ABSTRACT: The legal closing of the Sufi lodges in Turkey in 1925 caused the sudden ruination of hundreds of buildings that were used as tekkes before that event. In the last two decades, many of those buildings have been restored and opened to the public as museums or cultural centres. The museumisation of tekkes is part of a larger assimilation of Sufism into the notion of ‘national culture’. Upon close inspection, this culturalisation of Sufi lodges reveals an attempt to seal the ruination of their significance as sacred places. It is an attempt to commit a ‘perfect crime’: the tekke that is re-created as a cultural centre gives testimony to a destruction for which nobody is blamed and no explanations are offered. Thus, the history of early republican violence against Sufi communities continues to be repressed. This return of the repressed could turn tekkes into uncanny objects, yet they are mostly examples of a banal understanding of the Sufism they claim to preserve.

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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS: