** The Box Man reimagines and reconstructs the spaces he encounters through writing and drawing. In this way, Box Man reshapes the reality of himself and the box, opening up a space of intervention. It becomes possible to question creativity's role in forming spatial perceptions and experiences.	"At the rate things are going, this someone intends to go on writing forever and ever in order to cling desperately to the box." (Abe, 2020, 118) "The inside of a face that no one can imitate since no one can see it, a collection of graffiti written compactly all over the inner cardboard walls tanned by three years of sweat and sighs ... this is the story of my life ... there is a sketch map of the town for the purpose of collecting foodstuffs as well as memoranda for the purpose of these notes. Besides all this, ciphers and diagrams the sense of which I myself do not clearly apprehend." (Abe, 2020, 122) "In processing the box the most important thing in all events is to ensure leaving plenty of blank space for scribbling. No, there'll always be plenty of blank space. No matter how assiduous one is in scribbling, one can never cover all the blank space. It always surprises me, but scribbling of a certain type is blank itself." (Abe, 2020, 203)

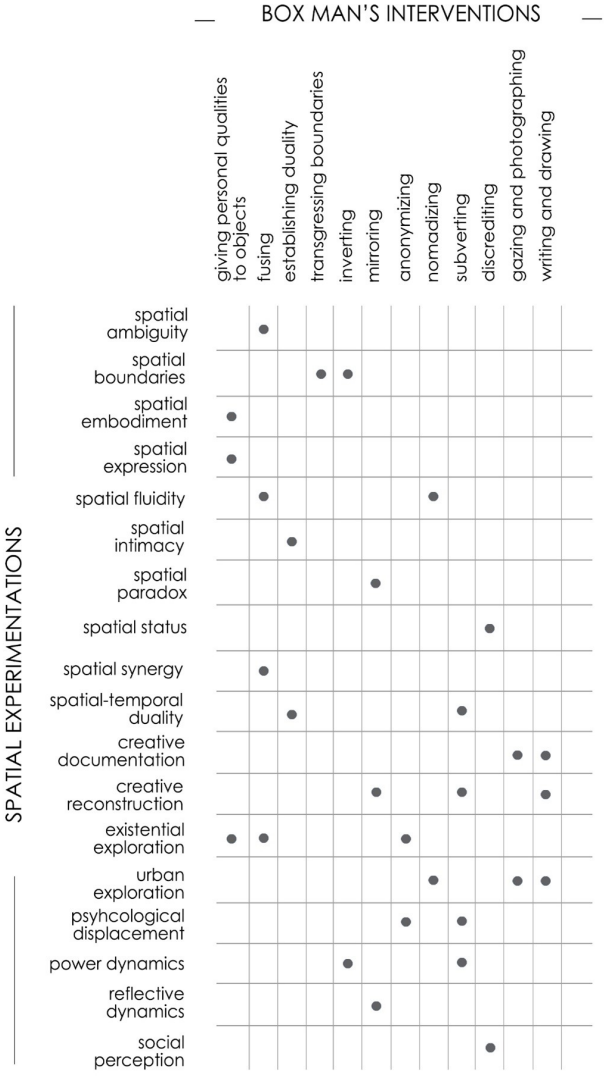
Table 13. *The Box Man's Grotesque Intervention: "Writing and Drawing" and Its Resulting Spatial Experimentation*

experiment with space in ways that can be analyzed under the headings of spatial expression, creative documentation and creative reconstruction *(Table 13)*.

The forms of intervention in the Box Man narrative provide a fragmentary understanding of the presence and creative agency of the grotesque body. Since each grotesque body is characterized by what it conflicts with or what it is trying to make visible in this context, it is not possible to generalize the forms of intervention of the grotesque body based on a single example. However, by evaluating the impact of the forms of intervention in the example of the Box Man and the spatial experimentation it employs, an exemplary partial understanding of the construction of the grotesque body in urban space and its use as a tool in the production of space is created. The Box Man questions the physical, social and psychological aspects of space through his interventions in urban space. The spatial experimentation he created through his varying interventions in the urban space can be explained under the titles of spatial ambiguity, spatial boundaries, spatial embodiment, spatial expression, spatial fluidity, spatial intimacy, spatial paradox, spatial status, spatial synergy, spatial-temporal duality, creative documentation,

creative reconstruction, psychological displacement, power dynamics, reflective dynamics, social perception, urban exploration. These designations that the interventions caused demonstrate how the grotesque body interacts with urban space, transforming it and challenging traditional spatial norms. By problematizing his existence in the space he is in, Box Man investigates the space and the dynamics that shape it, demonstrating the potential of constructive and creative acts to reshape and recontextualize urban spaces *(Table 14)*.

Table 14. *The Box Man's Interventions and Spatial Experimentations*



The Box Man's grotesque body interventions, giving personal qualities to objects, fusing, establishing duality, transgressing boundaries, inverting, subverting, mirroring, and discrediting, evolve to open a field of action in the city to shake and dissolve it. On the other hand, the interventions of anonymizing and nomadizing provide an escape from the everyday routines of the established order, take distance from it and expand the experimental field of action by liberating it from its constraints. In this way, the Box Man opens a space for himself. Despite his temporary nature, he creates a discontinuity within the ongoing, established processes and achieves an extraordinary becoming. He creates a resistance that interrupts the existing flow, acquiring the grotesque body characteristics of transformal, metamorphic, asymmetric, exaggerated, formative, playful, festive, permeable, sudden, open, repulsive, obscene, distorted, multiple, mad, ironic, perverse, ambiguous, other, incongruent, strange, eerie, uncanny, in-between depending on its different interventions. This resistance, triggering feelings of discomfort and confusion, evokes awareness simultaneously. However, in the case of the Box Man, the resistance created by the grotesque body is met with resistance by the city dwellers who tend to maintain order. In addition to violent, destructive and damaging forms of interaction, there are also forms of interaction based on understanding and dialogue or indifference to interaction. On the other hand, the interventions of gazing and photographing, as well as writing and drawing, constitute the creative agency of the Box Man. Thus, the experimental field of action that the box man opens for himself with the resistance he creates allows him to investigate, question, solve and reconstruct the dynamics that create urban space and make visible another existence in urban space.

Conclusion: Grotesque Body as an Experimental Spatial Production Tool

This study, which investigates the interventions of the grotesque body in urban space and its spatial productions, analyzes a representational form of the grotesque body by examining a fictional literary work, the novel The Box Man. The analysis builds an open conceptual framework that reveals the interventions and related characteristics of the grotesque body. This framework demonstrates grotesque body's potential to challenge conventional spatial production practices and to inspire creative, unique ways of reproducing urban space. Thus, it conceptualizes the grotesque body to understand, construct and use it for spatial production. It provides a conceptual framework that encourages and nurtures the use of the grotesque body as an experimental spatial production tool in design practices that shape urban space. This research is essential as it offers an alternative perspective on urban spatial production

Through its construction and creative agency, the grotesque body creates resistance in urban space by creating structures and processes that interrupt the ordinary flow of urban life. This resistance creates a spatial-temporal expansion. It temporarily opens an experimental field of action for questioning the existing and mobilizing suppressed potentials. The irony in the way the grotesque body relates to the existing reality creates patterns of conflict based on struggle, paving the way for the participation of interrogative and creative formations in the production of urban space. In this sense, the interventions of the grotesque body intend to distance oneself from the everyday routines of the city, shaking it up, dissolving it and making otherness visible. Transforming the familiar and the known creates unpredictable processes for both the grotesque body and the city dweller, and it realizes experimental spatial productions.

The depiction of the grotesque body in The Box Man exemplifies the influence of modernist existentialism on the Romantic tradition of creating the grotesque. The novel The Box Man depicts the problem of alienation and the feeling of not belonging to space, which puts human existence in crisis in modernity through the presence and agency of the grotesque body in the urban space. The Box Man opens a space of resistance in the urban space by using the physical distancing provided by the box and performs spatial experiments by opening an experimental field of action through the interventions he creates through the box or by using the box. The interventions of the Box Man's grotesque body and its characteristics create a critical attitude towards urban mechanisms, enabling him to question the physical, social and cultural structure of space to understand and reconstruct space creatively.

As the case of the Box Man reveals, the creative spatial productions produced by the grotesque body through its interventions in the city reveal the need to analyze it as an experimental spatial production tool. In this sense, discussing the presence and agency of the grotesque body constitutes an instrumental approach to the production of space. However, due to the unpredictability and uncertainty created by the grotesque body, rather than focusing on its use in the expectation of direct benefit, it is essential to address it in terms of the otherness it makes visible and what it suggests about the production of urban space to grasp its experimental nature. Researching the grotesque body to address and reproduce the problems of urban space will contribute to developing an alternative practice in the context of various design practices and independent and non-disciplinary practices. The proliferation of research in the context of diversifying practices is essential in terms of supporting alternative urban spatial production practices, given that there is not yet a structured field of research on this subject.

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