



METAFOR

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi
Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Bölümü
&
Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü
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The Department of Western Languages and Literatures and the Department of Turkish Language and Literature at Boğaziçi University are pleased to announce the launching of a new journal: *METAFOR: The Boğaziçi University Journal of Literary Studies*.

Our mission is to issue an academic periodical of the highest standards, one that provides a forum for innovative discussions in the field of literary studies and literary criticism. The journal accepts submissions of original essays, book reviews, interviews and short commentaries.

We especially welcome contributions that take an interdisciplinary and comparative approach. *METAFOR* will be a semi-annual journal, accepting submissions in Turkish and English. All submissions will be peer-reviewed by referees assigned by the editorial board.

*We thank Burak Şuşut and FİKA
for our cover design...*

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Eda Dedebaş Dünder, Boğaziçi University

**NARRATIVES OF RIGHTS AND THE TRAVEL OF STORIES IN J.M.
COETZEE'S *ELIZABETH COSTELLO***

Abstract

With its close reading and discussion of J.M. Coetzee's novel *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), this article undertakes the debate that is centered on doing good/humanitarian travel versus telling a story/writing about atrocities and argues that Coetzee's novel contributes a cutting-edge dimension to the discussion in that it foregrounds the interconnectedness of texts, humans, and other species. I argue that *Elizabeth Costello* adds a third dimension to the palimpsestic experience in the post-authoritarian text: that is, to enable interconnectivity among texts, humans, and other species, and thus enhance humanitarian effort through an intertextual travel among narratives. In its juxtaposition of travel and meta-fictional storytelling, the novel foregrounds writing and travel as possible modes of humanitarian action refuting a singled-out endeavor for rights abuses. It is thanks to Coetzee and Costello's self-conscious and self-effacing writing styles that storytelling immediately comes forth as an unsatisfying humanitarian effort. However, through inconsistencies of writing and the acknowledgement of stories as being unreliable sources, the act of writing itself turns out to be an empowering experience that denies a cathartic and an emphatic entanglement. Furthermore, combined with travel, writing and self-referentiality stand out as complementary aspects of the discussions of humanitarianism in the novel.

Keywords: J.M. Coetzee, human rights narratives, humanitarian travel, metafiction, *Elizabeth Costello*

**J.M. COETZEE’NİN *ELIZABETH COSTELLO* ADLI
ROMANINDA HAKLARIN ANLATILARI VE ÖYKÜLERİN
SEYAHATI**

Öz

Bu makale, Güney Afrikalı yazar J.M. Coetzee’nin 2003’te basılan *Elizabeth Costello* romanını detaylı incelerken, iyi bir şeyler yapmak/hikaye anlatmak ya da insan hakları için yapılan seyahatler/zulümlerin öykülerini yazmak arasında var olan tartışmayı ele almakta ve Coetzee’nin romanının metinler, insanlar ve öteki türler arasında bir bağlantı kurarak bu tartışmaya yeni bir boyut kazandırmakta olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Dahası, metinleri ve öteki türleri birbirine bağlı göstererek, bu roman metinlerarası bir seyahat kavramı üzerinden hümanitarizm sorunlarını çözmeye çalışmaktadır. Seyahat ve üstkurmacasal öykü anlatımını bir araya getiren bu roman, yazma ve seyahat etme eylemlerinin hümanitarizme beraberce katkıda bulunduğunun altını çizer ve hak ihlallerinin tek bir olguyla çözümlenemeyeceğini vurgular. Coetzee ve Costello’nun üstkurmacasal ve alçakgönüllü yazma biçimleri sayesinde hikaye anlatıcılığı hemen yetersiz bir çaba olarak ortaya çıkar. Fakat, yazma eyleminin tutarsızlıkları ve hikayelerin güvenilmez kaynaklar olduklarını kabullenmeden dolayı, yazma eylemi kathartik ve empatik ilişkileri reddeden güçlü bir olguya dönüşür. Buna ek olarak, seyahat etme kavramıyla bir araya gelen yazma ve özgöndergelilik kavramları romanda hümanitarizmin tamamlayıcı öğeleri olarak ortaya çıkarlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: J.M. Coetzee, insan hakları anlatıları, hümanitarizm ve seyahat, üstkurmaca, *Elizabeth Costello*

The question of representation – whom to represent and how to represent the distant other – has been one of the prominent questions of human rights narratives. Moreover, the discrepancy between doing good versus telling a story; humanitarian travel versus writing about atrocities, consolidates the dominant discussions of contemporary human rights narratives. The main distinction oscillates between whether a humanitarian traveler or a writer who focuses on relaying atrocities, provides more benefit to establish a human rights regime in international territories. For instance, in “‘The Spectacle of Our Suffering’: Staging the International Human Rights Imaginary in Tony Kushner’s *Homebody/Kabul*,” Elizabeth Anker introduces the term “humanitarian crusaders” for Western humanitarian travelers and their newly emerging interest in depictions of suffering from underdeveloped parts of the world and argues that “the humanitarian sentiment that inspires Milton and Priscilla [the two protagonists of Tony Kushner’s *Homebody/Kabul*] is tainted by multiple kinds of self-interest. ... [and] egoistic longings for atonement also consolidate humanitarianism as an ideology.”¹ The metaphorical mantling of the imperialist perspective of the Crusades in contemporary humanitarian aid campaigns implemented by Western NGOs solidifies the short-sighted view of savior Westerners and establishes a binary that differentiates between white saviors and their non-white victims.² In this mutual interdependency, both the savior and the victim thrive through the existence of one another and the real motives of the Western humanitarian crusader – to quote from Anker – are challenged in contemporary human rights narratives.

Similarly, J. M. Coetzee’s 2003 novel *Elizabeth Costello* deals with likeminded questions and the overlapping boundary between humanitarian travel and writing and narrates the story of an aging fictional writer, Elizabeth Costello, who abandons writing in order to travel around the world and delivers lectures on human rights and planetarity. As a vegetarian, traveler, lecturer, self-contradictory writer, public intellectual, mother, sister, and an animal rights absolutist, Costello bears inconsistencies in her lectures and her life in general. Made up of five lectures in eight lessons, all of which were composed by Coetzee between 1998 and 1999,³ the novel tackles these disparate lectures that are connected through Costello’s voyages around the world. Ranging from realism to the relationship between poetry and ecological writing, Costello’s lectures offer the reader a meta-fictional and an inter-textual

1 Elizabeth Anker, “‘The Spectacle of Our Suffering’: Staging the International Human Rights Imaginary in Tony Kushner’s *Homebody/Kabul*,” in *Imagining Human Rights in Twenty-First Century Theater: Global Perspectives*, ed. Florian Becker et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 215-217.

2 For a detailed analysis of the triangle of savage, victim, and savior, see Mutua, Makau. In “Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights,” Mutua argues that contemporary human rights debates and aid campaigns are established on a triangle of a non-white local savage, a non-white non-Western victim, and a white, Christian, Western savior. The elements of this schematic triangle are interdependent on one another.

3 For a complete list of the lectures, see Attwell, David.

reading in which divergent ideas come together in various ways.⁴ The novel has been interpreted as a narrative presenting ecocritical perspectives by critics such as David Attwell, Sam Durrant, and Dominic Head.⁵ In addition, to date, it has been read as a postmodern text foregrounding intertextual references by Thorsten Carstensen, Louise Bethlehem, Michael Moses, and Reingard Nethersole.⁶

Moving beyond the existing criticisms on the novel, I argue that *Elizabeth Costello* adds a third dimension to the palimpsestic experience in the post-authoritarian text: that is, to enable interconnectivity among texts, humans, and other species, and thus enhance humanitarian effort through an inter-textual travel among narratives. In its juxtaposition of travel and meta-fictional storytelling, the novel foregrounds writing and travel as possible modes of humanitarian action refuting a singled-out proposition for rights abuses. It is thanks to Coetzee and Costello's self-conscious and self-effacing writing styles that storytelling immediately comes forth as an unsatisfying humanitarian effort. However, through inconsistencies of writing and the acknowledgement of stories as being unreliable sources, the act of writing itself turns out to be an empowering experience that denies a cathartic and an emphatic entanglement. Furthermore, combined with travel, writing and self-referentiality and their self-sustaining aspects are revealed throughout the novel. In line with the argument proposed above, the first part analyzes the dubious role of writing in activism and narratives of rights and dwells upon the boundary between "telling a story" versus "travelling for a humanitarian purpose." As a writer who now chooses to travel instead of writing fiction, Costello stands out as a disputed figure, and is the emblem of this controversy between travelling and writing. As a female traveler and the public face of J.M. Coetzee, Costello elucidates how the concept of voyage is linked to intertextuality and takes her readers to a journey through her lectures and literary allusions. The second section discusses the concept of self-referentiality and the duplicated embedded reader and writer roles in the novel. In this last section, I highlight the representation of a writer-protagonist and her performativity along with the actualization of a readerly duty that arises through the form of writing proposed in *Elizabeth Costello*.

4 In regards to the disparity of her lectures, Reingard Nethersole states: "All the 'lessons' remain inconclusive because they offer neither an escape from ambivalence nor resolution of 'double meanings', although the first 'lesson' of Elizabeth Costello adheres, at least, to a minimal narrative contract between a reader and a collection of hybrid metafictional texts. [...] [T]he compositional structure of the stories/lessons prevents any suture that would put to rest simultaneous conflicting feelings or close the gap between dichotomies set up by multivalent views espoused, voices aired and contrasting positions taken. Moreover, the 'lessons' neither synthesise opposing views nor do they bridge incompatible sides" (2).

5 See Attwell, Durrant, and Head.

6 See Carstensen, Bethlehem, Moses and Nethersole.

I. Traveling in the World of Writing and Humanitarian Activism

Extensive criticism on the romanticized and voyeuristic experience of the traveler in a non-Western setting and the perpetuation of superior attitudes portrayed in fiction and travel writing have been frequently discussed by scholars.⁷ In *Tourists with Typewriters*, Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan argue that “travel writing frequently provides an alibi for the perpetuation or re-installment of ethnocentrically superior attitudes to ‘other’ cultures, peoples, and places”.⁸ Likewise, in the twenty-first century, this colonial phenomenon has molded into a different form that emphasizes humanitarian aid and travel. Moreover, it is these superior attitudes that Holland and Huggan underscore that mark why humanitarian travel and travel writing are worth critiquing. Despite the fact that Elizabeth Costello denies travelling for the sole purpose of engaging in humanitarian action, the novel repudiates writing as a form of activism and foregrounds an old-fashioned writer’s travels. However, the fact that Costello travels to the Western world so as to instruct Westerners on the atrocities around the world, *Elizabeth Costello* resists settling into hierarchical binaries in which a Western traveler explores sites of dark tourism where she can perpetuate superior attitudes to other cultures.⁹ Therefore, the novel and its traveling protagonist defy hierarchical and mutually exclusive categories.

The close affinity between expedition and storytelling has also been analyzed by scholars. In *Travelers, Immigrants, Inmates*, Frances Bartkowski defines journey as “a strong motif in all storytelling, [...] already a rewriting of the journey into culture.”¹⁰ The concepts of voyage and intertextuality are intrinsically linked to one another. In the distance travelled, there is no longer a discovery for the traveler since the new destination has already been visited by many others. It enables the traveler to look back at home from a new perspective, the new experience she/he gains through his expedition. Alternatively, rewriting in literary texts functions in an analogous way to the idea of voyage. Akin to the concept of travel, intertextuality not only displays a new - usually a critical - view of the source text but also enables us to look at the source-text with different eyes. Julia Sanders defines adaptation as both an innovative and conservative genre since it also locates itself within the canon. Disregarding the question of fidelity between the source-text and the adaptation, she labels

⁷ See Blunt and Mills.

⁸ Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), 7.

⁹ For a wider discussion on dark tourism, see Willis.

¹⁰ Frances Bartkowski, *Travelers, Immigrants, Inmates* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), xix.

adaptation as “the expansion of the canon.”¹¹ Likewise, the female wanderer, Costello in this case, stands in this liminal position in which she imitates the previous models and exemplifies a unique figure at the same time. She not only travels to different lands so as to voice her opinions and to repudiate the influence of literature, but also legitimizes literary actions as modes of activism by alluding to several literary texts. Through this engagement, she juxtaposes travel and writing as leading techniques to call attention to human rights violations and ecological decay. It is through the schema of this palimpsestic experience that she builds up this interdependency among humans, texts, and other species.

A parallel idea of liminality in adaptation and intertextuality can also be observed in Costello’s role as a traveler. In *The Invisible Flâneuse*, Janet Wolff draws attention to the invisibility of women travelers of the nineteenth century. Labeling modernity and the experience of the modern as masculine, she states that a *flâneuse* cannot exist within male institutions.¹² In response to Wolff’s article, Elizabeth Wilson argues that as the *flâneur* leaves home for travel, he loses his masculinity, his ties with the home.¹³ Being emasculated, the *flâneur* becomes a defeated hero who no longer has strict gender boundaries.¹⁴ Analogously, in Coetzee’s novel, Elizabeth Costello takes the position of a female traveler, who no longer has strict gender codes. As the emasculated face of J.M. Coetzee, she has a presence that is both original with no clear-cut gender boundaries and imitative due to her adaptation of a male traveler/writer figure. It is this act of voyage that transforms Costello into a gender-free and almost identity-free role. Due to the symbiotic relationship between Coetzee and Costello, both writers replace one another and their roles are displayed as being interchangeable. Having delivered the five lectures in the novel before its publication, Coetzee uses Costello as his pseudo-public intellectual, who travels to give lectures and does not believe in the power of fiction any more.

In line with Sanders’ definition of an adaptation, Bortolotti and Hutcheon offer a third position in which a literary adaptation is analogous to a biological adaptation and represents “a repetition with a change.”¹⁵ They endorse the absence of authenticity and celebrate the numerous adaptations that are separate from the source but bring a change, an expansion to the canon. They state: “[T]he success of the replicator (narrator) is measured by its survival in

11 Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 7.

12 Janet Wolff, “The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity,” in *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, (London: Routledge, 1989), 141.

13 Elizabeth Wilson, “The Invisible Flâneur,” *New Left Review*, 191 (1992): 110.

14 Ibid., 108.

15 Gary Bortolotti and Linda Hutcheon, “On the Origin of Adaptations: Rethinking Fidelity Discourse and ‘Success’—Biologically,” *New Literary History*, 38 (2007): 447.

its other versions and copies, by its persistence, abundance and diversity. The success of the vehicle is measured by its capacity to propagate the replicator that rides inside it.”¹⁶ Correspondingly, in the novel, as Elizabeth Costello travels and makes allusions to previous texts, Coetzee’s place in the canon is further strengthened. The more she travels through stories and recounts them to her like-minded readers, the more sustained her position in the canon becomes. It is this self-contradictory undertaking that locates *Elizabeth Costello* as a controversial and inaccessible text.

II. Self-Conscious Writing and the Role of the Writer-Protagonist in *Elizabeth Costello*

In contemporary human rights narratives, the act of storytelling stands out as a significant entity as it is usually being set as a complementary form of relaying atrocities and abuses to the rest of the world and a tool to help for healing. In his discussion of the affinity between literature and human rights, James Dawes is critical of storytelling since he believes that choosing one witness or a speaker erases many: “No trial, and no novel, can tell everyone’s story, but the act of selecting a single representative [...] is always an erasure of many.”¹⁷ Repudiating the idea of a single representative and the singularity of the rights, Dawes calls for a multiplicity and heterogeneity of activism and advocating for human rights. In conjunction with Dawes’s argument, it is argued that writing could not be regarded as the sole action against rights abuses, and correspondingly, Coetzee’s writer/protagonist Elizabeth Costello juggles with her dual roles: she is a writer who travels around the world and gives lectures.

Making a clear-cut distinction between “doing good” and “telling a story,” Costello stands out as a self-contradictory writer. On the one hand, she is the famous author of a bestseller, *The House on Eccles Street*, a novel that rewrites Joyce’s *Ulysses* from Molly Bloom’s perspective. She believes in the potential of literature in “reclaiming women’s lives.”¹⁸ On the other hand, she is an activist writer who no longer believes in literature:

She is not sure, as she listens to her own voice, whether she believes any longer in what she is saying. Ideas like these must have had some grip on her when years ago

¹⁶ Ibid., 452.

¹⁷ James Dawes, *That the World May Know: Bearing Witness to Atrocity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 198-9.

¹⁸ J.M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 14.

she wrote them down, but after so many repetitions they have taken on a worn, unconvincing air. On the other hand, she no longer believes very strongly in belief.¹⁹

It is thanks to this controversy that she voices throughout the novel and that leaves literature's role in rights debates in limbo. As a writer who gives lectures on the amity between rights and literature, Costello openly disregards writing as a form of engagement with the debates on planetarity.

In addition to Costello's and Coetzee's disillusion with fiction, the novel displays a variety of metanarrative techniques. First, it uses intertextual references in the lectures by making allusions to Homer's *The Odyssey*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *A Modest Proposal*, *Robinson Crusoe* and various poems by Ted Hughes. Instead of paying tribute to a single text and securing a position in the canon (just as Elizabeth Costello does with her best-seller), Coetzee's novel adds a recalcitrant dimension to this palimpsestic experience, celebrates interdependency among texts, humans, and other species, and challenges the legacy and authority of a single text.

Secondly, the last chapter "At the Gate" is written akin to Kafka's *Before the Law*. In this dream-like lesson/chapter, no lecture exists but Costello arrives at a gulag-like camp where she is asked to make a statement about what she believes. As the writer of many novels and speeches, she finds it hard to write a statement. Finally, she defines herself as such: "*I am a writer, a trader in fictions. [...] I maintain beliefs only provisionally: fixed beliefs would stand in my way. I change my beliefs as I change my habitation or my clothes according to my needs.*"²⁰ In this hazy scene, she acknowledges the efficacy of literature and writing as a profession and thus lays out another contention in relation to the role of writing and literature.

Throughout the novel, substantial references to literature and the impact of storytelling in creating an equal world and feeling compassion for the distant other abound. Labeling herself as the "secretary of the invisible," Elizabeth Costello defends her position as embracing all beings: "I am open to all voices, not just the voices of the murdered and violated. [...] If it is their murderers and violators who choose to summon me instead, to use me and speak through me, I will not close my ears to them, I will not judge them."²¹ She underlines her position as a writer who advocates planetarity and sets up links among texts and beings.

¹⁹ Ibid., 39.

²⁰ Ibid., 195.

²¹ Ibid., 204.

The call for writing is further emphasized with Elizabeth Chandos's letter in the epilogue. Elizabeth Chandos, the fictional wife of a fictional character Lord Chandos, replies back to Francis Bacon.²² In the letter, she asks Bacon to convince her husband to return to writing:

All is allegory, says my Philip. Each creature is key to all other creatures. A dog sitting in a patch of sun licking itself, says he, is at one moment a dog and at the next a vessel of revelation. [...] But how I ask you can I live with rats and dogs and beetles crawling through me day and night [...] Save me, dear Sir, save my husband! Write! Tell him the time is not yet come, the time of the giants, the time of the angels. Tell him we are still in the time of the fleas. Words no longer reach him, they shiver and shatter, [...] But fleas he will understand, the fleas and the beetles still creep past his shield, and the rats.²³

The novel's epilogue with a letter written to a historical character as a response to a fictional letter further bolsters Coetzee's protean fiction that defies the authoritarian text.²⁴ According to Chandos/Costello/Coetzee, writing is a tool to pave the way for sympathetic imagination among human beings, fictional characters, and other species. This intertextual travel among other texts makes human beings eligible to comprehend one another. Intertextuality, thus, bridges the gaps in writing and establishes connections among beings from various backgrounds. It is through writing and literature that human beings are able to have empathy for other species.

In the cruise boat in Chapter 2, Costello becomes aware of the gap between herself and the King penguins. However, later in the novel, she proposes writing as a means to bridge this gap. She says: "In any event, the point is, Marion [Molly] Bloom never existed. Marion [Molly] Bloom was a figment of James Joyce's imagination. If I can think my way into the existence of a being who has never existed, then I can think my way into the existence of a bat or a chimpanzee or an oyster, any being with whom I share the substrate of life."²⁵ If there is sympathetic imagination between fictional characters and the reader or the characters and the writer herself, then there is the possibility of establishing a likewise bond between ourselves

22 The Chandos letter was written by Hugo von Hoffmanthal in 1902. It is considered to be one of the foundational texts of modernism. It is a fictional piece written by a fictional writer, Lord Chandos, to Francis Bacon. There is a play with time and textuality in the letter. In this fictional letter, Lord Chandos complains about the fact that he cannot write due to the raptures in language.

23 J.M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 229-230.

24 Michael Valdez Moses, "'King of Amphibians': Elizabeth Costello and Coetzee's Metaphoric Fictions," *Journal of Literary Studies/Tydskrif vir Literatuurwetenskap*, 25 nr: 4 (2009): 29.

25 J.M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 80.

and other species. Building on Costello's belief in sympathetic imagination, Heather Walton argues that Coetzee claims to share a related bond with Costello. In relation to Coetzee's writing from the perspective of a woman, Walton writes:

Literature does truth differently and it cannot manifest its revelations without fault. ... Yes, when a man writes as a woman, he employs imagination rather than experience and they are not the same. Yes, authors achieve their ends by borrowing, impersonating, mirroring and metamorphosis. But it is substitution, miscegenation and artful deceptions that constitute every literary text. This is what literature is.²⁶

It is this intertextual and deceptive nature of writing that Coetzee and Costello utilize and thus make an argument based on the fact that if literature is made to build sympathetic imagination, then human beings are analogously dependent on other species and can establish hearty bonds among species.

Despite Chandos's plea for writing and Coetzee's stress on the power of fiction, Michael Deckard draws attention to the ironic nature of Costello as a writer and the discrepancy between her frailty as an intellectual and her strong and radical arguments in the lectures.²⁷ The novel problematizes Elizabeth Costello as a failed intellectual and activist. As a vegetarian who does not allow any meat to be served at any dinner she attends, as an animal rights advocate who uses a leather bag, Costello stands out as an inconsistent activist. As she becomes radical in her beliefs, she turns into an animal rights absolutist, who takes her arguments to an extreme position and makes an analogy between the cattle slaughtered in the slaughterhouses and the Holocaust.

The reader's skepticism on Costello's inconsistency can be observed in Norma, her daughter-in-law, who criticizes Costello for being too sentimental and naïve by refuting her biased perspective on vegetarianism. As a professor of philosophy, Norma disapproves Costello's speech "The Philosophers and The Animals." In her complaint of Elizabeth Costello, Norma talks to her husband John:

It's naïve, John. It's the kind of easy, shallow relativism that impresses freshmen. Respect for everyone's world view, the cow's world view, the squirrel's world view,

26 Heather Walton, "Staging John Coetzee/Elizabeth Costello," *Literature & Theology: An International Journal of Religion, Theory, and Culture*, 22 no: 3 (2008): 286.

27 Michael Funk Deckard, "Irony and Belief in Elizabeth Costello," in *J. M. Coetzee and Ethics: Philosophical Perspectives on Literature*, ed. Anton Leist and Peter Singer (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), 339.

and so forth. In the end, it leads to total intellectual paralysis. You spend so much time respecting that you haven't time left to think.²⁸

By assuming the position of a reader and voicing her views openly, Norma discloses Costello's ambiguous stance in this novel. It is through Norma's reflection of the reader's point of view that *Elizabeth Costello* showcases its metafictional features and reveals the disputed role of writing.

Moreover, in Chapter 6, in her Amsterdam lecture called "The Banality of Evil," Elizabeth Costello critiques Paul West's novel *The Very Rich Hours of Count von Stauffenberg*, which depicts the memories of a hangman, who tortured the would-be assassins of Hitler in 1944.²⁹ She is critical of the realistic representation of the memoir. As a writer who clearly values "doing good" over "telling a story," she perplexes the reader with her ideas on West's novel. As an activist who has turned to activism due to the mesmerizing aspect of fiction; "the secretary of the invisible," i.e. Elizabeth Costello, is now critical of a novel for being too realistic. According to Thorsten Carstensen, her disillusionment and inconsistency is compatible with the deconstruction of Grand Narratives in the novel. He writes: "While Elizabeth continuously deconstructs her own ideas, the novel displays an analogous lack of coherence and discomfort with universal statements. [...] Acting within different fields of discourse, Elizabeth experiences the loss of an all-embracing, ultimate truth. Forever gone is the unifying metanarrative, which would offer the necessary criteria for judging and (de-) legitimizing individual claims."³⁰ Costello's inconsistencies as a writer and an intellectual challenge the idea of authoritarian text and writer. Finally, her re-union with her son and daughter-in-law Norma ends with an ironic, skeptical and perhaps a rhetorical question raised by her son as they are departing. To highlight his mother's inconsistent and irrational behaviors, John asks: "Do you really believe, Mother, that poetry classes are going to close down the slaughterhouses?"³¹

III. Conclusion

In the novel, Elizabeth Costello devalues writing as a failed attempt for humanitarianism, for bridging the gap between previous writings, for creating a sympathetic imagination between ourselves and other species. Instead, she emphasizes traveling and

28 J.M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 91-2.

29 Ibid., 88.

30 Thorsten Carstensen, "Shattering the Word-Mirror in Elizabeth Costello: J.M. Coetzee's Deconstructive Experiment," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 42 (2007): 81.

31 J.M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 103.

“doing good.” However, the novel ends with Elizabeth Chandos’s appeal for writing despite all the limitations: “Yet he writes to you, as I write to you, who are known above all men to select your words and set them in place and build your judgments as a mason builds a wall with bricks. Drowning, we write out of our separate fates. Save us.”³² On the surface level, Elizabeth Costello emphasizes the futility of writing as a form of humanitarian effort and valorizes her travels and lectures as enabling modes of activism. However, deep down, as an inconsistent figure, she refutes what she advocates. By presenting Costello as a controversial figure, Coetzee opens up new venues for fiction to emerge. By challenging the authority of canonical texts with the use of intertextual references and including a writer-protagonist who is not successful in her travels and lectures, Coetzee foregrounds fiction as a means to channel thoughts and to pave the way for a more sustainable form of activism. Moreover, in his use of a metaphor of a travel – a metaphorical and symbolic voyage among texts – Coetzee underscores the travel of stories that foreground writing and literature. All in all, *Elizabeth Costello* emerges as a novel that successfully assembles travel and literature as potential patterns to human rights narratives and their advocacy.

³² Ibid., 230.

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**IS A *BILDUNG*SWOMAN POSSIBLE? THE MAKING OF A WEST
INDIAN HEROINE IN JAMAICA KINCAID'S *ANNIE JOHN***

Abstract

Feminist theory has been under critique from within and without with regards to how inclusive it is in its scope and how welcoming it is for those women who either refuse to perform mainstream identities or are disregarded because of their traditional identities. Literature represents the epitome of a space of inclusion in which feminism can transform into feminisms and thrive. I claim that fictional biographies and autobiographies of West Indian women provide us with these new spaces that enable us to expand the conversation about how the feminisms of different women can come together. As one such novel, actually a bildungsroman, Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* both provides a fertile ground for questioning the significance of race in addition to gender for the lives of women, and also gives voice and visibility to a genuine character of color who is neither a generic fairy tale heroine, nor an invented representation of an exotic woman. In my title, I refer to the book as a bildungswoman because a brief research on the origin of the genre exposes its unflinching connection to a white middle class hero rather than a black lower class heroine. In this article, I first examine the traditional and feminist versions of autobiography and bildungsroman, and then offer a reading of *Annie John* as a feminist and postcolonial subversion of the traditional bildungsroman. I analyze how Kincaid juxtaposes patriarchal with colonial to highlight the double bind women of color have to fight against and how she makes use of different kinds of interactions among women in writing the destiny of Annie as an alternative to the traditional plot lines allotted for women of color.

Keywords: feminism, interdisciplinarity, West Indian Literature, bildungsroman, Post-colonial autobiography, colonial identity, oppression.

KENDİNE AİT BİR *BILDUNGSROMAN*: ANNIE JOHN

Öz

Son zamanlarda feminist teori, faaliyet alanının kapsayıcılığı ve ana akım feminist yaklaşımları ya kurallara uymayan cinsellikleriyle ya da geleneksel kalıpları birebir takip edişleriyle aşan kadınlara karşı göstermekte zorlandığı kucaklayıcılığı dolayısıyla kadınların eleştirilerine maruz kalmakta. Edebiyat, bu kendini sürekli yenilemesi gereken teorinin yenilenmekle kalmayıp çoğalabilmesi ve ötekileştirilmiş feminizmleri kendine verimli bir şekilde katabilmesi için oldukça uygun bir alan. Antiller’de yazılmış kurmaca kadın biyografi ve otobiyografileri, bize başkarakterlerinin hayatları üzerinden farklı kadınların bu tartışmalara neler katabileceğini örnekliyor. Aynı zamanda *bildungsroman* da olan Jamaica Kincaid’in *Annie John* isimli romanı, bir yandan ırkın bir kadının cinsiyeti üzerinde ne denli büyük bir etkisi olduğunu gösterirken diğer yandan da başkarakter Annie’ye şimdiye kadar geleneksel olarak zorunda bırakıldığı masal prensesi ve batılı erkek yazarların fantezilerinde yaratılmış bir egzotik prenses rollerinin dışında ses ve görünürlük veriyor. Başlığında *bildungskadın* kelimesini kullanıyorum çünkü *bildungsroman*’ın orta sınıf erkek kahramanlarla ilintili olduğunu anlamak için kısacık bir araştırma bile yeterli. Bu makalede, önce otobiyografi ve *bildungsroman* formlarının geleneksel ve feminist versiyonları arasındaki farkları inceliyorum, sonra da *Annie John* romanının neden feminist ve koloni sonrası bir *bildungsroman* uyarlaması olduğu üzerinde duruyorum. Kincaid’in patriarkadan ve kolonyal düzenden kaynaklanan baskıları birbirine karışmış bir biçimde incelemesi renkli kadınların ne derece çapraşık bir düzene karşı mücadele verdiklerini gösteriyor. Kincaid başkahramanını bu düzenin içinde çırpındırmak yerine ona diğer kadınlarla kurduğu ilişkiler üzerinden yepyeni bir kader yaratma şansı vererek feminizm/ere katkıda bulunuyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: feminizm, disiplinlerarası araştırma, Antiller edebiyatı, *bildungsroman*, Koloni sonrası otobiyografileri, kolonyal kimlik.

In 2009, Homi Bhabha gave the opening speech of a graduate student conference as the director of the Humanities Center at Harvard University. The conference was on interdisciplinary studies in the humanities, and after a short speech on the subject, Bhabha concluded with a memorable sentence that I remember whenever I am among my engineer, scientist, and medical doctor friends and feel less valuable than they are as a PhD student in the humanities: “Engineers build models, while humanities builds communities.”¹ Aside from the personal significance the quote carries, I visit its vision because the idea of all work done by humanities as an attempt at building communities of unlimited variety and richness brings forth numerous new opportunities and possibilities for the interdisciplinary scholar. Feminist study constitutes one example of how interdisciplinarity among the humanities and the social sciences is urgent and indispensable in building, transforming, and healing individuals and communities. Not only does it make visible the diversified versions of women’s oppression, it also reveals new connections both among the different oppressed groups and between the oppressors and their victims.

There are few feminist scholars who would still argue that women of color have not been victimized more than their white counterparts because they are marked by their race as well. As Uma Narayan notes, they are oppressed even by western feminism because “different cultural contexts and political agendas may cast a very different light on both the ‘idols’ and the ‘enemies’ of knowledge as they have characteristically been typed in western feminist epistemology.”² Religious, historical, cultural, and even traditional issues ranging from the use of hijab to the struggle of national independence have stirred controversies among feminist communities, and approaches disregarding contexts have caused more harm than benefit for the feminist discourse. As a result, Leith Mullings asserts “African-American women, and other women of color find themselves in a narrow historical space, caught between ideal models and real social conditions, between the pressures of racial liberation and gender liberation.”³ Hazel V. Carby in her article “White Woman Listen!” makes the same claim and demands a feminist theory that takes into consideration the racial dynamics controlling the lives of women of color.⁴ As a result, during the last decades, feminists of color have criticized the western feminist

1 Homi Bhabha (opening speech delivered at the conference entitled “Objects of Knowledge/Objects of Exchange: Contours of (Inter)disciplinarity” Mellon Graduate Student Conference Humanities Center. Harvard University. April 3-4, 2009).

2 Uma Narayan, “The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Non-Western Feminist,” eds. McGann and Kim (Routledge, 2010), 309.

3 Leith Mullings, “Images, Ideology and Women of Color,” eds. Hermann and Stewart (Avalon Publishing, 2001), 283.

4 Hazel V. Carby, “White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood” eds. Rosemary Hennessey and Chrys Ingraham (New York: Routledge, 1997), 110-128.

standpoint and have proposed new ways of seeing and understanding the women who do not carry the white badge of privilege. In this endeavor, critics, scholars, and writers have been giving voice to the women of color and incorporating discussions of race and class into the feminist theory. This inclusion helps represent women who were silenced for a long time and adds a new interdisciplinarity to the work undertaken by feminist scholars.

Literature represents the epitome of a space of inclusion where “feminisms” can thrive in. Narayan writes that “it is easier and more likely for the oppressed to have critical insights into the conditions of their own oppression than it is for those who live outside these structures.”⁵ She proposes “nonanalytic” and “nonrational” forms of discourse as more “sympathetic” ways of representing these critical insights.”⁶ According to Donna Perry, one such “sympathetic” source is fiction that “offers new myths of female development and new definitions of success”⁷. Similar to these scholars, I claim that fictional biographies and autobiographies of West Indian women provide us with these new spaces that enable us to expand the conversation about how the feminisms of different women can come together. As one such novel, actually a *bildungsroman*, Jamaica Kincaid’s *Annie John* both provides a fertile ground for questioning the significance of race in addition to gender for the lives of women, and also gives voice and visibility to a genuine character of color who is neither a generic fairy tale heroine, nor an invented representation of an exotic woman. In my title, I refer to the book as a *bildungswoman* because a brief research on the origin of the genre exposes its unflinching connection to a white middle class hero rather than a black lower class heroine. In this article, I first examine the traditional and feminist versions of autobiography and *bildungsroman*, and then offer a reading of the *Annie John* as a feminist and postcolonial subversion of the traditional *bildungsroman*. I analyze how Kincaid juxtaposes patriarchal with colonial to highlight the double bind women of color have to fight against and how she makes use of different kinds of interactions among women in writing the destiny of Annie as an alternative to the traditional plot lines allotted for women of color.

Philippe Lejeune describes autobiography as “A retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning *his* own existence, focusing on his *individual* life, in particular on

5 Narayan, *Ibid.*, 314.

6 *Ibid.*, 313

7 Donna Perry, “Initiation in Jamaica Kincaid’s *Annie John*” ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe (Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications, 1990), 256.

the *development of his personality* [emphases added].”⁸ According to Georges Gusdorf, autobiography “depends on conscious awareness of the *singularity* of each *individual* life [emphases added].”⁹ Although Lejeune and Gusdorf are two of the most important scholars of autobiography, their definitions are limited by their own word choice to only a small percentage of the world’s population: middle class Western male. Similarly, *Bildungsroman* originated as the novel of the development and social formation of a young man. Louis Caton writes that in a *Bildungsroman* “[a] sensitive child-hero begins his life in a provincial area where he quickly perceives constraints on his ‘natural’ development. He grows frustrated with his family, school, and friends. Finally, at a fairly early age, he leaves the repression of home for the ‘real’ education that occurs in a sophisticated, worldly, and often urban setting.”¹⁰ He concludes that “The *Bildungsroman*, then, has a perceived history of only turning the boy into the man, not the girl into the woman.”¹¹ Examples of traditional *Bildungsroman* disclose how when development, individuality, success, and incorporation into society as an adult are considered, women, as well as the poor and the colored, are irrelevant. However, the second half of the twentieth century witnessed a decrease in the works written according to this original structure and brought forth new practices instead. Linda Hutcheon connects this decrease to the modern distrust in a coherent self and the postmodernist emphasis on fragmentation¹². As printing cultures became more inclusive and began to include more heterogeneous stories and characters, life-narrative gradually have lost its rigidity, as well. While providing more opportunities to be heard, this transformation brought new challenges for the subaltern: “The current post-structuralist and postmodern challenges to the coherent, autonomous subject have to be put on hold in feminist and postcolonial discourses, for both must work first to assert and affirm a denied or alienated subjectivity: those radical postmodern challenges are in many ways the luxury of the dominant order which can afford to challenge that which it securely possesses.”¹³ Women writers of color, being twice removed from the norm of Western male luxury of authority illustrate the best example to those assertions and affirmations of a denied or alienated subjectivity. They had been invisible in the literary canon because when they wrote, they had used their own cultural traditional forms instead of Western genres. As a result, they

8 Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 4.

9 Georges Gusdorf, “Conditions and Limits of Autobiography,” ed. James Olney, *Autobiography*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980, 28.

10 Louis Caton, “Romantic Struggles: The *Bildungsroman* and Mother-Daughter Bonding in Jamaica Kincaid’s *Annie John*,” *MELUS* 21, No. 3, (1996): 125.

11 *Ibid.*, 126.

12 Linda Hutcheon, “Circling the Downspout of Empire: Post-Colonialism and Postmodernism,” *Ariel* 20, no. 4, (1989): 151.

13 *Ibid.*

had been represented and objectified by others in travelogues, stories, novels, letters, anthropological accounts, and political treatises. Edward Said talks of the Orient as “almost a European invention;” women of color in traditional literary forms were no exception.¹⁴

During the postcolonial movement women writers managed to reclaim more power as narrators of their own stories, and as Julia Swindells writes, they “began to assert themselves into the culture via autobiography, via the assertion of a ‘personal’ voice, which speaks beyond itself.”¹⁵ One important element in this sudden increase in the number voices was the interest of the non-white literary spheres in using versions of Western forms in their literary works. By adopting Western genres and adapting these to their own subjectivities, they have subverted both the Western literary traditions that control literary markets, and the Western male gaze that oversees the representation of everything and everyone in these markets. Throughout the last decades, life narratives written by non-Western writers demand a new interest in the women of color. The examples such as Merle Hodge’s *Crick Crack Monkey*, Jamaica Kincaid’s *Annie John*, Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*, although not numerous, are successful enough to find their way into the Western syllabi.

Bildungsroman goes back to the eighteenth century German literature and appears many times in English literature. The genre which emerged in line with the emphasis placed on the inevitability of change and progress situates the individual and his life experience at the center. Being a term borrowed from German, it remains untranslated on the grounds that the word *bildung* has significations such as “education,” “creation,” “development,” “establishment,” and “formation.” Of all these definitions, the last one might be the best to convey the essence of the genre. *Bildungsroman* aims to portray the identity formation of a protagonists through his metaphorical or actual journey from youth to maturity. The genre thus proves quite suitable for the postcolonial and/or female subjects celebrating their long strived for subjecthoods. It enables the woman writer of color to create a space to tell either her own story or the story of her culture. However, the examples of *bildungsroman* created by the postcolonial authors do not usually engender a direct replication of the western form. Postcolonial writers lift the form from its context and position it in a completely different historical, cultural, and geographical context. While the traditional *Bildungsroman* is primarily about the acculturation of an adolescent and since the acculturation of the postcolonial subject is marked with a flaw because it is forced, the postcolonial *Bildungsroman* constitutes almost a genre of its own.

14 Edward Said, *Orientalism*. (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 1.

15 Julia Swindells, *Uses of Autobiography*, (Taylor and Francis, 1995), 7.

In general terms, life writing of women of color differs from the Western male tradition of self-writing in two main aspects: First, as Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson claim, women's narratives "[culminate] not in integration [into the dominant culture] but in an *awakening* to gender-based limitations."¹⁶ In contrast to a white male who, through the adventures in the novel, realizes that he is the paradigm of power in society, the female writer is faced with the truth of her inferiority because of her gender. Traditional literary forms had barely allowed any visibility for the development of a heroine in works other than fairytales. In many fairy tales the same structure repeats: a girl with a happy life is introduced; her life is suddenly disturbed by a hardship; she has to leave her family, go through adventures, and with the help a knight with a shining armour—reaches a happy end. On the other hand, female protagonists of postcolonial growth stories are not damsels-in-distress. These characters brim with aesthetic appreciation, capacity to love, solidarity, and independence. These protagonists will not be saved by a knight. Instead, the writers position their female characters in a network of other women, thus causing different kinds of female solidarity to help them forge their own identities. Thus these novels, as Donna Perry claims, suggest "a possible paradigm for female development that represents an alternative to the victim models."¹⁷

The second strategy of adapting traditional *bildungsroman* to non-Western women's situations is the type of the final identity formation. These novels focus on a communal rather than an individual tradition of story-telling. This means that these narratives are not haunted by a gradually increasing dose of individualism that allows the protagonists in male narratives to triumph in the end. Instead, they incorporate other women's stories, and interactions among these women prove important in final autonomy of the heroine. She grows up with female involvement in her life, and her success in life is tethered to these influences.

Annie John, which tells the story of a young girl growing up in Antigua, is at once a *bildungswoman* and Caribbean *bildungsroman* since it follows the identity formation of its West Indian female protagonist.¹⁸ Kincaid takes the traditional *Bildungsroman* and subverts it. To do this, she changes the gender of the protagonist, situates her among women, and assigns her a rejection of Western values through the critique of colonial education. This way, as Maria Karafilis claims, Kincaid "[colonizes] this literary form and [reverses] traditional lines of

16 Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 189.

17 Donna Perry, "Initiation in Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John*" ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe (Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications, 1990), 256.

18 Jamaica Kincaid. *Annie John* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1997).

power by controlling representation instead of passively being represented by the dominant culture.”¹⁹ Thus composed, *Annie John* makes us read neither a fairy tale, nor an invented representation of an exotic woman.²⁰

West Indies refers to the numerous islands in the Caribbean Sea. Their population, changed drastically due to the Atlantic slave trade from the 16th until the 19th centuries, includes ethnic groups descended from Europe, Africa, India, and China along with Native American inhabitants who came or were brought to the islands as plantation owners, overseers, or slaves. As the ethnic structure of the West Indies is marked by colonialism, its communal identity cannot be separated from a past of slavery.²¹ Jamaica Kincaid was born in 1949 in Antigua, one of these West Indian islands reshaped demographically and culturally by British imperialism. She lived on the island until she was sent to the United States to become an au-pair to send money to her family. As numerous interviews and biographical introductions note, after a period of obeying her mother’s expectations, she decided to follow the call for education and terminated connection with her family. She ended up as a staff writer for the *The New Yorker* and in 1983 published her first book, *At the Bottom of the River*. Her second book *Annie John*, whose chapters were first published separately in *The New Yorker*, was compiled in 1985.

The novel is composed of eight chapters, each focusing on a different phase, crisis, or influence on Annie’s development. They are written from Annie John’s point of view and narrative voice and tell the story of her life beginning with her tenth year and ending when she is seventeen and about to leave the island for a new future overseas. The period of Annie’s life that Kincaid narrates is for the most part marked by both colonial and patriarchal oppression and her interactions with her mother. These three sources of interventions which are at times inseparable give rise to Annie’s numerous rebellions to all the authority figures that symbolize these oppressions. Yet, Annie undergoes other interventions by women in her community, and it is these interactions that help shape her identity.

As a character, Annie represents the first variation in non-traditional *Bildungsroman* that I have talked about above. Annie’s identity formation is linked to the colonial education she has to take in her island. Rather than going through adventures that accentuate her

19 Maria Karafilis, “Crossing the Borders of Genre: Revisions of the ‘Bildungsroman’ in Sandra Cisneros’s ‘*The House on Mango Street*’ and Jamaica Kincaid’s *Annie John*,” *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 31, No. 2 (Winter, 1998): 64.

20 Jamaica Kincaid. *Annie John* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1997).

21 Selwyn Cudjoe writes how slavery affected the institution of family on the one hand, and men and women separately on the other hand in her introductory piece to *Caribbean Women Writers: Essays from the First International Conference* (1990).

individuality like *bildungs* boys, she keeps analyzing the nets that keep her imprisoned. Annie has to read the same texts, learn the same history, memorize the same dates, and recite the same poems as the students in England do. She has to celebrate imperialism, respect the British Queen, read children's books written for the blonde and blue eyed children of the center of the empire, and honor Christopher Columbus, the very symbol of colonialism, who sealed the destinies of many of the Atlantic islands during his voyages. Beginning with her first encounter with the education system of the island, Annie consciously criticizes the teachers and their practices. With the loss of her idealism about and trust in the colonial education, she becomes aware especially of the perversity of her people's situation as the former slaves who are forced into respecting imperial culture and history. Contemplating on history during one class at school, she says,

Of course, sometimes, what with our teachers and our books, it was hard for us to tell on which side we really now belonged—with the masters or the slaves—for it was all history, it was all in the past, and everybody behaved differently now; all of us celebrated Queen Victoria's birthday, even though she had been dead a long time. But we, the descendants of the slaves, knew quite well what had really happened, and I was sure that if the tables had been turned we would have acted differently; I was sure that if our ancestors had gone from Africa to Europe and come upon the people living there, they would have taken a proper interest in the Europeans on first seeing them, and said, "How nice," and then gone home to tell their friends about it. (1997, 76)²²

The passage presents us both sides of Annie: the funny dreamer who can imagine how unimpressed her ancestors would have found their white counterparts, and the smart cynic who acknowledges not only the political, financial, and physical oppression that had happened before she was born, but also the cultural and psychological oppression that still continues during her lifetime.

However, dreamer and cynic are not enough to describe everything about Annie because as aware as she is of the catastrophes of imperialism, she is also obsessed with its cultural products: she devours the adventures of the blonde girl in her Enid Blyton books even though she could only be a part of these books as the savage stereotype. She imagines she lived in Belgium just like Charlotte Bronte, "the author of [her] favorite novel, *Jane Eyre*."²³ As a child

22 Jamaica Kincaid. *Annie John* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1997), 76.

23 Ibid., 92.

constantly reading what is made available to her by her school and the public library and daydreaming whenever she finds an opportunity, Annie is more influenced by the colonial education than she is alert to its oppression. She tries to revolt against the rules that the colonial education system inscribes for the West Indian girls, but she subscribes to and appreciates the same rules through her identification with the Western literary figures. While her favorite novel ends with the marriage of the protagonist, she would not consider marriage for her own future. In the chapter entitled “Somewhere, Belgium,” her daydream about Bronte comes to an end abruptly the minute her friend Gwen mentions marriage: “‘I think it would be so nice if you married Rowan. Then you see, that way we could be together always.’ I was brought back to the present, and I stopped and stood still for a moment; then my mouth fell open and my whole self started to tremble. ... I felt so alone; the last person left on earth couldn’t feel more alone than I.”²⁴ Annie leaves Gwen out of her life after this instance and shuts her out the narrative till the very end of the novel. From that point on, we witness Annie’s struggle to completely grasp all the oppressions that make her suffer, and run away from them.

Kincaid emphasizes Annie’s struggle with her conscious revolt to and unconscious acceptance of the enforced value system by contrasting the daughter with her mother Mrs. Annie John. Although she is a strong, understanding, and intellectual woman, who herself revolted against her family and the patriarchal values they represent when she left her home and island in order to live as she wanted, she becomes a perpetrator of a similar oppression towards Annie. She is there as a possible version of Annie lest she cannot internalize and heal her struggle. In the beginning of the novel, the two get along very well. Annie even says that she used to live in a paradise in those early years of her life when she and her mother were so close.²⁵ However, when Annie turns twelve and begins to grow into a young woman, her mother’s attitude towards her changes. Mrs. John’s and her generation’s in-between position plays an important role in the abrupt transformation of their relationship: She is West Indian in her interactions with other women, in her participation in cultural rituals such as funerals, and in her relationships with her husband while she is also an Anglophile who tries to furnish Annie with the manners of a middle class English girl.²⁶ Her own ambiguity towards the two cultures makes her a prisoner of both, and she reproduces them in herself.

24 Ibid., 93.

25 Ibid., 25.

26 Jamaica Kincaid calls her mother an Anglophile in Cudjoe’s interview (1990, 217).

One obvious example of this identification of the patriarchal and colonial oppression in the voice of the mother manifests itself in the chapter entitled “Columbus in Chains.” Right after her critique of the colonial education quoted above, Annie John sees a picture of Christopher Columbus in her history book. He is sitting in the bottom of the ship while his hands and feet are chained to it because of a quarrel he had with a representative of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. “What just deserts, I thought, for I did not like Columbus. How I loved this picture—to see the usually triumphant Columbus, brought so low, seated at the bottom of a boat just watching things go by.”²⁷ Then she remembers how she heard her mother read a letter from her family and responded to the news of her father’s stiff limbs saying ““So the great man can no longer just get up and go. How I would love to see his face now!”” Annie writes her mother’s first sentence under the picture on her book. As Moira Ferguson writes, “Annie John relished defacing the picture of Columbus, whom she detests. Quickly, she mentally shifts images from Christopher Columbus to her grandfather, Pa Chess, from paternalistic colonialism to paternalistic domesticity, and her own mother’s sardonic anger when she discovers that Pa Chess is ill.”²⁸ Annie realizes, though unconsciously, the interconnectedness and almost the interchangeability of patriarchy and colonialism when she is twelve; but Mrs. John remains blind to it. She simplifies her own feud to a personal level and connects it neither to the Caribbean gender norms nor to colonial impositions on identity formation. She represents what Annie should not become in this *Bildungswoman*. Otherwise, she would remain as a product of patriarchy and colonialism.

Under colonialism and patriarchy, the two pressures originating from inside and imported from outside her island, Annie struggles to find her identity throughout different stages she goes through in her childhood and youth. However, in line with the communal aspect of the West Indian *Bildungsroman*, Jamaica Kincaid supplies her protagonist with different forms of female solidarity which, along with turning Annie into a strong, independent, and successful young woman, also contributes to the feminist readings of the novel. In 1974, feminist sociologist and psychologist Nancy Chodorow wrote that since women are responsible for child care and the male and female children go through this experience in diverse ways, they

27 Jamaica Kincaid. *Annie John* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1997), 77-78.

28 Moira Ferguson, *Jamaica Kincaid: Where the Land Meets the Body*, (Virginia: The University Press of Virginia, 1994), 60.

end up growing up with different personality traits.²⁹ Because of this early diversification, she claimed, “feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to others more than masculine personality does.”³⁰ The significance of relationships with others increases even more for the women of color: Mary Helen Washington writes, “few, if any, women in the literature of the black women succeed in heroic quests without the support of other women or men in their communities. Women talk to other women in this tradition, and their friendships with other women—mothers, sisters, grandmothers, friends, lovers—are vital to their growth and well-being.”³¹ Annie represents an example of this tradition through how she manages to survive after her colonial assimilation and patriarchal enculturation, and to some extent, how she rejects them through these bonds that she develops with other women.

The forms of female interactions in *Annie John* can be classified into three categories: mother-daughter bonding, friendship bonds, and connection with nature and the spiritual world.³² First of these interactions takes place between the child Annie and her mother. This stage furnishes Annie not only with her mother’s limitless love for her but also with the traditional West Indian values about gender and social norms such as family formation and women’s status in society. As Donna Perry states, “in a racist society in which the world beyond the family denies her autonomy, the female hero of color looks to her mother—and the world of women—to find models of strength and survival.”³³ Annie participates in her culture through her mother’s stories the way she would not be able to in the real world. Even though Kincaid presents Mrs. John as the embodiment of patriarchal and colonial oppression, she also gives her two very important roles in Annie’s identity formation. First of all, Annie is initiated into love and bonding through her mother, which allows her, for the rest of her life, to seek connection with other women around her. As the novel proceeds, Annie looks for these intimate bonds in order to nourish her identity formation. Secondly, Mrs. John provides Annie with the story of her own rebellion. In the chapter entitled “The Circling Hand,” Annie tells the reader the story of how her mother left her house on Dominica after a quarrel with her father and came to

29 Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* qtd in Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993), 7.

30 Ibid.

31 Mary Helen Washington, *Invented Lives*, (Anchor, 1988) qtd in Donna Perry, “Initiation in Jamaica Kincaid’s *Annie John*” ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe (Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications, 1990), 252.

32 Jamaica Kincaid. *Annie John* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1997).

33 Donna Perry, “Initiation in Jamaica Kincaid’s *Annie John*” ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe (Massachusetts: Calaloux Publications, 1990), 252.

Antiqua. She was liberated enough to remain unmarried until she was thirty and choose a husband thirty-five years older than she is. As a result, although she forces Annie to comply with the expectations of society and become a “lady,” she also provides for her a very strong and independent role model. Annie follows this role model even though she is not conscious that it is her mother’s story that inspires her to rebel.

The second stage in Annie’s gender construction comes when she befriends first Gwen and then the Red Girl. These two subsequent chapters in Annie’s life present two female influences on her identity as opposed to the older male figures that influence the protagonists’ lives in the traditional *Bildungsroman*. She tries to replace her mother with these new friends, to the degree of saying “when I was younger I had been afraid of my mother's dying, but that since I met Gwen this didn't matter so much.”³⁴ However, her love for Gwen does not last long. After completing her duty in Annie’s life, Gwen disappears, becomes a random student in the class and an old friend in the street. Instead, Annie aims for a more secret, more rebellious relationship: The Red Girl. The Red Girl represents what Annie’s mother’s “lady-like business” rejects. Her unclean clothes, her unruly hair, her independence from her mother all excite Annie and makes her admire this new friend. Still, this relationship, too, ends as abruptly as the previous one did: “Soon after I started to menstruate, and I stopped playing marbles. I never saw the Red Girl again.”³⁵ Although Annie ends up forgetting both of the girls, one embodying a complete independence to the degree of refusing to participate in society and follow its rules, and the other a complete acceptance, internalization, and reproduction of the same social norms; her experience with them allows her to realize the oppression around her, see her options, and defy them.

The final stage that orients Annie towards a new kind of female identity manifests itself as a connection with nature and spiritual world. In “The Long Rain” chapter, Annie suffers a long period of depression related to her identity crisis. During this time, she remains in bed and her parents cannot find a way to make her well. So, her obeah grandmother Ma Chess decides to come, and in a mysterious fashion, becoming of an obeah woman: “I heard my mother and father wonder to each other how she came to us, for she appeared on a day when the steamer was not due.”³⁶ She “settled in on the floor at the foot of my bed, eating and sleeping there, and soon I grew to count on her smells and the sound her breath made as it went in and out of her

34 Jamaica Kincaid. *Annie John* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1997), 51.

35 Ibid., 70.

36 Ibid., 123.

body.”³⁷ Through the proximity of her grandmother’s body, Annie goes back to where she began: the Eden of oneness with her mother. However, the bonding occurs in a different way this time: the healing rituals of the obeah woman connect Annie to her island’s history and traditions. Kincaid thus makes the spiritual and healing powers of the West Indian women a part of Annie John’s identity before she leaves the island. In other words, Kincaid makes her heroine reclaim her Caribbean history and culture which was attempted to be replaced by imperial values by the in-between generation of Mrs. Annie John.

One day during her nervous breakdown and before Ma Chess arrives, Annie gets up from the bed and picks up some photographs from the table to give “them a good bath.”³⁸ Each of these photographs represent either a gender role or a colonial intervention, and she ends up erasing everyone’s faces except hers in her Aunt’s wedding picture, bodies of her parents below the waist in the cricket picture, and her body except her “rebellious” shoes in her Communion day. By this action, Annie practices erasure—an erasure of all the patriarchal gender roles that are imposed on her and all the signifiers of sexuality that her mother forbids her to know. This erasure is somehow parallel to what Mrs. John had done when she picked up her bag and left her family house years ago. However, Annie could take one more step beyond erasure. By the intervention of her grandmother, Annie learns that the power of negotiation is much bigger than her unfocused anger. Instead of refusing all aspects of both her island’s culture and the colonial heritage, she realizes that both have things to offer for her.

The last chapter of the novel, “A Walk to the Jetty” begins with the words “My name is Annie John.”³⁹ On the one hand, it symbolizes the individualism preached by the colonial education and how Annie has decided to negotiate with it to find her own identity. On the other hand, as Annie John is also her mother’s name, it bolsters the significance of the communal identity of the West Indian culture and the reconnection of the mother and the daughter. Annie will be carrying both cultures’ baggage with her as her mother did, but she will not be reproducing them. She leaves the island knowing, at least unconsciously, what part of her mother and her culture she needs to take with her to west. She is ready to refuse the reproductive role prepared for her by the patriarchal and colonial mechanisms, and instead she will take on the role of the producer, which has been claimed traditionally by male protagonists of *Bildungsroman*. With this truncated ending, Kincaid offers uncertainty and bravery as characteristics of the life of a woman of color. Annie is not waiting for a knight in a shining

37 Ibid., 125.

38 Ibid., 119.

39 Ibid., 131.

armour like a fairy tale damsel, nor is she marrying her oppressor like Jane Eyre. We do not know what happens to Annie, but we know that she is going to do better than her favorite heroine, Jane.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS (E)UTOPIA: *REVERIES* OF THE SOLITARY WRITER

Abstract

This article argues that an autobiographical project can be regarded as utopian with the connotations of both a good place and a non-existent (no) place. It represents a good place (*eutopia*) offering an understanding of the self to the author. It is at the same time a “no” place (*outopia*) due to the impossibility of achieving full transparency in self-understanding and transcribing that transparency into writing. In this article, the implications of this dual framework in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* will be explored in relation to his *Social Contract* with the purpose of shifting the emphasis from completeness/unity as the ultimate aim of autobiography to the expression of change, or from *outopia* to a desired *eutopia*. When considered within the paradigm of change and stasis, the utopian quality of autobiography becomes manifest. The task of the author is to capture an image of her own life in a static condition, which is that of writing, whereas she is continuously required to reconsider, re-member, and rework her perceptions of past events within the constant flux of life. However, this dilemma could still hold a “eutopian” potential if the urge to narrate is considered as the primary motive of the autobiographical endeavor regardless of the contradictions and ambiguities in narrative. The article will attempt to trace this potential by focusing on Derrida’s concept of the “supplement” and examining the issues of spontaneity and narrative ambivalence in the *Reveries*.

Keywords: autobiography, conversion, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, utopia, Derrida, supplement spontaneity, narrative

BİR ÜTOPYA OLARAK OTOBİYOGRAFİ: YALNIZ GEZEN YAZARIN DÜŞLERİ

Öz

Bu makale otobiyografinin hem “yok-yer” hem de “güzel yer” anlamları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda ütöpik bir proje olarak düşünölebileceğı iddiasını önermektedir. Otobiyografi yazarın kendini anlamasını sağlayacağından güzel bir yeri temsil eder. Ancak bu yer, yazar kendini anlama ve bunu yazıya dökme esnasında tümünden şeffaf olamayacağı için aynı zamanda bir “yok-yer”dir. Bu makalede söz konusu bu ikili çerçevenin Jean-Jacques Rousseau’nun *Yalnız Gezenin Düşleri* adlı eserine yansımaları, yazarın bir diğör eseri olan *Toplumsal Sözleşme* ile ilintili olarak ele alınacak ve eserleri incelemede odak noktası otobiyografinin nihai tamlık/ birlik hedefinden değışimin ifadesine, yani “yok-yer”den “güzel yer”e doğru değıştirilmeye çalışılacaktır. Otobiyografinin ütöpik niteliğı değışim ve durağanlık ikilemi içinde ele alındığında daha iyi ortaya çıkmaktadır. Yazarın görevi hayatının imgesini yazının durağanlığında yakalamaktır fakat aynı zamanda hayatın akışı içinde geçmiş olayları algılayışını tekrar tekrar gözden geçirmesi gerekmektedir. Yine de bu zorluk, anlatıdaki çelişki ve belirsizlikler göz ardı edilerek anlatma dürtüsü otobiyografinin temel amacı olarak göröldüğünde olumlu anlamıyla ütöpik bir potansiyel taşıyabilir. Bu makale Derrida’nın “ilavesellik” kavramına odaklanarak ve *Yalnız Gezenin Düşleri*’ndeki muğlaklık ve birdenbirelik/kendiliğindenlik konularını ele alarak bu potansiyelin izlerini araştıracaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: otobiyografi, dönüşüm, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, ütöpa, Derrida, ilavesellik, birdenbirelik / kendiliğindenlik, anlatı.

Autobiographical accounts reflecting the diverse aspects of self in writing are in fact based upon a narrative predicament, that is, the difficulty, if not impossibility, of formulating a well-structured answer to the question “Who am I?”, the alpha and omega of autobiography. Authors ideally exploit the full reservoir of self-knowledge, or perhaps anticipate arriving at self-knowledge at the end of the process. The contradictions and ambiguities which inevitably permeate their accounts and disrupt the sense of coherence and totality may, however, hinder this endeavor. This article argues that an autobiographical project can be regarded as utopian with the connotations of both a good place and a non-existent (no) place. It represents a good place (*eutopia*) offering an understanding of the self to the author. It is at the same time a “no” place (*outopia*) due to the impossibility of achieving full transparency in self-understanding and transcribing that transparency into writing. In this article, the implications of this dual framework in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* will be explored in relation to his *Social Contract* with the purpose of shifting the emphasis from completeness/unity as the ultimate aim of autobiography to the expression of change, or from *outopia* to a desired *eutopia*.

In its traditional interpretation, utopia as a literary genre is criticized for being intrinsically static and failing to accommodate the essential element of change. When considered within the paradigm of change and stasis, the utopian quality of autobiography becomes manifest, albeit in different terms. Crafting an autobiography is challenging not because “nothing happens,” but because “many things have happened and are still happening.” The task of the author is to capture an image of her own life in a static condition which is that of writing, whereas she is continuously required to reconsider, re-member and re-work her perceptions of past events within the constant flux of life. Autobiography demands that the author stand outside to be able to look inside or be nowhere, in an *outopia*, so as to be everywhere. However, this dilemma could still hold a “eutopian” potential if the urge to narrate is considered as the primary motive of the autobiographical endeavor regardless of the contradictions and ambiguities in narrative.

Taking himself as his main object of inquiry, Jean-Jacques Rousseau strives to adopt such an omniscient position in his *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*. In line with generic conventions, the impact of a conversion, of a great change in his life, is at the center of the narrative. This impact can be better understood when the dialogical relationship between the *Reveries* and *The Social Contract* is taken into account. In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau delineates the ideal system for modern civil societies in the form of a political utopia. In the *Reveries*, however, his tone changes from (e)utopian to dystopian, and he makes a very dark

reading of his own political theory. He creates an individual utopia in response and as opposed to the social one formulated in the previous work. This individual utopia conveyed through an autobiographical mode is not exempt from challenges, either. Yet, the very same challenges, such as the split occurring in the self after his conversion and the desire to fix change in expression, allow Rousseau to create an “arresting” narrative.

The Social Contract opens with Rousseau’s declaration of citizenship, and his sociopolitical identity occupies the foreground of the work. As “a citizen of a free state and a member of its sovereign,”¹ he explains the purpose of his social contract theory, which is “to devise a form of association which will defend and protect the person and possessions of each associate with all the collective strength, and in which each is united with all, yet obeys only himself and remains as free as before.”² According to Rousseau, such association, which reflects both the collective strength and the individual autonomy, is necessary because people are no longer in the state of nature. They are members of the civil state that substitutes justice and rights for instinct and provides their acts with the lacking moral principles and sense of duty. A “civil” life is superior to the state of nature in the sense that it enables individuals to exercise their faculties and broaden their visions. They can only be pleased to “be drawn out of the state of nature forever and changed from a stupid, short-sighted animal into an intelligent being and a man.”³ The individuals must, however, first give consent to the legitimate power of the collective will, which Rousseau calls “the sovereign” throughout the *Contract*, in order to enjoy the privileges provided by the civil state. The sovereign compels them to obey its will, which paradoxically forces the subject to be free. The organization of this ideal political system becomes further complicated by Rousseau’s proposition that there should be other bodies such as governments, governors or magistrates to maintain the dialogue between the sovereign and the subjects. The bipartite contract between the sovereign and the individuals has now been extended to include intermediary agents, which will in turn include the individual will of their own members and the collective will of the group. Rousseau seems aware that there is a delicate balance among all these organs of the body politic when he gives examples of good and bad governments in history. What is particularly relevant to the purposes of this article is the tension between his ostensibly unshakeable belief in human potential and values such as equality and freedom, and his resentment for the current condition of modern society.

1 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* in *The Essential Rousseau*, trans. Lowell Bair (NY: New American Library, 1974.), 8.

2 Ibid., 17.

3 Ibid., 20.

In the section where he explains why a monarchy is inferior to a republic, Rousseau states that “In a republic, the voice of the people *nearly*⁴ always raises enlightened and able men to the highest positions [...] whereas those who rise in a monarchy are usually nothing but petty troublemakers.”⁵ He believes that when people are governed by a republic, they will “almost always” act rationally. However, while depicting the Roman public assemblies, he also acknowledges that such democratic quality is not possible to achieve in modern societies, as the “devouring greed, restlessness, incessant movements, and constant reversals of fortune”⁶ of people would not allow such a system. In these instances of faltering faith, it is possible to trace the dialogical relationship between the *Social Contract* and the *Reveries*. What has been hinted at in the former is explicitly stated in the latter. The voice of the civil/ social philosopher who presents himself first and foremost as a citizen of Geneva transforms into that of an individual disillusioned with and cynical of the state of his society.

Reveries of the Solitary Walker is the total renunciation of society in the rational capacity of which Rousseau has put his confidence. “So now I am alone in the world,” he expresses his disappointment, “with no brother, neighbor or friend, nor any company left me but my own. The most sociable and loving of men has with one accord been cast out by all the rest.”⁷ These sentences can be read as the acknowledgement of defeat: the social contract is doomed to fail as Rousseau’s own case demonstrates. The collective will no longer apply to him. Yet, it is equally possible to interpret this case not as failure but as complete success of the system. Rousseau himself states in the *Social Contract*:

If there are those who oppose the social pact at the time when it is made, their opposition does not invalidate the contract: It only excludes them from it. They are foreigners among the citizens [...] When, therefore, an opinion contrary to mine prevails, it proves only that I was mistaken, that what I thought was the general will was not.⁸

The sovereign is entitled to banish any citizen if the latter refuses to comply with the social pact as citizenship automatically requires consent. It can banish him “not for impiety, but as an anti-social being, incapable of truly loving the laws and justice, and of sacrificing, at need, his life

4 Emphasis mine.

5 Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 62.

6 Ibid., 95.

7 Rousseau, *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, trans. Peter France (NY: Penguin Books, 1979), 27.

8 Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 88.

to his duty.”⁹ Rousseau’s exclusion from society ironically confirms the efficiency of his social contract. In the *Reveries*, he claims that his “only remaining duty is towards [himself].”¹⁰ However, his defiance insinuates a major conflict between the individual and the collective will. People are now living in a civil state, and it is impossible to go back to the state of nature in which one used to have duties only towards oneself. That would make the individual a total sovereign holding both the general and the individual will in the same body with no mediators. Rousseau seems willing to give up his status as an “intelligent being and a man” to return to his natural state and become the individual sovereign. In other words, he yearns for a “no place,” or perhaps for a “eutopia” that has already expired.

Although Rousseau is pleased to finally be able to inquire into the depths of his soul, solitude still arouses ambivalent feelings in him. The whole “First Walk,” as well as many other parts in the work, is built upon this duality. The pleasure of being on his own is tainted by the fact that everybody has blamed and turned against him. He is torn between attraction and repulsion, that is, between the simultaneous feelings of sorrow and disappointment, and anger and bitterness against society. His ambivalent emotional state exemplifies yet another instance of self-refutation. According to his theory, it is the individual’s problem when his personal opinion is different from the general opinion. Within this framework, there cannot be a misunderstanding on the part of the society but only an individual misconstruction. Rousseau’s argument that the society fails to see him in the way he wants is thus based on a false premise. He seems nonetheless reluctant to affirm the power of the majority in the *Reveries*. What he has described as the collective will of the sovereign before is now regarded as “the tyranny of public opinion.”¹¹ The practices of this tyranny “are all nothing to the man who sees in the hardships he suffers nothing but the hardships themselves [...] and whose place in his own self-esteem does not depend on the good-will of the others.”¹² *The Social Contract* is permeated by the dream of an inclusive society despite the author’s hesitations and bad examples from history. As Patrick Riley points out, “the solitary self of the *Reveries*, by contrast, has no longer to be defined in terms of a causal relations to society.”¹³ “How has this come about?” Rousseau wonders throughout the Eighth Walk explaining that he has learnt “to bear the yoke of necessity

9 Ibid., 113.

10 Rousseau, *Reveries*, 32.

11 Ibid., 129.

12 Ibid., 130.

13 Patrick Riley, *Character and Conversion in Autobiography* (Charlottesville: Virginia UP), 129.

without complaining”¹⁴ and with total indifference. He now prefers to stay away from society and people’s “evil plots” replacing them with nature in the new phase of his life.

The thought of a “silent conspiracy” haunts Rousseau’s writings as the “Second Walk,” which describes how he is hit by a Great Dane dog and gets acutely injured, makes clear. This seemingly irrelevant and accidental incident becomes, in Rousseau’s eyes, the link that connects the chain of events culminating in his banishment from society and crystalizes his thoughts about the grand plan of others: “The accumulation of so many chance circumstances, the elevation of all my cruelest enemies, [...] all those who occupy places of credit and authority seem to have been hand-picked from among those who harbor some secret animosity towards me to take part in the universal conspiracy.”¹⁵ The impact of his paranoia is such that he has traced the signs of this conspiracy until his complete renunciation of society. This so-called “fetishization” of the other makes the absence of social bonding all the more conspicuous for Rousseau as emphasized by Riley: “the *Reveries* is predicated on a bracketing of any concern with an ‘outside.’ Nonetheless, the outside returns here as a reminder that the meaning of solitude depends on imagining the other from whom one is excluded, even if it is only to reaffirm the radicality of that exclusion.”¹⁶ In order to tackle this radicality, Rousseau utilizes his urge to write and explain himself in the clearest manner. He traces his main motives and strives to delve into the basic principles that compose his identity. Self inquiry thus offers the means not only for self justification but also for better self knowledge. This endeavor finds its expression in the autobiographical account of the *Reveries*; however, promise does not entail its fulfillment. The work has its own challenges as “the ‘Know Thyself’ of the temple at Delphi was not an easy precept to observe” as Rousseau thinks it would be in his *Confessions*.¹⁷ The difficulty of the task doubles when self knowledge seeks expression in writing, and, knowing the self is expected to become writing the self.

In his reading of Rousseau, Derrida notes that “Rousseau considers writing a dangerous means, a menacing aid, the critical response to a situation of distress. When Nature, as self-proximity, comes to be forbidden or interrupted, when speech fails to protect presence, writing becomes necessary. It must be *added [sic]* to the word urgently.”¹⁸ Derrida’s observation is particularly relevant to the *Reveries*, which may be considered to function as an appendix to the *Confessions*. Rousseau himself alludes to his previous work at many points. After he describes

14 Rousseau, *Reveries*, 126.

15 Ibid., 44.

16 Riley, 133.

17 Rousseau, *Reveries*, 63.

18 Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1976), 144.

his solitary state in the First walk, he explains: “This is my state of mind as I return to the rigorous and sincere self-examination which I formerly called my *Confessions*.”¹⁹ He returns to his old project making amendments where necessary. Similarly, in the Fourth Walk he “confesses” that he has been too harsh on himself in *Confessions* heralding the amelioration of his bad mood in the new work: “I can declare with a proud consciousness of my achievement, that in this work I carried good faith, truthfulness and frankness [...]”²⁰ Each text operates to fill in the gaps of the previous one and present a better and ideally a more accurate representation of the self by re-evaluating the autobiographical narrative. To borrow from Derrida, they each become a supplement for the one they ensue. Examining the impediments to transparent communication in Rousseau’s writings, Jean Starobinski reiterates this observation, albeit in different terms: “Throughout the *Reveries* he seeks to justify his decision to end all relations with other human beings and relate only to himself; ultimately the justification supplants the intimate dialogue it is supposed to introduce.”²¹ Rousseau’s evasive tone in the *Reveries* implies that the intimate dialogue is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve, and that is why his narrative has to be “supplanted” with justifications and “supplemented” with further elaborations.

At the beginning of his work, Rousseau claims that he writes the *Reveries* only for himself. He is thus both the passive object under scrutiny and the active subject and the primary addressee. He feeds on his own substance, experiences and reflections to construct his subjectivity, which demonstrates that autobiography is more about self-reflection and construction than about the way the individual is perceived by others. If, as Jean-Luc Nancy argues, “the subject becomes what it is (its own essence) by representing itself to itself,”²² then writing first and foremost *to* the self before others is a *sine qua non* of autobiography. Nevertheless, writing about and primarily to oneself may not necessarily diminish the power of the “implied reader” on Rousseau when his paranoia about a universal conspiracy and obsession with the words of others is taken—perhaps literally—into account. Despite describing his reveries as a “formless record,” he also implies that he would like to put his thoughts about himself and others in order: “I myself will figure largely in [my reveries], because a solitary person inevitably thinks a lot about himself. But all the other thoughts which pass through my mind will also have their place here.”²³ Whether he assumes a reader or not, his yearning for accuracy

19 Rousseau, *Reveries*, 32.

20 Ibid., 76.

21 Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction* (Chicago: Chicago UP), 352.

22 Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence* (Stanford, California: Stanford UP, 1993), 148.

23 Rousseau, *Reveries*, 32.

seems more urgent than his authorial endeavor for structure as his next sentence indicates: “I shall say what I have thought just as it came to me.”²⁴ But is it ever possible to transcribe the thoughts “today” as they were formed in the mind “yesterday”? Can spontaneity be captured in retrospect?

Rousseau’s narrative revolves around the core question of identity. Being expelled from the garden of society through a secular fall, he turns to himself and his writing as the only remedy. In the First Walk, he explains how he has gradually come to this stage and identifies his main objective as forming “an account of the successive variations” and taking “the barometer readings of [his] soul.”²⁵ In other words, he intends to write the spontaneity of the past by transferring his reveries and the fluctuations in his soul onto paper. His register is also noteworthy since the word “barometer” is suggestive of measurement and precision. The ambitiousness of the attempt is revealed in the tension between retrospection and spontaneity: “As I tried to recall so many sweet reveries, I relived them instead of describing them. The memory of this state is enough to bring it back to life; if we completely ceased to experience it, we should soon lose all knowledge of it.”²⁶ Rousseau claims that he does not simply remember those moments but rather experiences them again. According to Leo Damrosch, “the *Reveries* are about memory in a new sense: not the factual reconstruction of past actions, but the recovery of states of being that live on deep in the imagination.”²⁷ Even if remembering the past is not about remembering the actual events for Rousseau, he believes that he is at least able to bring back the “exact” impressions. This new sense of memory described by Damrosch in fact succinctly frames the narrative predicament of autobiography explained at the beginning. The desire of the author is nothing less than simultaneously capturing both the past and the present of the self; however, the void between experience and its transformation into writing would bring about a split in the subject.

The double existence of the past and the present in narrative highlights the significance of conversion as a pivotal element and the embodiment of change in autobiography. Riley aptly defines conversion as a “fulcrum” referring to various meanings of the word such as “a prop, support, base or anchor.” “Conversion,” he explains, “is the foundation upon which an autobiography is built, its justification and motivation, the center of gravity providing its cohesion.” However, as he points out, “the fulcrum disrupts as much as it unifies.”²⁸

24 Ibid., 32.

25 Ibid., 33.

26 Ibid., 36.

27 Leo Damrosch, *Jean-Jacques: Restless Genius* (NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), 482.

28 Riley, *Character*, 6.

Paradoxically, conversion both infuses within and diffuses into the narrative: it serves as a unifying theme but also separates before and after from the middle where the act of writing is taking place. Autobiography is formed in the vacuum of this rift as a supplementary gesture to satisfy the (e)utopian yearnings for self-cohesion.

The famous Great Dane incident in the Second Walk of the *Reveries* can be interpreted as an instant realization of self-cohesion and unity desired by Rousseau. After he has been hit by the dog and come to his senses, he experiences a momentary bliss and absolute sense of freedom. The passage is worth quoting at length:

Night was coming on. I saw the sky, some stars, and a few leaves. The first sensation was a moment of delight. I was conscious of nothing else. In this instant I was being born again, and it seemed as if all I perceived was filled with my frail existence. Entirely taken up by the present, I could remember nothing; I had no distinct notion of myself as a person, nor had I the least idea of what had just happened to me. I did not know who I was, nor where I was; I felt neither pain, fear, nor anxiety. I watched my blood flowing as I might have watched a stream, without even thinking that the blood had anything to do with me.²⁹

When the boundary between before and after is completely eradicated and the flow of time is felt as an eternal present, “autopia,” which includes both the “no place” of autobiography and the “good place” of the self, is attained. Similarly, the division between the subject and the object disappears, too, as the individual has blended into the fullness of the universal subject with “no distinct notion” of the self. Memory stops operating and fixes the moment within a sensation of delight. The rift seems to be closed, albeit only for a moment. This sense of unity, however, can occur only to the detriment of the self. If there is completeness, then there is no change, no conversion and thus no self. Feeling alienated both to his own identity and physicality, Rousseau could not even perceive that he is bleeding. Losing his connection with himself is the price to pay for absence of consciousness and memory.

In the Seventh Walk, he describes a similar state of mind in which he is able to forget himself by becoming one with nature: “I feel transports of joy and inexpressible raptures in becoming fused as it were with the great system of beings and identifying myself with the whole of nature.”³⁰ Like the momentary fullness after the Great Dane Incident, his reveries enable him

29 Rousseau, *Reveries*, 39.

30 Ibid., 111.

to go into a kind of trance. Yet, the whole passage begs the question of how Rousseau can actually describe a state to which his memory has no access. How can the inexpressible be expressed? Actually, throughout the *Reveries*, Rousseau is far from expressing the content of his reveries. Seeking to be justified in his conversion, he either tries to demonstrate how inexpressible they are or to declare his intentions for writing about them. The reveries themselves can be regarded only as meta-reveries that anticipate to be further explained, or if not, further supplemented by Rousseau. The supplement, however, only supplements as Derrida observes, and it “only adds to replace. [...] As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence, it produces no relief, its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness.”³¹ Rousseau seems to supplement all along: he supplements his past writings, he substitutes society with solitude, and he replaces his exclusion from social interaction with his submersion into nature. The effort may be futile, though, since the supplement fails to meet the demand for presence by supplying absence in return.

Rousseau recognizes his own limitations when he oscillates between moments of self-assurance and ambivalence. While boldly declaring in one instance that his mind rests on solid foundations and “no strange doctrine, old or new, can any longer disturb [his] peace for a single moment,”³² he later regrets that “the real and basic motives of most of [his] actions are not as clear to [him] as [he] had long supposed.”³³ The fulcrum performs its double function in the text as his reveries reveal the internal conflicts within the world and the word. He claims indifference towards others and yet feels trapped between solitude and the narrative stasis of writing the self as “the desire to hypostatize the self, to freeze it in time and present it as the psychological essence of the individual, is opposed to the mobility and causal irreversibility involved in narrating one’s life.”³⁴ In the last Walk, he remembers the joyful times he has spent with Madame de Warens. Mutual love nourishes his soul granting him the sense of freedom he desires. He wishes that “sweet state” to last forever.³⁵ Looking back on those years, he has a single mental image rather than the whole live picture. The *Reveries* closes with this image Rousseau fixes into his writing since “fixing happiness in a written image is the expression of a wish to escape from the confusion and imperfection of the present,” as Starobinski suggests:

31 Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 145.

32 Rousseau, *Reveries*, 60.

33 Ibid., 94.

34 Riley, *Character*, 12.

35 Rousseau, *Reveries*, 154.

“reverie never realizes this wish, yet it never ceases to strive in that direction.”³⁶ Hence the “eutopian” gesture of autobiography, or the yearning for order and perfection.

Autobiography is a locus of hope for the individual who simultaneously desires to know herself better and be better known to the other. In *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Rousseau undertakes the noble task of inquiring into the depths of his soul even though he attempts to describe a state of forgetfulness with the aid of his memory. He retains the “eutopian” impulse within the vision of creating a true-to-life “autopia” after his conversion from solidarity to solitude. If the *Social Contract* is the legitimization of dependence, the *Reveries* is the melancholic celebration of independence. As the dialogical relationship between the two works demonstrates, the *Reveries* can be read both as a denunciation and as the confirmation of the utopian sociopolitical vision depicted in the *Social Contract*. It is also an attempt at a narrative utopia which, to borrow from Beckett, fails again but fails better each time as the urge to tell remains, and the search for the self continues.³⁷ This is by no means to undermine the act of writing as secondary to the experience of life. Even if words can only offer to go to a “no place” hindered by the narrative predicament of autobiography, they represent “failing better” as they gradually take the place of life itself and demand better expression from their writer.

36 Starobinski, *Transparency*, 363.

37 Samuel Beckett, *Worstward ho* (London: John Calder, 1999), 7.

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**“ARE YOU REAL, MY IDEAL?”: EMBODIMENT AND POPULAR
CULTURE IN THE “NAUSICAA” EPISODE OF JAMES JOYCE’S
*ULYSSES***

Abstract

The “Nausicaa” episode of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is about a young woman named Gerty MacDowell, who constantly imagines herself like an idealized heroine of a romance novel. She has a limp which is carefully hidden in her narrative. The repression of the body in the narrative is made possible by narrative conventions of commodity culture and popular literature. Gerty is constructed by the standards of the marriage market and the heroines of sentimental and sensational novels. Many critics have demonstrated the impact of advertising culture in this chapter and focused on how Gerty tries to transform her defective body into a commodity by successfully packaging it with beauty products. Despite all the acts of erasure of the body, the critical moments of ellipses in the episode reveal more genuine experiences of embodiment such as disability, sexuality, and motherhood.

Keywords: James Joyce, “Nausicaa”, Gerty, body, sexuality, objectification, ellipses, sentimental novel and sensation fiction, advertising, pornography.

“GERÇEK MİSİN, İDEALİM?”: JAMES JOYCE’UN *ULYSSES* ROMANININ “NAUSICAA” BÖLÜMÜNDE BEDEN VE POPÜLER KÜLTÜR

Öz

James Joyce’un *Ulysses* romanının “Nausicaa” başlıklı on üçüncü bölümü kendini bir pembe roman kahramanı gibi hayal eden Gerty MacDowell adlı genç bir kadına odaklanır. Gerty’nin çolaklığı anlatıda özellikle gizlenir. Meta kültürü ile popüler kültürün ürettiği anlatı gelenekleri bedenin bastırılmasında rol oynar. Gerty evlilik kurumunun dayattığı ve duygusal ve sansasyonel romanların yeniden ürettiği standartlara göre kendini yeniden üretir. Pek çok eleştirmen bu bölümde reklamların romanın anlatısındaki rolünü incelemiş ve Gerty’nin güzellik ürünleri kullanarak sakat bedenini adeta bir reklam nesnesi haline getirmesine dikkat çekmişlerdir. Karakterin bedenini anlatıdan silmeye yönelik olan bütün bu unsurlara rağmen anlatıdaki kritik boşluklar sayesinde Gerty’nin sakatlık, cinsellik ve annelik gibi bedensel deneyimlere yaklaşımını ve süslenmemiş, idealize edilmemiş, gerçek algısını görmek mümkündür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: James Joyce, “Nausicaa”, Gerty, beden, cinsellik, nesneleşme, metinlerdeki boşluklar, duygusal edebiyat ve sansasyonel romanlar, reklamlar, pornografik imgeler.

The thirteenth chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, titled "Nausicaa," is about an erotic encounter between Leopold Bloom and a young woman named Gerty MacDowell, who is spending the summer evening on the beach with her two friends, Cissy Caffrey and Edy Boardman, and their baby brothers. Most of the chapter is narrated as the interior monologue of the young woman whose vision of herself and her life is strongly shaped by sentimental romance novels and the commercial rhetoric of the beauty advice sections in women's magazines. Gerty has a limp, as Bloom discovers at the end of the chapter. The chapter ends with the mental flux of Bloom, who feels embarrassed, a little nervous, and perplexed after discretely masturbating to an erotic spectacle offered by a girl on the beach.

There are so many ways in which Gerty, mentally as well as textually, renders her defected body invisible in the "Nausicaa" episode. This episode's irony relies on the fact that her ethereal, elusive, spiritual beauty is maintained with a plethora of beauty products. She also imagines a highly idealized and desexualized romance with the dark stranger, while rhythmically swinging her legs and flashing part of her underwear in order to arouse him. These examples of subversion make Joyce's modernist narrative a parody of the traditional forms, which exert a powerful control over the textual reconstructions of the body. Joyce's narrative is full of deliberately constructed failures to represent embodiment, through which Gerty's body can be revealed.

The erasure of the female body is not only mandated by the sexually conservative culture, but it is also cultivated by the ambitious protagonist herself, who does not want to face her physical defect or other romantic disappointments such as her crush Reggy Wylie. Her defective body, which could potentially hinder her from competing in the marriage market, is replaced with idealized images borrowed from sentimental fiction, sensation fiction, and religious iconography. In *Joyce and the Victorians*, Tracey Teets Schwarze writes about the social and cultural constructions that nourish these feminine fantasies of herself: "Gerty becomes the signifier of a culturally constructed and contested femininity, a surface that draws attention to itself by continually gesturing toward its constructedness, a facade that is constantly threatened by contentious disruptions ('little monkeys common as ditchwater' [U 13.467-68]) or contradictions within its sources themselves."¹

Gerty MacDowell's body is the nexus of the visual and the material in the chapter. Sentimental fiction, sensation fiction, pornography, and advertising are different genres of popular culture, which all eroticize the female body in different ways. All these traditions of

¹ Tracey Teets Schwarze, "'Do you call that a man?': The Discourse of Anxious Masculinity in *Ulysses*," in *Joyce and the Victorians* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 71.

representation rely on the tension between disembodied representation and embodied existence. Sentimental and sensational fiction directly effects the bodies of the readers, resulting in physical responses like crying or increase in heart rate. Pornographic mutoscope films, which Gerty brings to Bloom's mind, rely on strategic acts of concealing and revealing bodies. And, finally, advertisements of products in the magazines and newspapers constantly offer idealized images of physical bodies together with commodities that will replace ugly, aging, unhealthy, or otherwise defective body parts.

John Bishop analyzes the "Nausicaa" episode in "A Metaphysics of Coitus in 'Nausicaa'" in terms of the thematic coupling and the coupled themes of "femininity and masculinity, youth and old age, culture and nature, conventionality and idiosyncrasy, idealism and practicality, fate and chance" in "an immense field of tensions and contrasts."² The visual and the material is another important thematic pair that is explored in context of popular culture, advertising, religion, pornography, and the relationship between texts and bodies. Despite all the packaging and advertising, her deformed body subverts the conventions of sentimental tradition and brings out her individuality. Gerty's body makes its presence felt in the ellipses of the narrative. In this chapter, instead of repression or erasure of embodied existence, the narrative ellipses privilege female body over the male gaze, idiosyncrasy over conventionality, practicality over idealism, and chance over fate.

Gerty's body is allowed to be visible only within the linguistic and imagistic vocabulary of the social codes, popular culture, and commodification. She constantly constructs and reconstructs her body through a sentimental discourse. Just like her disability, her existence as a sexual being is equally elusive in the text. This is not because her sexuality is repressed but because it is in constant change. Ambivalent or partially concealed sexuality is substantiated with the discourse of sentimental fiction and its vague physical descriptions of its heroines. The location of virtue and sentiment in the sentimental tradition can be ambivalent and in its ambivalence, indicative of the political view of the novel. In a typical Victorian marriage plot novel, the heroines are not beautiful but somehow very attractive. Their physical traits are scrupulously described but this only serves the novel's emphasis of desexualized femininity. The following passage from the beginning of the episode is representative of the cliché language used in the protagonist's inner monologues which mimic the language of nineteenth-century sentimentalism. "But who was Gerty?" asks the narrator before transitioning into free indirect speech:

2 John Bishop, "A Metaphysics of Coitus in 'Nausicaa'," in *Ulysses: En-Gendered Perspectives*, eds. Kimberly Devlin and Marilyn Reizbaum (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 209.

There was an innate refinement, a languid queenly hauteur about Gerty which was unmistakably evidenced in her delicate hands and higharched instep. Had kind fate but willed her to be born a gentlewoman of high degree in her own right and had she only received the benefit of a good education Gerty MacDowell might easily have held her own beside any lady in the land and have seen herself exquisitely gowned with jewels on her brow and patrician suitors at her feet vying with one another to pay their devoirs to her. Mayhap it was this, the love that might have been, that lent to her softly featured face at times a look, tense with suppressed meaning, that imparted a strange yearning tendency to the beautiful eyes a charm few could resist.³

Deprived of a high birth and education, the heroine's only asset is her body on which markers of gentility and class can be inscribed. Even though the description seems to contain details of her body such as the high instep, delicate hands, and enigmatic eyes, these are generic descriptions that can belong to any heroine of Victorian fiction. In this passage, as in many others, narrative conventions displace the corporeality of the female protagonist. In the rare occasions when she manifests genuine emotions, the emotional experience is quickly eclipsed by aesthetic and social conventions:

That strained look on her face! A gnawing sorrow is there all the time. Her very soul is in her eyes and she would give worlds to be in the privacy of her own familiar chamber where, giving way to tears, she could have a good cry and relieve her pentup feelings. Though not too much because she knew how to cry nicely before the mirror.⁴

In *Gestural Politics: Stereotype and Parody in Joyce*, Christy Burns comments on how popular culture, as the mirror of social codes, dictates the imitation of stereotypes. Gerty uses her mirror to train herself "to cry nicely." Burns writes that "the mirror instructs her as to *how* she should present her grief, if ever she should express it before the eyes of a potential suitor. The mirror is not radically other than Gerty's mind, but her own mind is not in the least divorced from social directives that tell her to pose for the male gaze."⁵

The mawkish passages of sentimentalism and gentility are interrupted by the physical failures of her body and the strong emotions of fear, envy, and anger. One of the moments in the narrative, where she suddenly finds herself on stage facing the danger of revealing her

3 Joyce, *Ulysses*, (London: Vintage Books, 1986), 13.80.

4 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.82.

5 Christy Burns, *Gestural Politics: Stereotype and Parody in Joyce* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 71-72.

deformity to the “gentleman” by falling, is significant in illustrating how she diverts both her and the reader’s attention from her body with the help of spectacle. In the perhaps most critical scene of the episode, one of the little boys throws a ball toward Gerty, which she has to kick toward her friend under the gaze of strangers on the beach. It is difficult to sustain the constant replacement of her body with objects and fantasies because there is an undeniable contrast between her and the athletic and free Cissy Caffrey, who is a “good runner.” Not only does Cissy have a healthy body, but she also has control of the male body. Cissy is constantly busy with the needs of her baby brothers, which are miniature and caricaturized versions of masculinity. Bloom throws the boys’ ball back to Cissy, but it falls in front of Gerty and she has to kick it back.

Cissy told her to kick it away and let them fight for it so Gerty drew back her foot but she wished their stupid ball hadn’t come rolling down to her and she gave a kick but she missed and Edy and Cissy laughed.

-- If you fail try again, Edy Boardman said.

Gerty smiled assent and bit her lip. A delicate pink crept into her pretty cheek but she was determined to let them see so she just lifted her skirt a little but just enough and took good aim and gave the ball a jolly good kick.⁶

This scene suddenly acquires subtly malicious and violent tones. Cissy, who has so far been intent on making the brothers play nicely, wants to see them fight each other. Edy slyly pokes into Gerty’s wound by pretending to be encouraging. Gerty swallows her bitterness and later on takes pleasure from imagining Cissy falling down while running after the boys. There is a possibility that Edy *is* well intended in her encouraging words and that Cissy is just a fun-loving woman. The malice and violence in the scene can be read as indicative of the emotional tension within Gerty, who is afraid of not being able to kick the ball, and even of falling down under the gaze of the other girls and of Bloom. This is the scene in which her “shortcoming” is almost revealed, therefore the girls’ laughter does not carry the same significance for their exasperated friend. The body remains concealed in this passage and Gerty’s potential humiliation is replaced with her unexplained anger at the girls. This passage, where her body comes to the brink of display is not surprisingly also one of the passages where she displays genuine emotions instead of the stereotypical angelic demeanor.

⁶ Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.356-363.

The heroine's emotional responses fluctuate from grand saintliness to bitter suspicion and malice throughout the episode. It is equally difficult to determine her sexual status because it also constantly changes. She describes herself as an innocent girl, seductive femme fatal, loving wife, loving wifie, little girlie, "girlwoman," and "womanly woman" within the same page. This ambiguity is partly a symptom of the ambivalent Victorian perception of young female bodies which oscillated between asexual and sexually mature, thus eligible for marriage. Our savvy heroine sometime uses this ambivalence to her own advantage. The sexually "innocent" status allows her to imagine that she is still not too old, even though she knows that she will never be seventeen again. Furthermore, the forms of popular culture that feed her intellect and imagination do not offer legitimate vocabulary to express sexual desire. Sex remains outside her language or it is expressed with non-words. For example, when she fantasizes about being married to the mysterious dark stranger, she imagines living as brother and sister "without all that other." The sentimental fiction heroines after whom she constructs herself, have "ambiguously described or non-existent bodies" in Richard Bishop's words.⁷ Consequently, even in her imagined marriage she is the "little wifie" or "girlie" of her older and mature husband. The distortion in the word "wife" suggests that Gerty is not imagining a consummated marriage but one in which she will remain "a girl."

Oxymoronic epithets like "girl woman" signify the effects of sexual repression but sexuality is not completely or obscured from the narrative. Her carefully selected lacey underwear, the erotic spectacle she choreographs for Bloom evince at a woman who is in touch with her sexuality. In fact, it is the driving force behind her imaginative mind and fantasies. I believe that the most apt descriptions of sexual status are being in constant flux. She wants to remain a "girlwoman" and in the same sentence she changes into a "womanly woman." These fluctuations of her self-perception can be read as the existence of her sexual energy, rather than stifled desire.

Commodities offer constant pleasure and gratification to Gerty, for whom sex may be unavailable because of her disability or intimidating because of her young age and inexperience. She tries to maintain an acceptable image of her body in her own gaze with the help of beauty products and fashionable articles of clothing. April Pelt and Daniel P. Gunn have examined the gendered implications of advertisements in this episode.⁸ Advertising is a

7 Bishop, "A Metaphysics," 188.

8 April Pelt, "Advertising Agency: Print Culture and Female Sexuality in 'Nausicaa'," *James Joyce Quarterly* 48.1 (2010): 41-53, and Daniel P. Gunn, "Beware of Imitations: Advertisement as Reflexive Commentary in *Ulysses*," *Twentieth Century Literature* 42.4 (1996): 481-493.

mode of representation that relies on the erasure of the body from narrative. It is a medium of popular culture, which uses sexuality without making it visible. In “Joyce's ‘Nausicaa’: The Paradox of Advertising Narcissism” Peggy Ochoa argues that the narcissism involved in advertising empowers its receivers to a certain extent, in fashioning themselves.⁹ As she successfully uses commodities to adorn her body to compensate for the “shortcoming,” she erases the body or replaces it with these commodities. In “Gerty MacDowell and the Irish Common Reader,” Thomas Karr Richards notes the replacement of the body with commodified objects: “For several pages the narrative couples physical attributes with material objects until one feature of the style finally overwhelms the reader: the sheer abundance of manufactured objects present in her voice.”¹⁰ The sentimental descriptions are littered with products such as “iron jelloids,” “eyebrowleine,” “the Woman Beautiful page of the Princess novelette” in which “blushing [is] scientifically cured.” Her fantasy of marriage to Reggy is almost like a fashion set for the “sumptuous confection of grey trimmed with expensive blue fox” she will wear at her wedding. Later on in the episode, she imagines various delicious dished she would prepare for her “dreamhusband,” but she does not “like the eating of it.” Her imagination produces images of food ready to be consumed but not the bodily activity that goes along with them. She often wonders “why you couldn't eat something poetical like violets or roses.”¹¹

The obscuring and distracting attention to detail and the abundance of objects marks Gerty's speech. Her “energy is dissipated by her concentration on the ‘minor differences’ within the restricted world of what Joyce calls ‘matters feminine’ (*U* 13.12)” according to Ochoa.¹² Her voice is cluttered with commodified objects that attach themselves to everything she thinks of. These commodities obscure the body, when they are attached to it. The “transparent” stockings, which she trusts, do not highlight her ankles but their own expensive transparency; when she lifts her skirts up, she is showing her silver buckle rather than her legs. Even taking off her hat to show her abundant hair is read through the hat rather than the hair, as it resonates with the visual lexicon of pornographic films. Transparent stockings, the

9 Peggy Ochoa, “Joyce's ‘Nausicaa’: The Paradox of Advertising Narcissism,” *James Joyce Quarterly* 30.4 (1993).

10 Thomas Karr Richards, “Gerty MacDowell and the Irish Common Reader,” *ELH* 52.3 (1985): 759.

11 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13. 368.

12 Ochoa, “Joyce's ‘Nausicaa’,” 787.

buckles of her shoes, and the hat replace her legs, the high inner arches of her elegant feet, and her hair.

Pornography is an unexpected form of popular culture that enables Gerty to fashion herself, given her general tendency to suppress sexuality in her fantasies. However, it is in fact parallel to her attempts to divert the attention towards visuality of the body rather than to its materiality. In the ball-kicking scene, she lifts up her skirt to show her ankles to the enigmatic stranger. She diverts Bloom's gaze from her lameness, by replacing her body with the more attractive image of skirt dancers who also lift their skirts and kick. While her language is borrowed from popular romantic novels and advertising, her poses and gestures are borrowed from pornographic films. In "Making a Spectacle of Herself: Gerty MacDowell through the Mutoscope" Katherine Mullin argues that Gerty's gestures and the dynamics of gazing within the narrative structure of the episode heavily rely on the vocabulary, gestures, and conventions of the pornographic mutoscope films. "By placing her image rather than her body on the market," Mullin writes, "by imitating successful strategies of the mutoscope display, Gerty reproduces modernity's commodification of the visible and shrewdly allies herself with the perfect product."¹³ Her gestures indeed imitate the mutoscope films and there is certainly shrewdness in her use of visual display of the body to seduce "the mysterious gentleman" and outperform her friends. Her use of her hat reminds Bloom of the mutoscope film, *What the Girls Did with Willie's Hat*. It would not be possible for her to deliberately imitate these films, as she would not have access to them. She wouldn't have access to these films to imitate them consciously. Instead of claiming that Gerty is consciously imitating pornographic films, I would argue that these films are likely to be drawing from the everyday, familiar gestures such as taking off one's hat.¹⁴ They place the pornographic and the prohibited into a quotidian setting in order to heighten the suspense of being caught in the act of gazing. Gerty's complicity in this episode has been the concern of many critics, who took sides in a debate about whether she is innocent or complicit in this scene. "Complicity" and "innocence" are outdated moral judgment categories of the sexually repressive, patriarchal ideology. The female protagonist of this episode of the novel, simply wanders through the modern world of material, sentimental, and sexual pleasures. The narrative thwarts attempts to make such moral judgments. This ambivalence is one of the qualities that pulls the

13 Katherine Mullin, "Making a Spectacle of Herself: Gerty MacDowell through the Mutoscope," in *James Joyce, Sexuality and Social Purity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 165.

14 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13. 261-2.

character out of the cloud of literary and cultural clichés that clutter the narrative and allow her to become an authentic individual.

Gerty's body is represented with techniques of objectification, erasure, and revelation in advertising and pornography. A third mode of objectification happens in her inner monologues and constant self-fashioning as a stereotypical heroine of sentimental fiction. This form of objectification proves to be even riskier than commodification or pornographication of her body because the sympathizing gaze of sentimentalism can be a cruel form of kindness. With Gerty MacDowell, Joyce parodies Gerty Flint, the heroine of the very popular nineteenth-century sentimental novel *The Lamplighter*. He completely subverts the conventions of the sentimental tradition. In "Gerty MacDowell: Joyce's Sentimental Heroine" Suzette Henke claims that Gerty is already showing signs of spinsterhood with her moments of quirky behavior, her lack of compassion for the children, and her cynicism toward her girlfriends.¹⁵ Annoyance with children and malicious thoughts indeed do not fit in with the sentimental literature's conventions such as the cult of the cute and the ever-loving and kind heroine. Gerty's narrative at times "falls short of the ideal of proper female conduct presented by" *The Lamplighter's* heroine Gerty Flint and at times subverts it with ironic realism. "After many trials from unsuitable admirers and vindictive female rivals, her [Gerty Flint's] virtues are rewarded by marriage to her childhood sweetheart, who through a final plot twist is suddenly endowed with riches from an unexpected bequest."¹⁶ Gerty MacDowell does not persevere through "many trials from unsuitable admirers." On the contrary, she is ready to fall for a random stranger she notices on the beach and fantasizes about accepting him as her husband despite his, also imaginary, dark past. Her female rivals "who are hissing at each other" as Bloom observes, appear to be healthy and fit for marriage, while she is inferior to them because of her physical defect. "She's left on the shelf and the others [do] a sprint" as Bloom notices.¹⁷ She upstages her rivals not with her superior virtues but by successfully advertising her body, particularly using conventions of the suggestive mutoscope films. At the end of the episode, Bloom remembers her as "a hot little devil" rather than as a paragon of feminine virtues. And most importantly, she seems to be jilted by her childhood sweetheart, Reggy Wylie, who has already disappointed her as a lover.

The objectifying gaze generated by sentimentalism is also problematized in this episode. Her body does not generate the reverent sympathy that is appropriate for an

15 Suzette Henke, "Gerty MacDowell: Joyce's Sentimental Heroine," in *Women in Joyce*, ed. Suzette Henke and Elaine Unkeless (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 140.

16 Mullin, "Making a Spectacle of Herself," 142.

17 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.773.

inherently superior, albeit impoverished, heroine. On the contrary, this is a cruel sympathy reserved for the deformed bodies of “spinsters” and “cripples” in nineteenth-century sentimental fiction. “Nausicaa” has several instances where the already delicate distinction between cruelty and kindness is lost. Gerty’s body reveals the tensions and proximity between cruelty and kindness, fear and pleasure in her friends’ cruel sympathy for her lame and jilted body and in her fantasies of the mysterious, dark gentleman. When Gerty fails to kick the ball, Edy Boardman says, “Try again if you fail” in fake kindness, which embarrasses her in front of the dark gentleman. Again the two friends’ kind inquiries after Reggy Wylie, who does not show up as he promised, torture her further. “Their eyes were probing her mercilessly but with a brave effort she sparkled back in sympathy as she glanced at her new conquest for them to see.”¹⁸ The cruelty of the kind friends who are looking for a body to pity is expressed in terms of physical torture. The girls’ eyes probe at Gerty’s lame body and wounded soul and “sparkle” her.

Sentimental fiction is not the only genre of popular literature that forms Gerty’s dream world. She draws from sensation fiction as well to feed her imagination and more importantly to express her sexual desires. When becoming an object of sympathy brings the pain of being an object of gaze, her mind wanders toward a different kind of fiction that involves acts of cruelty performed “in the way of kindness” and dangers that can be titillating. She starts fashioning Bloom as one of the dark, brooding, and attractive heroes, which were introduced to English literature by the Brontë sisters. The erotic pleasures of sensation fiction villains allow Gerty to express her sexuality as well as her fears of it.

As several critics have notes, the dark stranger replaced her abusive father in her imagination as a pleasurable authority figure. Gerty remembers her father’s alcoholism and domestic violence, which must have contributed to her difficulty in seeing herself as a sexual being. Henke observes: “The young girl witnesses her father’s acts of household violence and recoils at the spectacle of masculine brutality.”¹⁹ She does not excuse his alcoholism, but strangely steers away from condemning domestic violence by a phrase that obscures cruelty:

Nay, she had even witnessed in the home circle deeds of violence caused by intemperance and had seen her own father, a prey to the fumes of intoxication, forget himself completely for if there was one thing of all things that Gerty knew it was that

18 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13. 586-588.

19 Henke, “Gerty MacDowell,” 144.

the man who lift a hand to a woman save in the way of kindness, deserves to be branded as the lowest of the low.²⁰

The desperate phrase “save in the way of kindness” makes one wonder what kind of kindness can excuse domestic violence except for Gerty’s kindness for her father. A similar cruelty “in the way of kindness” is seen in her fantasies about the dark, foreign-looking stranger. Gerty feels that she is ready to do anything for this stranger even if he is “a widower who has lost his wife or some tragedy like the nobleman with the foreign name from the land of song had to have her put in a madhouse, cruel only to be kind.”²¹ Don Gifford claims that the alluded tragedy of the nobleman from “the land of song” or Italy, is unknown.²² However, Victorian sensation and gothic novels are replete with such attractive villains. Gerty’s fantasy is reminiscent of the gothic, female, Bildungsroman *Jane Eyre*, whose titular heroine finds herself in the grip of the opposing forces of self-preservation and her passion for the dark and handsome bigamist Rochester. Wilkie Collins’ *The Woman in White* was a well-known sensation novel in which the villainous Sir Percival, with the help of his accomplice Italian Count Fosco, has his wife replaced with her mad foster sister and incarcerated in an asylum. Gerty sensationalizes her body by imagining herself as a sensation novel heroine, which enables her to be aroused by the alluring and dangerous gaze of the dark stranger. The foreign looking gentleman’s gaze has physical effects on Gerty like blushing, flushing, and tingling in her flesh. Her body is completely sensationalized by Bloom’s gaze: “She felt a kind of sensation rushing all over her and she knew by the feel of her scalp and that irritation against her stays.”²³ John Bishop interprets Gerty’s flushing as a displaced tumescence which parallels Bloom’s arousal.²⁴ The tingling, tickling sensations Gerty feels, do parallel Bloom’s sexual arousal, but the language used in their description is much more similar to Victorian criticism of sensation novels and their disquieting effects on young women readers. Victorians were deeply concerned with the sensational text’s conquest of young female bodies. The coexistence of cruelty and kindness in the dream husband “from the land of song,” highlights the pleasure taken from the terrors in the sensation novels.

Sensation fiction conventions also allow Gerty to transform her father’s traumatizing cruelty into the fantasy of a romantic thriller. The kind cruelty of the imagined husband

20 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.299-302.

21 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.57-659.

22 Donald Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce’s Ulysses*, (University of California Press, 1988), 578.

23 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.560-561.

24 Bishop, “A Metaphysics,” 194.

replaces the oppressive father figure. The fantasy is broken by an ellipsis, however, when Gerty recoils from something “indelicate.” “But even if- what then?” she says to herself. “[E]ven if” refers to premarital sex and “what then” refers to the social death that might follow an affair. She starts thinking of fallen women in the middle of the romance she conjures and shudders.²⁵ The ellipsis causes the leap from the asexual romantic fantasies about the stranger “with a past” to the catastrophic fallen woman narrative. Fear of extramarital sex leads to a naïve and irrational insistence on keeping her chastity even after marriage. “No, no: not that. They would just be good friends like a big brother and sister without all that other in spite of the conventions of Society with a big ess.”²⁶ Neither sentimental fiction nor sensation novel provides the vocabulary to acknowledge and legitimize female sexuality. The desire in the ellipsis can also be an incestuous desire, felt not only for the kindly cruel husband but also for the kindly cruel father. Incestuous feelings erupt at this moment in the text disrupting the fabric of popular fiction.

The narrative reaches a crisis in this section because none of the modes of representation of the female body are able to acknowledge female sexuality. The narrative crisis is resolved with the visual and auditory spectacle of the firework show which begins on the beach. The cadence of the fireworks represents the building up sexual energy of the characters as well as Bloom’s climax. Several critics, such as Philip Sicker in “Unveiling Desire: Pleasure, Power and Masquerade in Joyce’s ‘Nausicaa’ Episode” and Dominika Bednarska in “A Crippled Erotic: Gender and Disability in James Joyce’s ‘Nausicaa’” have argued that what is concealed in Gerty’s imagination and representation of her body, is not the “shortcoming” but sexuality.²⁷ The body surfaces with its repressed and irrepressible desires and its shortcomings, which cannot be concealed especially in juxtaposition to Cissy’s free, athletic, and probably fertile body. Suzette Henke writes that “[e]rotic desire smolders just beneath the surface of her romantic musings and finally explodes in pyrotechnic fury.”²⁸ Clara McLean analyzes how bodies are represented in the episode, in “Wasted Words: The Body Language of Joyce’s ‘Nausicaa,’” and argues that the body is present beneath the text, with its indelicate or repulsive features.

25 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.659.

26 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.664-666.

27Dominika Bednarska, “A Crippled Erotic: Gender and Disability in James Joyce’s ‘Nausicaa,’” *James Joyce Quarterly* 49.1 (2011): 73-89 and Philip Sicker, “Unveiling Desire: Pleasure, Power and Masquerade in Joyce’s ‘Nausicaa’ Episode,” *Joyce Studies Annual* 14 (Summer 2003): 92-131.

28 Henke, “Gerty MacDowell,” 137.

[U]ltimately, the dirty secret that the narrative and the characters strive so hard to conceal is precisely this troubling property of the body... By calling attention to itself as the cover, decked with stylistic frills and euphemisms, the language distracts from, and even attempts to replace, the unspeakable body beneath, much as Cissy's "puddeny pie" replaced the filth of the baby's soiling body... The sentimental language of 'Nausicaa' thus does more than parody a popular genre; it also, through Gerty, exposes the dirty reality behind the pristine dream of the romance heroine, the corporeality behind the cliché... In 'Nausicaa,' Joyce reveals the filth that lies behind the drive to art, behind the need to fictionalize.²⁹

McLean argues that Bloom's voice spills into the text which was trying to cover Gerty's body and his ejaculation erupts as the representative of the concealed corporeality. I argue that it is Gerty's limping that brings her body back into the text and lifts it out of the layers of vague sentimental description and artful packaging. Bloom is still under the influence of this packaging during the ejaculation and it is only when he realizes her "shortcoming" that he can see beyond the constructed façade and really sympathize with her. Besides, other exiled and erased aspects of her body, like sexuality and maternity, are inseparable from the physical defect. The absence of sexuality and maternity constantly bring the defective body back into the text and into Gerty's consciousness.

Erasure of sexuality and the virginal power created by this vacuum of sexual status is manifested in Gerty's self-identification with Virgin Mary. The obsession with the color blue in Gerty's clothes is not done only to match and foreground her blue eyes. The blue color of her cherished underwear ironically and irreverently resonates with the blue banner of the Virgin. Gerty's sensory perception alternates between the scenes on the beach and the nearby church where an evening service is held for Mother Mary. The most erotic parts of the narrative consist of the constant alternation between the sounds of prayer coming from the evening service and Gerty's seductively swinging her leg. She turns her attention to the Litany sung for "the Virgin most powerful, Virgin most merciful" to get moral strength from the Virgin Mary.³⁰ Ambiguous transitions in her thoughts confuse and conflate her with Mary,

29 Clara McLean, "Wasted Words: The Body Language of Joyce's 'Nausicaa,'" in *Joycean Cultures/Culturing Joyces*, ed. Vincent Cheng et. al, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), 45-50.

30 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.303-304.

enhancing and sublimating her reluctance to encounter sexuality as discussed in John Bishop and Garry Leonard's works.³¹

Mary is not only present in this scene as a Virgin but, more importantly, as a mother figure. Importance of motherhood is evinced by its absence from the narrative. Earlier in the same paragraph there is another ellipsis, this time in Gerty's memory rather than in her narrative. The missing line contains the missing image of Gerty as a mother, completing her curtailed identification with Mary as Virgin *and* Mother. As she thinks of "girlish treasure trove" and the confession book, which contains some "beautiful thoughts" written in "violent ink, bought from Hely's of Dame Street," she remembers a poem she read in the newspaper, but she forgets one line. As usual, objects and detail clot the narrative space, erase thought, and inhibit authentic expression. In other words, materiality and material circumstances shape or rather encumber the "beautiful thoughts" as well as Gerty's dreams. The relation between the objects in Gerty's treasure trove and her thoughts is analogous to the relationship between the physicality of her body and her dreams. Her enjoyment of poetry is interrupted by sadness: "...oft times the beauty of poetry, so sad in its transient loveliness, had misted her eyes with silent tears for she felt that the years were slipping by for her, one by one, and but for that one shortcoming she knew she need fear no competition."³² Gerty's transient beauty is the origin of her sadness. "The transient loveliness" of her body is displaced onto poetry, which is as ephemeral and fragile as corporeality. There is a gap in her memory of the poem: "The poem that appealed to her so deeply... *Art thou real, my ideal?* it was called by Louis J. Walsh, Magherafelt, and after that there was something about *twilight, wilt thought ever?*"³³ The missing part of Louis Walsh's poem addresses the beloved, perhaps Mary, who arrives with her baby. This is the original poem:

Art thou real, my ideal?
Wilt thou ever come to me
In the soft and gentle twilight
With your baby on your knee?³⁴

The ellipsis in Gerty's memory contains the image of Mary, with whom Gerty ardently and desperately identifies all evening. But the Mary she identifies with, by the help of the Litany,

31 Bishop, "A Metaphysics," and Garry Leonard, "The Virgin Mary and the Urge in Gerty: Praying, Buying, and the Packaging of Desire," in *Advertising and Commodity Culture* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1998), 98-141.

32 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.647-650.

33 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.64-647.

34 Walsh, quoted in Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated*, 568.

is Virgin Mary and not Mother Mary. Sexuality and motherhood are two difficult subjects in this extremely self-conscious narrative. Baby Boardman and the noisy twins annoy the obsessively neat, delicate, and “aristocratic” Gerty. The image of the mother is painful because it reminds her of the possibility of never becoming a mother. British and Irish society in 1904 prescribes motherhood as the ultimate goal and identity for women but the competitive marriage market excludes Gerty because of her “shortcoming.” “[A]ll the opiates her society has to offer: religion, and poetry, eyebrowline and romantic myth,” in Henke’s words, fail to compensate for the shortcomings of the body.³⁵ “Popular culture and popular religion both offer ‘one way out’ for a society that demands narcotic forgetfulness,” Henke states.³⁶ But even these are based on the domestic ideology so “the forgetfulness” they generate does not numb the pain but just hides the wound. Consequently, Gerty has to conceal this image in the ellipses of her memory, just as she conceals sexuality in the ellipses of her language because the same society and social code also prescribes young women to see “fallen women” and their overt, promiscuous sexuality with horror. Fantasizing about a morally flawed foreigner who might have incarcerated his wife in a madhouse might have its own pleasures, but the second ellipsis following the one in the poem writes sexuality as the dangerous, demonized sexuality of fallen women and prostitutes and erases sex altogether from the imaginary marriage with the foreigner.

In “Nausicaa” Joyce experiments with the female voice, moreover the voice of a female figure who is at once very stereotypical and very unique. Gerty MacDowell is indeed a fair “specimen of winsome Irish girlhood as one could wish to see” with her unique and at the same time very common language constructed out of various forms of popular culture.³⁷ She constructs herself and the image of her body out of these sources in her imagination as well as in the narrative. But her construction involves hiding her body as well as displaying it in particular ways. The rhetorical and visual codes of advertising, sentimental fiction, sensation novels, pornography, and religious iconography reveal her body the way advertisements reveal their products; as an image without material reality. It is, however, this material reality that lies at the basis of these images and allows Gerty’s authentic emotions and experiences to be disclosed.

35 Henke, “Gerty MacDowell,” 137.

36 Ibid.

37 Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.80.

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**FICTIONAL HISTORY OF THE GELİBOLU CAMPAIGN:
AN INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN DAISLEY ON *TRAITOR*¹**

**ÇANAKKALE MUHAREBELERİNİN KURMACA TARİHİ:
STEPHEN DAISLEY İLE *TRAITOR* ROMANI ÜZERİNE SÖYLEŞİ**

Stephen Daisley was born in 1955 and grew up in the North Island of New Zealand. He has worked on sheep and cattle stations, on oil and gas construction sites and as a truck driver, among many other jobs. Daisley's first novel, *Traitor*, won the 2011 Prime Minister's Literary Award for Fiction. He lives in Perth, Western Australia with his wife and five children. He has won the major New Zealand Literary award, The Acorn Foundation Literary Award in 2016 with his second novel *Coming Rain*, a story of shearers in 1950's Australia.

Daisley's novel, *Traitor*, transforms the cruelty of the trenches into the story of a spiritual friendship when New Zealander shepherd David and Turkish doctor Mahmoud meet during an explosion in Gelibolu Peninsula. Mahmoud, a Sufi and a whirling dervish of the Mevlevi order becomes a prisoner of war and David, his guardian in Lemnos. Mahmoud teaches David Sufi philosophy and 'sama', the journey of remembrance back to self during his captivity. The philosophical conversations enthrall David and he betrays his country by helping Mahmoud escape. Eventually he is court martialled but pardoned on condition that he serve as a stretcher bearer on the Western Front. David suffers from this dishonour all his life yet the reverential words of Mahmoud transform the trauma of his wartime experience and change David's perception of life. The narrative is fragmented, juxtaposed with David's memories of the Gelibolu Campaign and the Western Front due to shell shock. Just like his shattered memories, fragmented episodes of the novel reveal how difficult life is for the victims of war. David not only recalls the events that dishonour him as a traitor but also the beauty of Mahmoud's teachings that haunt him. Broken memories mixed with the peaceful

¹ The interview was edited for clarity and length. It was made in Perth, Australia on November 22, 2015 as part of the research project entitled 'Fictional History Writing: The Gallipoli Campaign in Contemporary British Commonwealth Novels', funded by TÜBİTAK (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) in 2015-2017.

spiritual healing portray an unsettled mind as memories and images clash. David realizes Mahmoud has taught him to look in solitude into his self for salvation.

Daisley manages to transform the battlefield experience of David and Mahmoud into a meaningful one bringing a Turkish and an Anzac soldier together, regardless of their religion and nationality. Connecting east and west, Sufi philosophy enables reconciliation in the very trenches while the reader feels the atmosphere, the past, the human bond and the effect of the true-life experience of 1915. In this way, Daisley's fictional rewriting of Gelibolu becomes a site of learning and healing rather than mere carnage.

Azer Banu Kemaloğlu (ABK): Your first novel *Traitor's* plot starts in the chaos of the Gelibolu Campaign and bears the effects of post war trauma. Why did you start your writing career with a Gelibolu Story?

Stephen Daisley (SD): The reason "why Gelibolu" is because of my family's involvement in the Gelibolu Campaign. My grandfathers and grand uncles were at Gelibolu in the New Zealand Army. The landings at Gelibolu on the 25th of April 1915 and the subsequent disastrous campaign there are part of our national identity. All of the literature which came out of that time seems to emphasize the fact that Gelibolu was a very causative factor in our national identity as independent people, as New Zealanders and Australians. As a result, it was always spoken about. My grandfather for example didn't speak about it a lot but he did tell us once in New Zealand at the beach bits and pieces about the campaign. He was probably suffering from some post-traumatic stress as so many of the men did which was undiagnosed in those days. In addition, in several of the properties which I worked at there were men who were badly affected by the war including shell shocked men who worked at very remote areas from where I developed the character David.

ABK: Do you find your novel a Gelibolu story because there are other stories embedded in the plot connected to the Campaign?

SD: I find it mainly a story of love and redemption. I find it an examination and meditation upon that which can redeem us through love. I think that is central for me and for the book and as a result, the Sufi practices come through Mahmood. David basically is quite a simple, uneducated man but Mahmood is educated and articulate, the wiser of the two which is also an inversion of what I was told. We were basically told that Turks were barbarians and we were the enlightened ones. It's probably the reverse.

ABK: Your novel challenges oriental discourse in the way you present an uneducated, simple New Zealand shepherd, David, opposed to the intelligent Turkish sergeant, Mahmoud, educated in London, teaching Sufi practices, fascinating David with stories of Majnun and questions of God's existence. Was that your intention in portraying such an inversion? And what is your source for Mahmoud?

SD: It wasn't my intention. It evolved naturally. I think I just began to write as E. L. Doctorow, the great American writer who says that when he writes he writes as if he is driving at night and he can only see so far in front of himself but he gets to where he is going and a lot of that was how I wrote. My book just came, it just spoke. Mahmoud's voice came when I met a wonderful Sufi man at the market. I used to work in a market selling second hand clothing and this wonderful fellow Mahmoud came. We spoke, we got on really well and this is how we became friends. And that's when I began my examination but it was also through the poetry of Rumi. He said this wonderful thing to me once when a fellow stole a shirt from the racks of the market. He came along and said: "Why are you so angry Steven?" I said "That fellow running, he stole my shirt". And he says "Perhaps he needed it more than you". This is a wonderful way to see things, you know. It set me off on the examination of this philosophy.

ABK: What is the significance of Sufi philosophy in your novel? Is David and Mahmoud's intimate relationship a reflection or an extension of the friendship established between Rumi and Şems Tebrizi?

SD: Absolutely, well spotted. Because that is also what informs the story of Şems Tebrizi and his meeting with the intellectual Rumi. Their story tells us that you know everything and suddenly you begin to know nothing which is a wonderful way of seeing things. I did a great deal of reading, a great deal of research on Rumi and Sufi philosophy. However, I do not read Persian. I referred to the books and interpretations of Coleman Barks which was great for me. And I read his poetic translations and a lot of other translations. Barks is on YouTube as well. He is very modest and clear. In addition, speaking to my friend Mahmoud from the market and to other friends I learned a lot. Yet I have several Muslim friends who consider Sufis to be crazy, lunatics. In fact, they pointed their fingers at their heads and made some circular motions. I was lucky enough to get several sides of it. But I was just entranced by it, and I find it lifesaving.

ABK: Writing on a historical event is difficult. Actually, it is a challenge, considering the fact that you wrote on one of the most significant campaigns of the First World War. For the credibility and authenticity of your story did you carry out some research before writing about war?

SD: Yes, I read extensively. About the Western Front, for example as it was the classic of this war. And again, one of my techniques, if you like to hear, is I try to get out of the way of myself and just allow the work to come through me. I used to be a shearer earlier in my life. When I was taught to shear it was very like saying that you allow the hand piece to do the work. So you take yourself out of the equation. If I can remove my ego, ‘nefs’ I think, if I can remove that from my work, or me from the work, it becomes okay. And it begins to work. If I put myself in it, it tends to be clouded and egoistical and almost grandiose at times. Hence, I try not to show off.

ABK: Do you have any experience of war? Because you reflect on war and your depictions are so authentic, especially some of the scenes from Gelibolu and the Western Front.

SD: I’ve been asked that a lot. But no, I don’t have any direct personal experience of war, I did not fight. I was in the military and I had a lot of friends who, for example, fought in Vietnam and Rhodesia. They were close friends and we spoke a lot. So, I used my imagination in the war scenes.

ABK: Along with the First World War scenes, your novel is rich with narratives of the post-war life of David on a New Zealand farm. Your depictions of lambing, shearing and skinning are so powerful, creating a reality effect. The relationship David formed with the animals is amazing. How do they contribute to the novel?

SD: Isn’t that interesting because a fundamentalist Christian that I knew rang me and asked if he could have coffee with me because he saw us rebirthing. I’m very much a Hemingway adherent and one of his messages was that you write as truly and authentically as you can of life and allow the reader to find the symbols and the messages. Don’t try to be didactic, don’t try to tell people what they should think. I actually think that people see what they want to. And you academicians know that the reader is more important than the writer as argued by Roland Barthes’ *The Death of the Author*. I happen to believe that because so many different people have found so many different messages and symbols from this novel, I’m an astounded, delighted and a humble poet. I have received feedback from various people in

New Zealand and Australia. A fishing boat charter captain loved the farming scenes of the novel. A woman who works at Red Cross in Wellington wrote me and said “Thank you, did this really happen?” or “Does this mean such and such?” And I again stress that readers-you are one of them as the reader- are much more important than me as the writer.

ABK: Since you wrote on a historical subject, a part of your novel is based on the Gelibolu Campaign and you connect it with personal history. Which is better at getting the truth for you? History or fiction?

SD: I particularly love to think about and meditate on this question. I can tell a story to illustrate this. Recently I returned to New Zealand for my 60th birthday with some old friends from my military life. They were talking about my perceived success with this novel. I said we don’t sort of speak about it much. There is a Maori saying: “the Kumara (which is sweet potato) does not speak of its own sweetness”, which is a lovely proverb. So they began to ask questions about research and about lies and about how fiction is telling lies. If we go back to that Kumara proverb, that sweet potato does not speak. Does it? So that is a lie. Ostensibly of course it is. But what you are doing with that proverb, you are telling a lie to tell a much more profound truth. They then began to see that sometimes we can lie to tell something that is much more profound and much more true. I think for me, reading history is the beginning. And then the imagination and the telling of the story through the imagination as long as you remain authentic and true to something that you believe as ultimately good.

ABK: How did you create your characters? Did you draw them from personal life experience?

SD: Mahmoud came from the man, the friend of mine I met in the market. He was a wonderful man, a Sufi. There were many fine doctors I knew of, which helped me create Mahmoud as a doctor. David was imagined but an amalgam of the men I’ve known during my military years and also some of the older men that I knew when I worked on sheep and cattle stations. They were usually veterans of war. They were isolated and they were known as “Shell Shock Hogan,” one of James K. Baxter’s characters in his poem called “The Lament of Barney Flanagan.” James K. Baxter was a famous and well-recognized New Zealand poet. He had many community places in New Zealand. James K. Baxter’s father was Archibald Baxter who was a conscientious objector. He was sent out to France for field punishment. David’s punishment in the novel is based on the letters of Archibald Baxter. They are quoted

in the novel. The other characters were people I know. There are no historical characters in the novel.

ABK: In your novel you prefer not to fictionalize historical figures except for a reference made to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Mahmoud's wife Aisha writes a letter to David as her husband's last wish: "Mahmoud was hanged by the jailers of the men who calls himself the Father of Turks. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who is also known as The Perfection and The Chosen One" (177). What is your historical source or evidence on Atatürk's involvement with the execution of Mevlevis? We know from history that Atatürk favoured Mevlevi and Bektashi orders. He did not order their execution at all.

SD: It was simply a rereading of history. Many people objected to it. Many Australians and New Zealanders objected to my treatment. It was not a condemnation as such but I had read that he had harshly come down on all things Islamic in Turkey at the end of the Ottoman Empire. All vestiges of the old world were ruthlessly put down. I saw him as a self-appointed dictator, a very ruthless military commander. I wrote it as a counterpoint. It was probably very inaccurate.

ABK: Did you challenge Anzac myth by creating the friendship between David and Mahmoud and rewriting the story of a traitor?

SD: Yes, this is a question that reoccurs often and it's also been appreciated by lots of Australians and New Zealanders: We question this whole notion of the heroic representation of the Anzac myth. Indeed, I don't challenge it but I just ask people to reread it, re-examine it, look at it from a different perspective but what I am really interested in is the notion of mateship. Notion of mateship is actually a central part of the novel. My stance is to find out where this love between men comes from, which is celebrated by men in Australia as represented in the notion of mateship. The sexual connotations are also there but never mentioned.

ABK: At present we cannot get your novel in Turkey. Is there a chance we will have it on the market soon?

SD: I can give good news to my Turkish friends. My publisher sold the Turkish rights of *Traitor* to Pegasus Publishing House in 2015. I hope Turkish readers enjoy my novel.

ABK: I'm sure they will Mr. Daisley. Thank you so much for your time and we'll be looking forward to reading the Turkish translation of *Traitor*.

SD: Thank you for coming to see me in Perth, Azer. Thanks a lot for your interest.

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DİVAN EDEBİYATINDA ETKİLENME ENDİŞESİ: TÂCÎ-ZÂDE CAFER ÇELEBİ ÜZERİNE BİR ÖRNEKLENDİRME DENEMESİ

Öz

Bu çalışmada, sanat ve edebiyat için göz ardı edilemez ancak her zaman olabildiğince uzak durulmaya çalışılan kavramlar olan etkilenme, esinlenme, örnek alma, taklit etme, izinden gitme gibi, yaratıcı sanatçıların bıçak sırtı mevzuu olan, İngiliz edebiyatı kuramcısı Harold Bloom'un terimiyle "etkilenme endişesi"nin Divan Edebiyatındaki örneğinin izini süreceğim. Bunun için, öncelikle Divan Edebiyatının kendi geleneği içerisinde etkilenme/esinlenme gibi durumlara bakışını ele alacak, ikincil olarak Harold Bloom'un etkilenme endişesi kuramına temel özellikleriyle değineceğim. Ardından Divan Edebiyatı geleneği içerisinde bu endişenin bir anlamda belirtilerini gözlemlediğim Tâci-zâde Cafer Çelebi ve etkilendiği ancak etkilerinden kurtulmak için çabalayıp bir zaman sonra da başkaldırdığı öncül şairlerle şiirler aracılığıyla kurduğu ilişkiye yakından bakacağım. Buradan da her edebiyatın temelinde olduğu gibi Divan Edebiyatında da bu endişenin yaratıcı ve itici aynı zamanda rahatsız edici ve bastırıcı güç olarak mevcut bulunduğu savını öne süreceğim.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Divan Edebiyatı, etkilenme endişesi, yaratım, taklit, özgünlük, nazire

ANXIETY OF INFLUENCE IN OTTOMAN LITERATURE: AN EXEMPLARY ATTEMPT WITH THE CASE OF TÂCÎ-ZÂDE CAFER ÇELEBÎ

Abstract

In this study, I will follow the traces of anxiety of influence (borrowing the term from Harold Bloom) which encompasses the dreary issues such as influence, inspiration, modelling, imitation, following etc. in Ottoman Literature. First of all, I will deal with the perspective within the Ottoman Literature itself to the states of creation like influence/inspiration, secondly I will touch upon the basics of the theory of anxiety of influence by Harold Bloom. Afterwards, I will take a closer look at Tâci-zâde Cafer Çelebi whom I have observed to carry the signs of this kind of anxiety in Ottoman Literature; and his relationship that he set up via poems with his predecessors by whom he got influenced on one hand yet against whom he revolted on the other hand. From this point forth, I will claim that anxiety of influence exists in Ottoman Literature just like any other literary tradition as a creative and driving yet exasperating and oppressive force.

Keywords: Ottoman Literature, anxiety of influence, creation, imitation, originality, parallel poem

*Gam degül dürdiyse devrân defterini Ahmedün
Buldı çün ni'me'l-bedel Ca'fer gibi kâ'im-makâm*

Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi¹

Bu çalışmada, sanat ve edebiyat için göz ardı edilemez ancak her zaman olabildiğince uzak durulmaya çalışılan kavramlar olan etkilenme, esinlenme, örnek alma, taklit etme, izinden gitme gibi yaratıcı sanatçıların bıçak sırtı mevzusu olan, İngiliz edebiyatı kuramcısı Harold Bloom'un terimiyle "etkilenme endişesi" nin Divan Edebiyatındaki örneğinin izini süreceğim. Bunun için, öncelikle Divan Edebiyatının kendi geleneği içerisinde etkilenme/esinlenme gibi durumlara bakışını ele alacak, ikincil olarak Harold Bloom'un etkilenme endişesi kuramına temel özellikleriyle değineceğim. Ardından Divan Edebiyatı geleneği içerisinde bu endişenin bir anlamda belirtilerini gözlemlediğim Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi ve etkilendiği ancak etkilerinden kurtulmak için çabalayıp bir zaman sonra da başkaldırdığı öncül şairlerle şiirler aracılığıyla kurduğu ilişkiye yakından bakacağım. Buradan da her edebiyatın temelinde olduğu gibi Divan Edebiyatında da bu endişenin yaratıcı ve itici aynı zamanda rahatsız edici ve bastırıcı güç olarak mevcut bulunduğu savını öne süreceğim.

Divan Edebiyatında Taklit ve Özgünlük

*Gitdim isbât-ı vücûd itmek için Şîrâz'a
Eyledim Urî-i fehhâr ile gavgâ-yı sühân*

Sünbül-zâde Vehbî²

Divan Edebiyatı Türklerin İslam medeniyeti çerçevesine girmesiyle beraber yüzyıllar içerisinde harcını bu medeniyetin verimleriyle kararak binasını kurmuş bir edebiyattır. Aslında, yalnızca kendisine bir model olarak aldığı Arap ve özellikle Fars edebiyat geleneği değil tüm bir orta çağ şiir geleneği ortak motifler üzerine kuruludur ve şairlere düşen de ortak motiflerin geliştirilmesi ve iyileştirilmesi/inceltilmesinden ibarettir. Dolayısıyla o çağın bir edebiyatı olarak Divan edebiyatı da ortak şairlik havuzunun çeşitlene çeşitlene işlendiği ve havuza önceden malzemesini bırakıp edebiyat tarihi içerisindeki yerini almış şairlerle, yaşayan ve

1 Zaman, Ahmed'in defterini dürdüyse de gam değildir; sürekli kalacak olan Cafer gibi bir karşılığını bulmuştur ya!

2 Varlığımı, şairliğimi ispat etmek için Şîrâz'a gittim; o çok övünen Urî ile söz söylemekte üstünlük kavgasına giriştim.

yazan şairler ve gelecek şairler arasında kopmaz bağların olduğu, gelenek ve uzlaşımın önemini her zaman koruduğu edebiyatlar içerisinde yalnızca bir tanesidir.

Divan Edebiyatı, kuşkusuz malzemesini büyük oranda İran edebiyatı ürünlerinden almış ancak zaman içerisinde işlene işlene kendi sesini, kıvamını, yatağını bulmayı başarmıştır. Bir devreye kadar her bir şairiyle tüm bir edebiyat İran edebiyatına karşı kendini kurma sancısı çektiğinden, şairler de kendi rakip ya da öncülleri olarak İran şairlerini, sözgelimi Hâfız'ı, Hâkânî'yi, Molla Câmî'yi, Urî'yi seçer ve kendilerini onlara göre konumlandırırken; edebiyatın kendi yolunu bulduğu noktadan itibaren İran şairleriyle beraber kendi öncül şairleriyle de bir yarış içerisine girmişlerdir. Böylelikle, taklit ve tercümenin karşısına özgünlük, tekrarın karşısına yenilik, aparma/çalma/esinlenmenin karşısına da îcad/yaratı konularak bu kavramlar üzerinden kendilerini ve birbirlerini değerlendirmeye başlamışlardır.

Etkilenme Endişesi ve Divan Edebiyatındaki Yansımaları

*Kimdir bizi men eyleyecek bâğ-ı cinândan
Mevrûs-ı pederdûr girerüz hâne bizimdür*

Nâbî³

Modern insanın bütünlük algılarını yıkan yaklaşımlardan birinin öncüsü olan Freud, Oedipus Kompleksi düşüncesiyle baba ile oğul arasında kaçınılmaz ve evrensel bir ilişkiyi öne çıkarmıştı. Buna göre, kendisini anne ile bir bütün halinde görerek annesini yani bütünlüğü arzulayan çocuk babanın yasası karşısında kendisini hadım edilme tehdidi altında görür. Ömrü boyunca baba gibi olma sancısı ve baba gibi asla olamayacak olmanın bilgisi yahut iki endişe ucu arasında bocalamaktan başka çaresi yok gibidir. Bu haliyle çocuk her zaman babadan önce gelememiş olma, baba değil de babanın sonrası ve ürünü olan çocuğu olma, kendisini var eden bir baba figürünün gölgesinde olma endişesiyle kendini kurmak zorundadır. Asla kaçamayacağı/kaçınamayacağı bu sonradan gelmişlikle mücadele içinse zaman içerisinde kendince bazı savunma mekanizmaları geliştirecektir. Bu bir nevi bastırılmışlık duygusunu da Freud'un "en büyük insani başarı olarak" gördüğü "yüceltme" aracılığıyla yaratıcı ürünler vermeye yönlendirecek ve böylece ikame edecektir.⁴

3 Cennet bahçesine girmemizi kim engelleyebilir ki; orası bize babamızın mirasıdır, ev bizimdir, elbette gireriz!

4 Harold Bloom, *Etkilenme Endişesi* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2008), 50.

Freud'un getirdiği bu düşünceler, Harold Bloom'un elinde başlı başına bir edebiyat kuramına dönüşür. Baba ve oğul ilişkisini öncül ve ardıl/halef ve selef şairlere uyarlayan Bloom, her bir şairin kaçınılmaz olarak önceki/baba şairden sonra gelmişliği, kendisini kuranın biraz da hatta kimi zaman tümüyle selefının olduğu, ondan etkilenmekten de etkilenmişlikten de kurtulamadığı, bu durumla başa çıkabilmek içinse etkilendiği şair(ler)i kendini kurabilmek ve ait olduğu edebiyat geleneği içerisinde konumlandırabilmek amacıyla kendince yanlış okuduğu/yorumladığını öne sürer. Bu anlamda bir şairin öz-inşa süreci aslında bir revizyon sürecidir; sonradan gelen şair önceki şairleri kendince revize etmekle, revize ettiğini düşünmek ve okurlarına da düşündürmekle farklılaşabilecektir ancak. Bu aynı zamanda hem doğayla bir savaşımdır; sonradan gelmiş/gecikmişliğe karşı hükmen mağlup bitmesi kaçınılmaz umutsuz bir savaştır; hem de Freud'a göre insandaki Eros ve Thanatos şeklindeki temel iki içgüdüden biri olan ölüm dürtüsünün sancısıdır, ölümle/ölüme karşı adını yaşatma/namını sürdürme, kendi için kaçınılmaz olandan hiç değilse eserlerini kaçırma savaşıdır.

Bloom'a göre, şair, Freud'un ileri sürdüğü gibi bir yüceltme ile de rahatlayamaz; önceliğin yerine geçebilecek "mutlu ikame" yoktur. Ancak, başarısızlık bile güçlü şairlerde bir başarıdır aslında; "büyük şiir başarılı olmuş endişedir."⁵ Endişenin başarılı olmuşluğuyse revizyonist hareketle endişeyi dönüştürerek mümkün olur. Bloom, bir şairin kendinden önceki ya da çağdaşı ancak etkilenmekten kaçamadığı büyük/güçlü şairlerden nasıl uzaklaşır da kendisini kurar sorusunu "güçlü şairin yaşam döngüsünde" çeşitli revizyon kategorilerinin izini sürerek yanıtlamaya çalışır. "Bir şairin içindeki şair" bulunduğunda, geçmiş şairleri bir nebze daha iyi okumanın olanaklı olabileceğini düşünür.⁶

Bu son derece temel ve evrensel endişenin, etkilenme endişesinin, Divan Edebiyatında işlemediğini düşünmek, Bloom'un da "Okurun içindeki eleştirmene haz veren şey, içindeki şairde endişeye yol açabilir" önermesine denk bir şekilde kendi endişelerimizin bir yansıması sayılabilir.⁷ İslam sanatlarının taklit ve "tenevvü"ye (çeşitleme) dayandığı, dolayısıyla edebiyat için de, taklit, etkilenme, esinlenme gibi şiirsel benlikle ilgili durumların eski edebiyat geleneği içerisinde yadırganmadığı, yargılanmadığı, tabii karşılandığına yönelik ezber kalıplardan biraz uzaklaşmak ve her şairin ister Divan şiiri geleneği içerisinde ister şiir geleneklerinden herhangi birisi içerisinde olsun, temel yaratım sancılarında taşıdığı ortak ya da benzer ruha dikkat çekmek istiyorum. Aslında buradan genişleyerek ve biraz da iddialı görülebilecek bir biçimde

5 A.g.e., 20.

6 A.g.e., 52.

7 A.g.e., 64.

Divan Edebiyatının tümüyle bir başarılımış endişe edebiyatı olduğunu öne sürmek bile mümkündür sanıyorum.

Yıllar yılı Divan Edebiyatını savunmak adına öne çıkartılan “edebiyat uzlaşımına dayalıydı, o dönem edebiyat geleneği içinde bunlar zaten alışıldık ve tasvip edilir yöntemlerdi, gelenekçi ve uzlaşımsal bir edebiyatta şair elindeki kısıtlı malzemeyi dönüştürmeye uğraşıyordu, taklit kaçınılmazdı” türü ifadeler bir noktadan sonra kanımca savunu işlevlerini aşarak tam tersi işlev görüyor. Böylece, Divan Edebiyatı seri üretim yapan bir dizi şairin sanat değil sanayi ürünü gibi, yahut şairlerin hepsi bir örnek makinelermiş gibi bir kalıba sokuluyor. Oysaki hangi gelenek ya da edebiyat içerisinde olursa olsun, bir şair her şeyden önce bir şairdir ve elindeki her durumda kısıtlı malzemeyle oynaması kadar oynayamaması, onu dönüştürememesinin sancısı da şiir tarihi için önemli sayılmalıdır. Bu bağlamda, Divan Edebiyatı şairlerinin birbirlerine yönelttikleri eleştirileri, daha da önemlisi, böylesi eleştirilerin bizzat varlığını dikkate almak gereklidir. Şair eleştirirken de –hatta en çok eleştirirken– kendisini, kendi şiirsel benliğini ele verir. Selefinde görüp de beğenmediğini söylediği her ne ise onu kendini kurma ve bir şair olarak farklılaşma sürecinde yapı taşı olarak kullanacaktır; en azından böyle olması beklenir.

Divan şairleri de, özellikle mesnevilerin eserin yazılış nedenlerini sundukları “sebeb-i telif” bölümlerinde, eserlerine ve dolayısıyla kendilerine bir varoluş nedeni kurarlarken, başka şairlerin ya da eserlerin eleştirisine girişmişler; kendi ürünlerinin eleştirdikleri özelliklerden kurtulmuşluğu simgelediğini vurgulamışlar; böylelikle haklı bir gerekçe/dayanak noktası elde etmişlerdir. Yapılan sınırlı sayıdaki araştırmada Divan şairleri eleştirilerini belli konular üzerine yapmışlar şeklinde varılan yargı bir varış noktası olarak kalmakta; her bir eleştiri parçasının, hatta en kalıp görünenlerin de bireysel bir ipucuna götürebileceği ya da daha genele varılarak bu şairlerin de etkilenme endişesi duyabildikleri üzerindeyse hiç durulmamaktadır.⁸ Ancak tam da buna bir örnek olması için, bu klişe yargılardan kaçınarak endişenin izini sürmek adına, Divan şiirinin sivri dilli şairlerinden Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi’nin eleştirilerine ve eleştirilerinin öncesinde kendisini bu noktaya getiren endişe ve sancısına bir bakmak yararlı olacaktır.

8 Bkz. Menderes Coşkun, “Mesnevilerde Klasik Şairlerle İlgili Değerlendirmeler” *TUBA* 27 (2003): 313-368.

Asi Evlat – Endişeli Şair: Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi

*Bu şi'r sevâdın okusun kanı ki Ahmed
Görsün ki nice olur imiş bârî benefşe*

*Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi*⁹

II. Bayezid ve Sultan Selim'in nişancısı olan ve ömrü boyunca sürekli devletin bünyesinde, zirvesinde yer almış sivri bir karakter olan Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi, aynı zamanda birçok devlet adamı gibi edebî yönüyle de öne çıkmıştır. Padişahın fermanlarını kaleme alan nişancı payesi dolayısıyla özellikle inşa adı verilen süslü nesirde usta sayılmaktadır. Bunun yanında İstanbul'un fethini anlatan ilk kaynaklardan biri olan *Mahrûse-i İstanbul Fetih-nâmesi* yazarıdır. Hacimli bir divanı, *Heves-nâme* adlı bir mesnevisi ve mektuplarından oluşan münşeâtı vardır.¹⁰ *Heves-nâme* adlı tümüyle tensel bir aşk hikâyesi olan, gelenek içerisinde son derece özgün ve kendine özgü eseri, edebiyat tarihçileri ve eleştirmenlerince iki özelliğiyle anılagelmıştır. Birincisi, sebep-i telif olarak yazılan “Hasb-i Hal” kısmında kendi eserini yazma nedeni ve gerekçesini anlatırken Şeyhî ve Ahmed Paşa gibi dönemin zirve şairlerini kıyasıya eleştirmesi ve ikinci olarak da eserin ilk başında yer alan İstanbul tasvirleridir. *Heves-nâme* içerisinde yer alan bu eleştirel beyitlere dikkatle bakıldığında, Harold Bloom'un her şairin kendinden önceki şairleri kendince (yanlış) okuyup yorumladığı ve böylece onu çarpıtıp bambaşka belki de hiç olmadığı bir şekilde konumlandığı düşünceleri akla gelmektedir. Bu eleştirilerinden yola çıkarak Cafer Çelebi'nin divanını incelediğimizdeyse, Ahmed Paşa ve Şeyhî'ye yazmış olduğu nazireler dolayısıyla onları bir dönem için üstat bilmiş olması ilginç bir nokta olarak göze çarpmaktadır.

Bilindiği üzere, nazire İslami kaynaklı edebiyatlarda (Arap, İran, Urdu ve Osmanlı) yaygın bir gelenek, şairlerin yetişme dönemlerinde kendilerini geliştirdikleri, üsluplarını iyileştirdikleri bir tür alıştırma ya da Tanpınar'ın deyişiyle “hakikî bir atölye çalışması”ydı.¹¹ Beğenilen bir selef/çağdaş şairin şiiri temel yani model alınır ve buna “zemin şiir” denir, o şiirin vezninde ve aynı kafiye/redifle, içerisindeki motifler dönüştürülerek yeni ve aslında daha iyi bir şiir yaratmaya çalışılır. “Nazirenin zemin şiir kadar güçlü olması gerektiği, bazı şairlerce nazirede bulunması gereken temel özellik olarak algılanmıştır.”¹² Bundan dolayı da, içerisinde

9 Ahmed bu şiiri okusun da menekşe nasıl olurmuş, şiir nasıl söylenirmiş görsün.

10 İsmail E. Erünsal, “Tâcîzâde Cafer Çelebi”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi C. 39* (2010): 353-356.

11 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *19. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (İstanbul: Çağlayan Kitabevi, 2001), 21.

12 Fatih Köksal, *Sana Benzer Güzel Olmaz, Divan Şiirinde Nazire* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2006), 39.

nazirecilikle kalan ya da nazire yazımında model şiiri geçemeyen pek çok şair, edebiyat tarihi adı unutulmuşlar ve silik şahsiyetler olarak kalakalmışlardır.

Nazire yazan şair, ya bir şiiri beğendiği için o şiire ve şairine hürmeten yazar, böylelerinde bazen model şiirin şairine telmihte de bulunur; ya da kafiyesini/redifini ve motiflerini/hayallerini beğendiği şiirin şairinin sözde nâkıs bıraktığı güzel şiirsel öğelerin hakkını verecek bir şiir çıkarmaya çalışır. Bu bağlamda bir nazire söylemek zordur; şairin iddiasını şiiriyle ispat edebilmesi gerekir.

Ancak aynı zamanda, bu zorlu uğraş, tam da Bloom'un "Şair kendisini ve idealize edilmiş okurunu o olmasaydı bilmecenin formüle edilemeyeceğine ikna etmesi gerekir" dediği gibi,¹³ bir şairin selefinin şiirini sözde selefi yarım ya da eksik ve kusurlu bırakmış da o tamamlıyormuş gibi ya da "Ebeveyn şiiri, terimlerini muhafaza edip başka bir anlama gelecek şekilde, sanki selefi bu denli ileri gitmeyi başaramamış gibi oku" masının bir örneğidir.¹⁴

Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi'nin divanının inceleme ve tenkitli metnini hazırlayan İsmail E. Erünsal'ın da belirttiği üzere, muhtemelen Cafer Çelebi şairliğinin ilk aşamasında Ahmed Paşa'yı taklit etmiş, onu kendisine model almış, onun izinden gitmiştir.¹⁵ Yani, Bloom'un terminolojisiyle söylersek, Çelebi'nin selefi, etkisinden kurtulmak için mücadele verdiği, kendisini yaratan babası Ahmed Paşa'dır. Dolayısıyla kendi şiirlerini ve nazirelerini, selefinin şiirlerini tamamlayan, mükemmelleştiren bir şiir olarak kurmuş yahut en azından öyle göstermiştir.

İsmail Erünsal, Divan şiirinde şairler arasında etkiden söz etmek için dış ve iç olmak üzere iki tür kanıt gerekli olduğunu söyler.¹⁶ Yani, ilkin şairin kendinden öncekileri ve çağdaşlarını ne dereceye kadar bildiği/okuduğu önem taşır. Bunun için de edebi kaynaklarla beraber şairin kendi eserinden yardım alabiliriz. Sözgelimi, şairin yazdığı ve şaire yazılan nazireler bir yol gösterecektir. Sonra, şairin başlangıçta ya da sanatçı kişiliğinin oluşma döneminde ya da tam tersi üstünlüğü kabul edilmiş şairlerden üstat olarak söz etmesi ya da onlara kendisine bir ad kazandırmak adına meydan okuması iki şair (ya da şairler) arasında bir ilişkiye işaret eder. Bu tür dışsal kanıttan sonraki aşama, biçimsel, dilsel ve estetik hükümler aracılığıyla şiirler arasında metinsel ve karşılaştırmalı bir incelemedir. Buna göre, Cafer Çelebi'nin Ahmed Paşa'dan etkilenmişliğinin hem dışsal hem içsel kanıtının izi kolaylıkla sürülebilir. Cafer Çelebi, dışsal kanıt olarak, hem Ahmed Paşa'ya kimisi tekrardan öteye

13 Harold Bloom, *A.g.e.*, 104.

14 *A.g.e.*, 55.

15 İsmail E. Erünsal, *The Life and Works of Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi, With a Critical Edition of His Dîvân*. (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1983), LXXVI.

16 *A.g.e.*, LXXIV.

geçemeyen pek çok nazire yazmış hem de meydan okurcasına onu kıyasıya eleştirmiştir. Bununla beraber, Ahmed Paşa'ya nazireleri karşılaştırmalı olarak incelendiğinde içsel olarak da etkilenmişlik kendini ele verir.

Tüm bu hususları göz önünde bulundurarak, bir örnek olması kastıyla, Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi'nin Ahmed Paşa'nın şiirini kendisine zemin aldığı nazire beyit örneklerine baktığımızda, Cafer Çelebi'nin alıştırma, çıraklık evresinde özellikle Ahmed Paşa'yı örnek aldığı, onun etkisinden kaçamadığı açıktır. Cafer Çelebi, Ahmed Paşa'nın (zemin) şiirine nazirelerinde, çok az bir değişikliğe gitmiş, bazen selefın şiirindeki hayali ya da imgeyi tek bir kelimeyi değiştirerek dönüştürmeye çalışmış, bazen beğendiği tüm bir mısrayı aynen tekrar etmiş, bazen de Ahmed Paşa'nın birden fazla beyitte söylediklerini tek bir beyitte toplamış, sonuçta selefının şiirlerine dilediğince tasarruf etmiştir:¹⁷

Ahmed Paşa:

Iyd-i nevrûzı görüp gül defterinden andelîb

Hoş du'â vü medh okur Şâh-ı zafer-yâb üstine

(Bülbül, nevrüz bayramının geldiğini görüp zaferler kazanan o Şah adına gül defterinden hoş dualar ve övgüler okur.)

Cafer Çelebi:

Minber-i şâh-ı gül üstinde hatîb-i andelîb

Hutbe-i tahsîn okur Şâh-ı zafer-yâb üstine

(Bülbül hatibi, gül dalının minberi üstünde zaferler kazanan o Şah adına övgü dolu hutbe okur.)

Ahmed Paşa:

Mutribün gül-gûn yüzinde perde-i evtâr-ı çeng

Çekdi mîstâr safha-i hurşîd ü mehtâb üstine

(Çalgıcının gül renkli yüzünde çeng sazının tellerinin perdesi, sanki güneş ve mehtabın yüzüne mîstar/cetvel çekilmiş gibi bir görünüm verdi.)

17 Nazire beyit örnekleri Cafer Çelebi'nin divanını yayımlayan İsmail E. Erünsal tarafından tenkitli metnin önsözünde Ahmed Paşa'nın Çelebi'nin şiirine etkisinden bahsedilirken verilmiştir. Beyitler için bkz. İsmail Erünsal, *a.g.e.*, LXXVI-LXXXI.

Cafer Çelebi:

Husrevâ medh ü senânı yazmaga zülfeyn-i yâr

Çekdi mîstâr safha-i hurşîd ü mehtâb üstine

(Ey Husrev, senin övgünü yazmak için sevgilinin iki zülfü güneş ve mehtabın üzerine mîstar çekti.)

Ahmed Paşa:

Bir senâ dürrin çıkardı bahr-ı tab'um mevci kim

Cân virür gavvâs olan ol dürr-i nâ-yâb üstine

(Benim şairlik tabiatımın denizinin dalgası öyle bir övgü incisi bulup çıkardı ki o benzersiz inci üstüne dalgıç olan can verir.)

Cafer Çelebi:

Dil kalup vasfında âciz bir gazel nazm eyledi

Cân virür sarrâf olan ol dürr-i nâ-yâb üstine

(Gönül seni anlatmada aciz kalıp öyle bir gazel yazdı ki o benzersiz inci üstüne sarraf olan can verir.)

Ahmed Paşa:

Senün bu şîr pençende cihân-gîrler zebûn iken

Rakîb-i rûbehe varup niçün nahcîr olasın sen

(Cihanı fetheden nice kimse senin bu aslan pençene düşmüşken, tilki rakibe varıp da ne demeye av olasın sen?)

Cafer Çelebi:

Niçe bîn şîr-merd âhû gözüne sayd olurken

Rakîb-i kelbe düşmez kim varup nahcîr olasın sen

(Nice aslan yürekli senin ceylan gözüne kapılmışken, köpek rakibe varıp da ona av olman yakışık almaz.)

Ahmed Paşa:

Umaram hâlis ola zer gibi bu kalb-i siyâh

Kimyâdur bilürem sohbeti dervişlerün

(Dervişlerin sohbeti madeni altına dönüştüren kimya ilmi gibi olduğunu bildiğimden, ben de bu siyah kalbimin altın gibi halis olmasını umarım.)

Cafer Çelebi:

Himmet itse kara toprağı kızıl altun ider

Kimyâ oldu meger himmeti dervîşlerün

(Dervişlerin himmeti meğher kimya olmuştur; bir himmet etse kara toprağı kızıl altına çevirir.)

Bunlar gibi, Ahmed Paşa'nın "Eyâ perî nicesin hoş musun safâca mısın" mısrası Cafer Çelebi'de "Ey yüzi tâze bahârum nicesin hoşca mısın" ile yankılanmakta; "Berât-ı hüsnî beyâzında kaşı halkaların/Nişân-ı pâdişeh-i kâm-kâra benzetdüm" beyti "Görüp bu mâh-likânun hilâl ebrûsın/Rikâb-ı pâdişeh-i kâm-kâra benzetdüm" e dönüşmektedir. Kimi zaman da Cafer Çelebi'nin Ahmed Paşa'nın iki beytini tek bir beyitte kendince bütünleştirip dönüştürmekte olduğunu görürüz:

Ahmed Paşa:

1 Olmaz turunc-ı gabgabun ey sîm-ber lezîz

Olmaz behîşt mîveleri bu kadar lezîz

2 Vaslun na'îmi lezzetini kande söyleyem

Ki olur gamun dile nite kim gül şeker lezîz

Cafer Çelebi:

Seng-i cefâsı lezzetini kande vasf idem

Olmaz bihişt mîveleri ol kadar lezîz¹⁸

Cafer Çelebi, tüm bu nazirelerin ardından, kendini yeterince geliştirdiği bir noktada, artık selefle/üstatla/babayla bağlantılarını koparmak istemiş, "oldum" dediği anda gerçekten "olmuşluğu"na da bir delil olabilecek mesnevisi *Heves-nâme*'yi yazmış ve eserini gerekçelendirirken de "baba" yı geçtiğinin herkesçe görülmesi arzusunu içten içe yazdıklarına sindirmiştir. Şair *Heves-nâme*'sinin sebeb-i telif bölümünde eserin yazılışı için kurmaca yahut gerçek olduğuna dair bir bilginin olmadığı bir gerekçe sunar. Buna göre, ârif ve fâzıl kimseler

18 A.g.e., LXXIX.

olduklarını vurguladığı dostlarıyla zaman zaman buluşup sohbet ettikleri, şiirler okuyup tartıştıkları meclislerden birinde, dostları şaire “sen ki şair yaradılışlısın, herkesten çok bu işte yeteneklisin, bir de mesnevi yazsan ya, mademki aslolan dünyada bir ad bırakmaktır, *Husrev ü Şîrîn* gibi hikâyeler artık eskimiştir, sen yepyeni bir hikâye anlatsan” diyerek sözüm ona şairi özgün bir mesnevi yazmaya teşvik ederler.¹⁹

Cafer Çelebi ilkin “bizim kalemimiz inceliklerin halliyle meşgulken, hakikatleri gün yüzüne çıkarırken yalan-yanlış, aslı astarı olmayan-uydurma bir hikâye yazması reva mıdır” diyerek karşı çıktığında arkadaşlarının “şairlikleriyle şöhret bulmuşların en önde gidenlerinin hali belli” şeklindeki eleştirilerinin sevkiyle bir mesnevi yazmaya ikna olur. Ancak bu sefer de ne yazsam düşünceleriyle boğuşurken, şimdiye kadar hep yapıldığı gibi bir mesneviyi alıp tercüme etmeyi “tercüme fazilet ehline yaraşmaz, hele benim katımda cehaletten başka bir şey değildir” diyerek kendisine yakıştıramaz ve kendi başından geçmiş özgün bir hikâye kaleme almaya karar verir. Aslında şair böylelikle, eleştirdiği Ahmed Paşa ve Şeyhî’ye atfettiği tercümecilikten kaçındığını, özgün ve yalnızca kendisine ait bir hikâye anlattığını göstermek ister ki Bloom’un Lichtenberg’den aktardığı bir cümleyle “tam karşıtını yapmak da bir taklit biçimidir ve taklidin tanımı her ikisini de içermelidir”.²⁰

Gecikmişliğin, sonradan gelmişliğin, Ahmed Paşa’nın, Şeyhî’nin ardında kalmışlığın sancısını hisseden, onlardan etkilenmişliğin kendi de farkında olan Cafer Çelebi, tüm taklit ve etki/esinlerden sıyrılmak/silkinmek arzusuyla bir zamanlar taklit ettiği, etkilenip esinlendiği bu iki şairi eserinde Bloom’un yanlış okuma ve tamamlama dediği şekilde öyle konumlandırır ki o şairler sanki hep eksik ve kusurlu imişler buna rağmen bunca şöhret bulmuşlar görünümüne sahip olurlar. Ayrıca, Şeyhî’yi ve Ahmed Paşa’yı farklı noktalardan, sanki bu iki şair birbirlerinin kusurlarını tamamlayan iki şairmiş de kendisi onların tüm kusurlarını aşmış bir şairmiş gibi eleştirir. Ona göre, Şeyhî söz söylemesini bilir, sözü güzelleştirmesini, üslubu, edayı anlar ancak sözü anlaşılır kılmayı beceremez; kelime seçiminden anlamaz:

Şular kim Türkî dilde şöhreti var

Biri Şeyhî biri Ahmed’dür ey yâr

(Ey dostum, Türk dilinde şöhret bulmuş iki kişi vardır ki biri Şeyhî, diğeri Ahmed Paşa’dır.)

19 Necati Sungur, *Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi Heves-nâme (İnceleme-Tenkitli Metin)* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2006), 205.

20 Harold Bloom, *a.g.e.*, 69.

Eger Şeyhî'dür insâf eyle bi'llâh
Sühânverlikden olmuş gerçi âgâh
(Şeyhî nasıldır dersin, doğrusu düzgün söz söylemeyi bilir.)

Sözün üslûb-ı nagzın anlamış ol
Kelâmın tavr u tarzın anlamış ol
(Sözün güzelliğinin üslubunu, kelâmın tavır ve tarzını anlamıştır.)

Fesâhatde velîkin kârı yokdur
Kelâmınun garîb elfâzı çokdur²¹
(Ancak, anlaşılır, telaffuzu kolay, ahenkli söz söyleyemez, sözleri içerisinde garip laflar bulunur.)

Buna karşılık, Ahmed Paşa ise, Şeyhî'de eksik olan akıcılık ve anlaşılabilirliğe sahip olsa da hangi kelimeyi nereye yerleştireceğini, sözleri arasında bağlantı kurmayı bilmez, böylelikle tatsız, zevksiz sözler söyler:

Ve ger Ahmed durur gerçi selâset
Bulınur sözlerinde hem fesâhat
(Ahmed'e gelirsek, gerçi sözleri akıcı ve anlaşılırdır.)

Belâgatda velî mâhir degüldür
Kelâmın rabtına kâdir degüldür
(Ancak, o da yerine göre uygun söz söylemesini bilmez, sözleri arasında bağ kuramaz.)

Sözinün hüsni vardur ânı yokdur
Nukûş-ı deyre benzer cânı yokdur²²
(Sözünün güzelliği vardır ancak cazibesi yoktur, kilisedeki resimler gibi cansız-ruhsuzdur.)

Bu özellikleri daha doğrusu kusurlarından dolayı bunlar aslında her ne kadar zirve şairler sayılsa da aslında şair tabiatlı bile değildirler, yalnızca başkalarının hayallerini ve sözlerini tercüme etmeyi bilir mütercimlerdir bir bakıma:

21 Necati Sungur, *a.g.e.*, 207-208.

22 *A.g.e.*, 208.

Bu hâl ile yine ey merd-i üstâd

Birinün dahı yok şânında îcâd

(Ey üstat kimse! Bu halle hiçbirinde yaratma kabiliyeti yoktur.)

Muayyen her birinün hâli kâli

Olupdur terceme ulu kemâli

(Her birinin durumu, yapıp ettiği belli; en iyi bildikleri şey tercümeden öteye geçmez.)

Ararsan her birinün defterini

Tettebbu eyler isen sözlerini

(Her birinin yazdıklarına bakarsan, sözlerini dikkatle incelersen)

Bulamazsın birinde mâni-i hâs

Bulursın gayrûn âhengine rakkâs

(Birinde bile kendine özgü bir mana bulamazsın; hep başkasının çaldığı müzikle oynayan dansçı gibi başkasının sözleriyle oynarlar.)

Hayâl-i hâssa çün kâdir degüller

Hakîkatde bular şâir degüller²³

(Bunlar, kendilerine özgü/özgün hayaller bulmaya güç yetiremezler, aslında şair bile değildirler.)

Buna karşın, akıcılık, anlaşılabilirlik, söyleyiş güzelliği, orijinal hayaller bulma, kelimeleri yerli yerinde kullanma, sözler arasında bağ kurma, söze can verme gibi seleflerinde eksik olan ne varsa Cafer Çelebi’de bulunmaktadır:

Senün hod nazm-ı pâke kudretün var

Meâni bulmaga hem kuvvetün var

(Bunlara karşın sense güzel şiir yazabilirsin, söylenmedik anlamlar bulmaya gücün vardır.)

Fesahât sende bulmuşdur nihâyet

Kemâline irişmişdür belâgat

23 A.g.e., 208.

(Sözü kusursuz, açık, öz ve yerinde söylemek sende son noktasına, mükemmel derecesine ulaşmıştır.)

Neye göstermeyesin kuvvetünü

Niçün bildürmeyesin kudretünü²⁴

(Öyleyse neden kuvvetini göstermeyip, kudretini âleme bildirmeyesin?)

Bu beyitlerden de görüldüğü üzere *Heves-nâme*'nin eleştirel bölümü bir nevi ergenlikten çıktığına inanan gencin yetişkinlik/reşitlik manifestosu gibidir. En önemli tezkire yazarlarımızdan Latîfî de Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi'yi anlatırken, “kendi yüce şairlik tabiatının ürünlerini överek Rum diyarının önde gelen şairlerini yermiştir” sözleriyle bu duruma değinir. Latîfî'ye göre de bu eser “matlaından maktâna kadar şaşılacak sözler, garib manalar, nükte dolu beyitler, güzel edebi sanatlar, ibare ve istiarelerle dolu, belîğ ve büyüleyici bir kitaptır.”²⁵ Yani, Bloom'un deyişiyle söyleyecek olursak, *Heves-nâme*'si Cafer Çelebi'nin başarılımış endişesidir. “Selefin şiiri neredeyse, benim şiirim de orada olsun” diyen şair ilkin çıraklık evresinde bir atölye çalışması halinde seleflerine nazireler yazmış; ardından ustalığını ilan etmek üzere zirve şairleri eleştirerek kendi zirve eserini inşa etmiştir.²⁶

Sonuç Yerine

*Kadd-i yâre kimisi ar'ar didi kimisi elif
Cümleinin maksûdı bir ammâ rivâyet muhtelif*

*Muhibbî*²⁷

Belirli şekillerde, belirli vezinde, belirli mazmunlar ve belirli kafiye/rediflerle oynamak, imgeleri çeşitlendirmek, hayalleri derinleştirmek esasına dayanmakla özdeşleştirilmiş Divan şiiri de, sanatın ve edebiyatın, özellikle de şiirin evrensel ve şairin bireysel sancı ve endişelerinden uzak bir edebiyat alanı değildi. Dolayısıyla, herkesin söylediği, söylemeyi dilediği nihayetinde aynı bile olsa, tüm yollar bir noktaya bile çıksa, orada da yolların farklılaşmadığı söylenemezdi. İşte bu farklılaşmanın, yani sanatçının evrensel ve ezeli arzusunun Divan şairlerinde de olduğu; bir örnek varsayılan, gerek üslupta gerek hayallerde

²⁴ A.g.e., 209.

²⁵ Mustafa İsen (haz.), *Latîfî Tezkiresi* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1990), 137.

²⁶ Harold Bloom, a.g.e., 111.

²⁷ Sevgilinin boyunu kimisi serviye benzetti kimisi elif harfine; aslında hepsinin de kastettiği de birdir ama söyleyişleri çeşit çeşittir.

farklılaşmayı, kendini ayırt edilebilir kılmayı gözetmeyerek tekrarlar yetinen bir yığın insan gibi anılan Divan şairlerinin de her şeyden önce şair, sanatçı, yepyeni ve bambaşka bir söz olmasa da söylenilecek olanı bir de ben kendi üslubumla söyleyeyim diyen ve böylece eline kalem alan yaratıcı kimseler oldukları gözden kaçırılmakta.

Bu bağlamda, Harold Bloom'un Batı'daki Romantik dönem şairlerini daha iyi anlayabilmek için Freud'dan esinlenerek geliştirdiği etkilene endişesi kuramı, kanımca, hemen her şair için olduğu gibi Divan şairleri için de geçerlidir. Buradan genişleyerek, Divan edebiyatı tarihinin de aslında, kendinden önce kurulmuş ve en zirve eserlerini çoktan vermiş Fars edebiyatının halefi olarak, onun ardından ve ondan etkilene başlangıç döneminde o edebiyattan tercümelerle kurulduğu ve tüm yaşam döngüsü boyunca – Divan şairlerinin hemen hepsinin kendini bir İran şairiyle kıyaslayarak üstünlüğünü ispata çalıştığını da göz önünde bulundurursak– selefi/babası Fars edebiyatına karşı “başarılmış bir endişe” olduğu sonucuna varılabilir diye düşünüyorum. Benim bu kısa incelememde değindiğim Tâcî-zâde Cafer Çelebi ise bu bütünün sadece bir parçası; ancak etkilene endişesinin, yaratıcı zihnin sonradan gelmişlikten duyduğu ıstırapın ve bundan yakasını kurtarmak için attığı hamlelerin güzel bir örneği olan bir parçasıdır. Çünkü bir bakıma “gerçek şiir tarihi, şairlerin şair sıfatıyla başka şairler yüzünden nasıl ıstırap çektiklerinin hikâyesidir, tıpkı gerçek bir biyografinin kişinin kendi ailesi yüzünden –ya da ailesinin yerine sevgilileri ve arkadaşlarını koymasından ötürü– çektiği ıstırapın tarihi olması gibi.”²⁸ Bu bağlamda Divan şiirinin de tarihi, bu edebiyatın bizzat kendi şairlerinin/eleştirmenlerinin ifadeleri dikkatle okunduğunda böylesi bir ıstırapın tarihi olarak görülebilir. Buna kanıt olarak, Divan şiirinin zirvelerinden biri sayılan Fuzûlî'nin yakınmalarına bir kulak vermek bile yeterli olacaktır:

Tesadüfen benden evvel gelen şairlerin hepsi yüksek anlayışlı, engin düşünceli insanlarmış. Gazel üslubuna yarayan her güzel ibareyi, ince mazmunu öyle kullanmışlar ki ortada bir şey bırakmamışlar. Bir insan onların bütün yazdıklarını bilmeli ki çalışıp vücuda getirdiği eserlerde kendinden evvel söylenen manalar bulunmasın. Öyle zamanlar olmuştur ki gece sabahlara kadar uyanıklık zehrini tatmış ve bağrım kanaya kanaya bir mazmunu bulup yazmışım. Sabah olunca diğer şairlerle tevârüde düştüğümü görüp yazdıklarını çizmişimdir. Öyle zamanlar olmuştur ki gündüz akşama kadar düşünce deryasına dalıp şiir elması ile kimse tarafından söylenmemiş bir inci delmişim; bunu görenler “bu mazmun anlaşılmıyor, bu lafız erbabı arasında kullanılmaz ve hoş görülmez” der demez o mazmun gözümde düşmüş hatta kalemi elime alıp onu kâğıda

28 A.g.e., 124.

geçirmek bile istememişimdir.

Ne tuhaf haldir bu! Söylenmiş bir şey evvelce söylenmiştir, diye; söylenmemiş bir söz de evvelce söylenmemiştir, diye; yazılmıyor.

Geçip giden dostlar ibare ve manaları öyle yağma etmişler ki artık şiir fezası bizim için çok darlaşmıştır. Ah, bu bizden önce gelmek yok mu?²⁹

Tıpkı Cafer Çelebi'nin eleştirileri gibi bu ifadeler de, hem Harold Bloom'un “etkilenme endişesi” kavramsallaştırmasıyla öne sürdüğü sonradan gelmişlik kaygısının Divan şiirindeki izlerini sergilemekte, hem de güçlü ve yetenekli Divan şairinin sancısını, endişelerini çok açıkça ve bizzat kendi sözleriyle göstermektedir.

29 Ali Nihad Tarlan, *Fuzûlî'nin Farsça Dîvânı* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1950), 6.

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“ABDULLAH EFENDİ’NİN RÜYALARI” ’NDA METİNLERARASILIK

Öz

Çağdaş yazınsal eleştiride metinlerarasılığı temel alan incelemeler, yazardan çok metne odaklanmayı öngörür, çünkü metin yazardan bağımsızlaşmış, kendi kendine yeten bir üründür. Bir edebiyat metni varlığını, kendisini üreten yazardan çok, kendinden önce üretilmiş diğer metinlere borçludur. Metinler metinleri doğurur, anlamı belirleyebilmek ise bu metinlerarası okumayı sürdürmekten geçer. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’ın “Abdullah Efendi’nin Rüyaları” adlı hikâyesi de eleştirmenleri metinlerarası okumaya davet eden derinlikli, çok katmanlı hatta açık uçlu metinlerden biridir. Tanpınar hikâyesinin temel sorunsalını yani modern bireyin trajedisini okuruna daha belirgin çizgilerle, daha çarpıcı ve etkili biçimde anlatabilmek için kutsal kitaplara, mitolojiye, dünya edebiyatının tanınmış eserlerine göndermeler yapar. Buralardan ödünç aldığı imge ve simgelerle okurunu iyilik-kötülük, tamlık/bütünlük-parçalanmışlık, kahraman olmak-sıradan bir birey olmak arasındaki karşıtlıklar üzerine düşündürür. Arzu ve ilkel dürtüleriyle toplumsal norm ve idealler arasında bölünmüş bir kişiliğe sahip olan Abdullah Efendi, ızdırap içindeki modern bir tragedya kahramanı gibidir. Hikâyedeki rüya atmosferi de bu parçalanmış benlikle tamlık arayışı arasındaki gerilimi açığa çıkarır. Modern bireyin trajedisi, kişiliğindeki bölünmeden, benliğindeki zıtlıkların uyumsuzluğundan kaynaklanır. Fakat bu durum yalnız Abdullah Efendi’ye özgü değildir. Tanpınar’ın gönderme yaptığı kutsal kitaplar, mitler ve yazınsal yapıtlar, modern insanın içinden çıkamadığı trajik durumun geçmişte kalan kaynaklarına da işaret eder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, “Abdullah Efendi’nin Rüyaları”, metinlerarasılık, psikanaliz, modern birey.

INTERTEXTUALITY IN “ABDULLAH EFENDİ’NİN RÜYALARI”

Abstract

In modern literary criticism, intertextual interpretations focus less on the writer and instead on the text as its own self-sufficient entity independent of who wrote it. A literary text owes its existence less to writer(s), but more to the texts that preceded it and led the writer(s) to producing that specific work. Texts are born by previous texts, and the ability to determine the meaning behind a given text comes primarily from such an intertextual reading. “Abdullah Efendi’nin Rüyalari” (“The Dreams of Abdullah Efendi”) by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar is a text that perfectly encapsulates an intertextual reading, due to the way its deep, multi-layered story can be interpreted in many different ways. Tanpınar uses references to the Quran, Bible and Torah, to mythology and to the great works of world literature to underscore the essential theme of his story: the tragedy of the modern individual. The images and symbols embedded in these works are used to discuss the contradictions of an individual who reflects both good & evil, the hero & the commoner, and a fully-formed person & a broken one. Abdullah Efendi represents a personality divided between social norms and ideals as he suffers with his own desires and primal urges, making him a modern tragic hero. The story proceeds in a dream-like atmosphere, itself exposing the tension between this fragmented self that seeks fully-formed completeness. The tragedy of the modern person arises out of this incompatibility of these opposing personalities and the divisions within the individual. But this isn’t a situation unique to Abdullah Efendi. Tanpınar’s references to holy books, mythology and great literary works display the same tragic situation of modern man in the works of the past as well.

Keywords: Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, “The Dreams of Abdullah Efendi”, intertextuality, psychoanalysis, modern individual.

Giriş

Düşünsel bir etkinlik olarak edebiyat eleştirisi, en büyük dönüşümlerinden birini, hiç şüphesiz, yirminci yüzyıl başlarında geçirir. Yüzyıl başında, İsviçreli dilbilimci Ferdinand de Saussure’ün yürüttüğü çalışmalarla şekillenmeye başlayan “yapısalcı” yaklaşım dilbilimden edebiyata intikal edip edebiyat eleştirisini metne odaklanmaya götürür. Edebiyat eleştirisi “metin odaklı” bir etkinliktir artık. Bu, o güne kadar eleştiride göz önünde bulundurulmuş bir çok unsurun, en çok da eserin sahibi olan yazara ilişkin pek çok verinin geri plana itilmesi anlamına gelir. “Tanrısal ilhamla donatılmış yazar” figürü ortadan kalkmış, metin yazarın gölgesinden çıkmıştır. Eleştiride inceleme nesnesi, örneğin yazarın hayatının esere nasıl aksettiği değildir de, metnin kendisidir. Herhangi bir yazınsal metin, ancak kendinden önce yazılmış, kendini çevreleyen diğer metinlerle bir arada düşünüldüğünde anlam kazanır, çünkü metinler o güne gelene dek birbirini doğurmuştur. Bu yazıda, yukarıdaki görüşlerden yola çıkılarak, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar’ın “Abdullah Efendi’nin Rüyaları” adlı hikâyesi ilişki kurduğu diğer metinlerle bir arada okunacak, hikâyedeki metinlerarası öğelerinin envanteri çıkarılacak ve söz konusu öğelerin metne anlamsal açıdan ne tür bir katkı sunduğu ortaya konacaktır.

“Abdullah Efendi’nin Rüyaları”, başkarakter Abdullah Efendi’yi bir düş atmosferinde okurun karşısına çıkarır. Abdullah Efendi’nin içinde devindiği düş, hayra yorulamayacak kadar karanlık ve çirkimsizdir. Okur Abdullah Efendi’yi ilkin bir lokantada geçen akşam yemeği sahnesinde görür. Bu sahneyi Abdullah Efendi ve arkadaşlarının birlikte gittiği iki ayrı genelev sahnesi izler. Hikâyenin bir sonraki mekânı, Abdullah Efendi’nin gece karanlığında arşınladığı ve insanın/insanlığın kösnül yüzüyle karşılaştığı sokaklar olur. Son sahnedeysen Abdullah Efendi, kurtuluş umuduyla kendini bir eve atar ancak umduğunu bulamaz. Bu sahneler, Abdullah Efendi’nin yaşadığı kâbusun aşamalarını gösterir. Abdullah Efendi hikâye boyunca tedirgin edici ve boğucu bir kâbus içinde devinirken, bu kâbus atmosferi birbirinden farklı metinlerarası girdilerle beslenerek okura aktarılır.

Freud’un Psişik Aygıtı

Abdullah Efendi hikâyenin hemen başında bir “küçük insan” olarak resmedilir: Kendi dünyasında yaşar. İçine kapanıktır, siliktir. Topluluk içinde sivrilmek istemez. Kendi köşesinde kalmayı yeğler. Ancak arkadaşlarıyla birlikte gittiği lokantanın afrodizyak havası onu kabuğundan çıkarır. İçkinin de etkisiyle dili çözülür, konuşup gülmeye başlar. Fakat bu, Abdullah Efendi için hiç de alışıldık bir durum değildir. Tedirgindir. Gelgitler yaşar: Hem

kendini masanın esrik havasına bırakmak ister, hem de ayaklarını yere basmaya mecbur hisseder. Bu inişli çıkışlı ruh hali hikâyede şöyle betimlenir:

Hakikatte Abdullah Efendi, ömürlerinin sonuna kadar kendileri olmaktan kurtulamayan, nefislerini bir ân bile unutmayan, etrafındaki havaya kendilerini en fazla bıraktıkları zaman bile, içlerinde, tıpkı alt katta geçen bütün şeyleri merakla takip eden bir üst kat kiracısı gibi köşesinde gizli, mütecessis, gayri memnun ve zalim ikinci bir şahsın mevcudiyetini, onun zehirli tebessümünü, inkâr ve istihfaftan hoşlanan gururunu ve her ân için ruhu insafsız bir muhasebeye davet edişini duyan insanlardan biriydi. Ah bu ikinci Abdullah Efendi, bu üst kat sâkini... Hayır, o kiracı değil, evin asıl sahibi, efendisi, hükümranıydı. Zavallı Abdullah Efendi bu sessiz seyircinin bakışları altında hayatının her lezzetinin birdenbire zehir kesildiğini bütün ömrünce görecekti.¹

Buna göre altlı üstlü oturan iki Abdullah Efendi vardır: Üst katta oturan Abdullah Efendi, alt katta neler olduğunu merak eder. Alaycı ve yargılayıcı bakışlarla alt katta oturan Abdullah Efendi'yi izler. Üst kat sakini, evin asıl sahibidir. Kuralları o koyar. Bu altlı üstlü oturan Abdullah Efendiler imgesi aracılığıyla hikâyeye Sigmund Freud'un "psişik aygıt" a ilişkin açıklamalarını yeniden yazar. Hatırlatmak gerekirse, Freud'un Türkçeye "İd", "Ben" ve "Üst Ben" olarak çevrilen kavramları insanın psişik yapısının üç katmanlı olduğuna işaret eder. En altta bilinçdışı itkilerin kökeninde yer alan "İd", en üstte kültürel faktörlerin içselleştirilmesiyle ortaya çıkan "Üst Ben", bu ikisi arasında da kendine yer arayan "Ben" vardır.² Hikâyede de Abdullah Efendi'nin ruhsal yapısının çok katlı bir bina içinde bir arada yaşayan farklı kişiliklerden oluştuğu söylenir. Bu bağlamda, üst kat sakini olan Abdullah Efendi yasa ve yasakları temsil eden "Üst Ben" i, alt kat sakini olan Abdullah Efendi ise, arzuların temsilcisi olan "İd" i simgeler. Dolayısıyla Abdullah Efendi, "İd" ile "Üst Ben" arasında sıkışmış ve varlık alanı neredeyse ortadan kalkmış bir "Ben" e sahiptir. "Ben" in alanından çalarak genişleyen ve büyüyen "İd" iyle "Üst Ben" i arasında sonsuz bir salınım içinde kıvrılmaktadır.

1 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, "Abdullah Efendi'nin Rüyalari," *Seçmeler 2* haz. Enis Batur (İstanbul: YKY, 1992), 77.

2 Bkz. Saffet Murat Tura, *Freud'dan Lacan'a Psikanaliz* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1996), 45-46.

Sisyphos'un Geri Dönüşü

Hikâye Freud'un ardından Sisyphos'a da gönderme yapar. Abdullah Efendi, arkadaşlarıyla birlikte lokantada yemek yerken bakışları karşı masada oturan çiftlerden birine takılır. İlk bakışta “sıradan” izlenimi veren çiftin ilişkisinde oldukça sıra dışı bir taraf vardır: Erkek sevgilisine her dokunduğunda sevgilisi ortadan kaybolur, elini geri çektiğindeyse geri gelir. İlişkideki tensel teması sekteye uğratan, hatta sıfıra indiren bu durum, anlatıcı tarafından erkeğin kişisel trajedisi olarak sunulur ve Sisyphos mitine gönderme yapılarak aktarılır:

Hiçbir sefalet, hiçbir hastalık, hiçbir işkence; sevdiği kadını her an yeni baştan kendi arzusunun ateşiyle ve ilk kımıldanışta bir yığın kül olmak için, yaratmaya mecbur olan bu zavallının azabıyla kıyas edilemezdi. Gayri ihtiyarî, kadim efsanenin bütün ebediyet boyunca, cehennemde hep aynı kızgın kaya parçasını dik bir yokuşa ite kaka sürüp taşımaya mahkûm ettiği kahramanı düşündü, ve insan talihinin zalim imkânları karşısında ürpere ürpere bu manzarayı üst üste birkaç defa daha seyretti; (...).³

Böylece “kadim efsane” ifadesiyle erkeğin trajedisi ve Yunan-Roma mitolojisinin önemli figürlerinden Sisyphos'un yazgısı arasında bir paralellik kurulur. Açmak gerekirse, ölüme mahkûm edilen Sisyphos aklını kullanarak tanrıları aldatmış ve Ölüler Ülkesi'nden kaçmıştır. Ama yaptığı yanına kâr kalmaz. Ölüler Ülkesi tanrıları onu bulup cezalandırır. Cezası bir kayayı sonsuza dek taşımaktır. Sisyphos bu kayayı bir dağın tepesine kadar çıkarmaya çalışır. Ancak hedefe her yaklaştığında taş yine aşağı düşer.⁴ Dokunuşlarıyla sevgilisinin yok olmasına ve “Anka Kuşu” gibi kendi küllerinden yeniden doğmasına neden olan, bunu bildiği için arzularına ket vuran, arzuyla yasa/yasak arasında bocalayan ve yasayı her ihlal ettiğinde bunun cezasını çeken erkek de Abdullah Efendi'ye Sisyphos'u hatırlatır. Sevgili burada ulaşılamayan arzu nesnesidir. Bir başka deyişle, sevgili her ne kadar arzulansa da ulaşılamayacak bir varlık olarak görülür. “İd” ile “Üst Ben” i arasında gidip gelen Abdullah Efendi için ilkel dürtülerinin bir yansıması olan arzularına ulaşmak bir cezayı da beraberinde getirir. Sisyphos ile ortak yönleri, her ikisinin de anlamsızlıkla yüklü bir cezaya çarptırılmış olmalarıdır. Cezadaki ortak felaketlerden biri de tekrardır. Hem Abdullah Efendi hem Sisyphos aynı eylemi tekrar etmek fakat bu eylemden bir sonuç alamamakla cezalandırılmıştır. Sürekli tekrar edilen bir eylem sonucunda arzularına ulaşamamak Abdullah Efendi'yi anlamsızlıkla karşı karşıya bırakır.

3 Tanpınar, *a.g.e.*, 83.

4 Colette Estin ve Hélène Laporte, *Yunan ve Roma Mitolojisi*, çev. Musa Eran (Ankara: Tübitak, 2005), 198.

Vahdet-i Vücut ve Bütüncül Kimlik Arayışı

Hikâyedeki diğer bir metinlerarası ilişkiyse, Abdullah Efendi'nin kimlik arayışıyla tasavvuftaki birlik arayışı arasında kurulan paralelliktir. Birlik arayışı; üst ben ve id arasında bir bütünlük kuramayan, arzusuyla yasa/yasak arasında gidip gelen Abdullah Efendi'nin bu zıtlıkların yarattığı gerilimin üstesinden gelme çabasını ifade eder. Abdullah Efendi, içinde devindiği kâbusun nedenlerini arar ve kendi kendine “bunlar neden benim başıma geldi” diye sorarken, anlatıcı onunla ilgili şu yorumu yapar:

Yavaş yavaş bu gecenin garip talihini sezmeye başlamış ve ondan ürkmüştü. Bununla beraber ne rüyalarında, ne de bugün tesadüf ettiği rakamlarda böyle bir âkıbeti haber veren bir şey yoktu. Gelirken bindiği otomobilin numarasını hatırladı: 1873. Rakamları mutlak kıymetleriyle tekrar topladı. Hepsini 19 ediyordu. 1+9=10. Sıfırı atıyordu. Elde kalan birdi; 1 onun çok iyi bir rakamıydı, evvelâ tekti ve sonra vahdetin ve vahdaniyetin rakamıydı.⁵

Abdullah Efendi yine rakamlarla ilgili olarak hikâyenin başka bir bölümünde “‘Tam bir rakam olmak, tam bir rakam... Ah, ne saadet yarabbi!’ (...)” diye içinden geçirir.⁶ Sayılara özel bir anlam yükler. Ona göre kimi rakamlar iyi, kimileriye kötü talihe işaret eder. Yukarıda geçen “1” rakamı da, tasavvuf felsefesinde vahdet, yani “birlik, Allah’ın birliği” demektir.⁷ Kesret âleminden kurtulup vahdete ulaşmayı, Allah’la “bir” olmayı ifade eder.⁸ Hikâyedeyse, gönderme yaptığı tasavvufi boyut kadar, Abdullah Efendi’nin kimlik bölünmesini telafi etme çabalarına da işaret eder. Edebiyat araştırmacısı Nurdan Gürbilek, Tanpınar karakterlerinin genel bir özelliği olan “bütüncül bir kimlik arayışı”ndan söz ederken bunun “Abdullah Efendi’nin Rüyaları”nda “taksim edilmemiş, kesirlere ayrılmamış bir ‘tam’ rakam olma hayali” şeklinde ortaya çıktığını savunur.⁹ Dolayısıyla Abdullah Efendi’nin rakamlarla kurduğu saplantılı ilişki, yaşadığı kişilik bölünmesini aşma çabasının işaretidir.

5 Tanpınar, *a.g.e.*, 84.

6 *A.g.e.*, 103.

7 İskender Pala, *Ansiklopedik Divân Şiiri Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: Kapı Yay., 2005), 469.

8 Süleyman Uludağ, *Tasavvuf Terimleri Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: Kabaıcı Yay, 2002), 363

9 Nurdan Gürbilek, *Kör Ayna Kayıp Şark: Edebiyat ve Endişe*, (İstanbul: Metis, 2004), 114.

Aynalardaki Öteki

Aynı noktadan devam etmek gerekirse hikâyedeki “ayna” motifi de, yine Abdullah Efendi’nin kimlik bölünmesine gönderme yapar. Anlatıcı Abdullah Efendi için şöyle der:

Ve bu derinlik sanki karşı karşıya konmuş iki ayna gibi bakışlarının takıldığı her şeyi bir sonsuzluk içinde çoğaltıyordu. Şüphesiz bu hususiyet yüzünden olacak, şimdi bizzat kendisini üç adım önünde görüyor ve her an tekrarladığı mütereddit hareketlerle ikizleşen hüviyetlerinden hangisinin asıl hakikisi olduğunu anlamaya çalışıyordu.¹⁰

Karşılıklı duran aynalar içinde kendine bakan Abdullah Efendi, benliğinin bölünüp çoğaldığını düşünür. Bunlardan hangisinin asıl benliği olduğunu bulmaya çalışır. Burada aynanın işlevi benliği parçalamasıdır. Hikâyenin ilerleyen bölümlerinde ayna bu işlevini sürdürür: Abdullah Efendi, “tıpkı çerçevesi içinde tuz buz olmuş bir aynada akseden bir vücut gibi nâmütenahi zerrelere ayrılmıştı[r].”¹¹ Hikâyenin son bölümlerindeyse girdiği evin odalarının “hepsinin duvarlarında o içeriye ayak atar atmaz cilâlanmış gümüş parıltısı birdenbire sanki bir beddua veya tılsımla bulunan büyük, geniş aynalar vardı[r].”¹² Yine aynı bölümde Abdullah Efendi’ye dair şu değerlendirme yapılır: “Fakat bu acayip gecede, bu ıssız evde o kadar mutlak bir boşluktan sonra, zembereği kırılmış bir eski saat gibi, bu aynaların birden bire bu kadar çıplak ve zalim hakikati birbiri ardınca oraya atmasına tahammül edemiyordu.”¹³ Dolayısıyla hikâyenin sonlarına doğru ayna hakikatin çirkin, soğuk ve ürpertici yüzünü gösterme işleviyle öne çıkar. Bu hakikat aynı zamanda Abdullah Efendi’nin parçalanmış benliğinin kendisi tarafından fark edilmesidir. Bu açıdan hikayedeki aynayı Jung’un ayna kavramıyla birlikte düşünebiliriz. Jung’a göre aynaya bakan kişi topluma gösterdiği tarafı olan “persona”nın ya da kamusal yüzünün altında yatan gerçek yüzünü görür.¹⁴ Abdullah Efendi’nin de gördüğü kendinden bile saklamaya çalıştığı “öteki yüzü”dür.

Bu bağlamda “Abdullah Efendi’nin Rüyaları”nda ayna, tıpkı Robert Louis Stevenson’ın *Dr. Jekyll ve Bay Hyde* adlı romanında, ya da Oscar Wilde’ın *Dorian Gray’in Portresi*’nde olduğu gibi, öznenin “öteki” sini yansıtmak için kullanılır. Öteki, öznenin ortaya

10 Tanpınar, *a.g.e.*, 85.

11 *A.g.e.*, 103.

12 *A.g.e.*, 106.

13 *A.g.e.*, 106.

14 Carl Gustav Jung, *The Integration of the Personality*, çev. Stanley Dell (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), 69

çıkması istenmeyen karanlık tarafıdır.¹⁵ Özneyi tehdit eder, hatta ortadan kaldırmaya çalışır. Bu yüzden de endişe ve huzursuzluk kaynağıdır.

Gölünç ve Geç Kalmış Kahramanlar

Hikâyenin metinlerarası ilişkiler bakımından en yoğun bölümlerinden birisi de, Abdullah Efendi'nin kendi cenazesinde okumayı tasarladığı konuşmayı kaleme aldığı sahnedir. Abdullah Efendi bir kimlik bölünmesine uğradıktan sonra, "asıl" benliğini, arkadaşlarıyla birlikte yemek yediğı lokantada unutmuş; burada çıkan yangın, Abdullah Efendi'nin bu asıl benliğinin yanarak ölmesine neden olmuştur. Abdullah Efendi, derin bir sarsıntının ardından ölen benliğinin cenazesinde konuşma yapmak üzere kaleme-kâğıda sarılır. Konuşma yapmak bir gerekliliktir, çünkü yaşamı beklenmedik bir biçimde sonlanmış, ne yaşarken ne de ölürken kendini etrafındaki insanlara ifade edememiştir. İş, hayatta kalan Abdullah Efendi'ye düşer. Konuşmanın en vurucu yerlerinden biri şöyledir:

[Abdullah Efendi'nin] Talihi küçük bir vodvil muharririydi. Fakat o bu vodvili bir Sofokles veya Shakespeare tiyatrosu imiş gibi ciddî ve muhtarip yaşadı. Onun için hayatı dışarıdan gülünç ve iç tarafından büyük ve azametliydi. Bilmem farkına varıyor musunuz? Hepimizin seyrederken o kadar güldüğümüz ve eğlendiğimiz Sekizinci veya cinsinden bir piyeste ciddiyetle rol almış bir Kral Oidipus veya Antigone, yahut Othello tasavvur edin. İşte zavallı Abdullah'ın hayatı...¹⁶

Dolayısıyla Abdullah Efendi, küçük ve önemsiz dünyasını gereğinden fazla ciddiye alır. Bir yanılsama içindedir, çünkü kendisine dair yarattığı imgelerin gerçek hayatta karşılıkları yoktur. Kaderi bir vodvil yazarı tarafından kaleme alınsa da o, soylu bir tragedya kahramanı (bir Kral Oidipus, bir Antigone, bir Othello) gibi davranmaya çalışır. Hayatı ve kendisiyle ilgili ideallere ulaşamamış, "talih" onu ızdıraplar içinde bırakmıştır. Olmak istediğı yerle bulunduğu konum bambaşkadır. Tıpkı tragedyalarda olduğu gibi "talih" i önünde büyük bir engeldir. Bu açıdan kendini tragedya kahramanlarına benzetir. Bu açıdan Oğuz Atay'ın *Tutunamayanlar* adlı romanında "hayatım, ciddiye alınmasını istediğim bir oyundu" diyen Selim Işık gibi Abdullah

15 Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: Literature of Subversion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 45.

16 Tanpınar, *a.g.e.*, 96.

Efendi de, içine itildiği hafif komedyanın ağırbaşlı bir tragedya gibi görülmesini, kısacası çektiği ruh azabının ciddiye alınmasını arzular.¹⁷

Abdullah Efendi konuşma metninde, Sofokles ve Shakespeare'in yanı sıra üçüncü bir yazardan daha bahseder: Cervantes. Anlatıcı şöyle der: “Acaba Cervantes’ten ve Don Kişot’tan bahsetmeli miydi, ne lüzumu vardı? Kısa kesmek daha iyi idi.”¹⁸ Burada Abdullah Efendi kendini Oidipus, Antigone ve Othello’dan sonra Don Kişot’la özdeşleştirir. Peki, kimdir Don Kişot? Nurdan Gürbilek’e göre Don Kişot, “kitabî arzusun esiri” olan bir karakterdir: Kendini okuduğu kitaplardaki kahramanlarla özdeşleştirir ve onlar gibi olmaya çalışır.¹⁹ Ancak çabaları sonuçsuz kalır, çünkü “geç kalmış” bir karakterdir: Okuduğu şövalye hikâyelerinin çağı çoktan geçmiştir. Bu hikâyelerin gerçek hayatta karşılığı olmadığı gibi, şövalye olmaya kalkışan Don Kişot’un da gerçek hayatta izdüşümü yoktur. Kurmaya çalıştığı imge boşluğa düştüğü için her an karikatüre dönüşme tehlikesiyle karşı karşıyadır. Bu bağlamda, Abdullah Efendi kendisini Don Kişot’la özdeşleştirirken eylemlerinin nafîle, geç kalmış varlığının boş olduğunu dile getirir.

Sardanapalus: Cümbüş mü, Kıyamet mi?

Hikâye, metinlerarası ilişkiler çerçevesinde Sardanapalus anlatısıyla da bağlantı kurar. Hatırlatmak gerekirse Sardanapalus (ya da Asur-bani-pal), Yunan efsanesine göre Asur’un son büyük hükümdarıdır. Mitolojide “efemine” olmasıyla ve bir kuşatma sırasında direnemeyeceğini anlayıp kendisiyle beraber tüm tebaasını ve ülkesini yok etmesiyle temsil edilir.²⁰ Sardanapalus, lükse ve zevke aşırı düşkünlüğüyle bilinir. Giyinişi ve davranışları ve ses tonuyla kadınlara özenir, günlerini ip eğirerek ve kumaş dokuyarak geçirir.²¹ Abdullah Efendi de, kendi cenazesinde okumak üzere hazırladığı konuşmayı tamamladıktan sonra, ferahlamak için kendini sokaklara vurur. Ancak gördüğü manzara onu ferahlatmak yerine, ürkütücü bir karabasanın içine sokar. Sokaklarda özlemini çektiği huzur ve sükûnetten eser yoktur, etraftaki hiçbir şey güven vermez. Aksine her yer harap ve sefildir. Sokaktaki hayvanlar tüyler ürperticidir. İnsanlarsa bu karabasanın içinde en karanlık yönleriyle var olurlar: Kimileri uluorta cinayet işler, kimileriye çiftleşir.

17 Oğuz Atay, *Tutunamayanlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), 31.

18 Tanpınar, *a.g.e.*, 97.

19 Gürbilek, *a.g.e.*, 164.

20 *Encycloaedia Britannica*’dan aktaran İnci Enginün, “Byron ve Hâmid’in *Sardanapal* Piyesleri Üzerine Mukayeseli Bir Araştırma,” *Mukayeseli Edebiyat* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1999), 78.

21 *Ana Britannica: Genel Kültür Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. “Sardanapalus”

Cinayetten ve cinsellikten alınan hazların birbirine karıştığı, herkesin suça ve günaha ortaklık ettiği bu ortam, anlatıcıya göre “emsali ancak bazı ortaçağ kabartmalarında veya şimal ressamalarının tablolarında görülen, hayalî, zalim ve çılgınca bir mahşer halini”²² düşündürür. Kıyameti anımsatan bu atmosferde sağduyu üzerine kurulu “uygarlık” düşüncesinden eser yoktur. Tam bu noktada şöyle denir: “Hangi münkârız ve kanlı Roma, son günlerini eğlendirmek için bu sarhoş tenlerin ziyafetini hazırlamış, yahut hangi talih Abdullah Efendi’nin karşısına birdenbire bu Sardanapal cümbüşünü çıkartmıştı?”²³ Dolayısıyla Sardanapalus, insanın en karanlık ve kötücül yanlarının su yüzüne çıktığı ortamda anılır. Metinde “cümbüş” kelimesi geçse de, bu, apaçık bir kıyamet halidir. Sardanapalus, “Abdullah Efendi’nin Rüyaları” nda akıl ve sağduyu yitimi, delirme ve kıyamet kavramlarıyla özdeşleştirilir.

Aydınlık ve Karanlık

Kıyamet atmosferi, hikâyenin tamamına hâkimdir. Abdullah Efendi bu kösnül âlemden çıkış umudunu aydınlık-karanlık karşıtlığıyla dile getirir. Hikâyede geçen gece ve karanlık sözcükleri, Abdullah Efendi’yi boğan karabasanı temsil ederken gündüz, güneş, aydınlık ve ışık sözcükleriye kurtuluşu ve ferahlığı simgeler. Abdullah Efendi, “güneş, Yarabbim güneş!” diye bağırır;²⁴ “kim bilir belki güneş doğunca bu işkence de biter” diye ümit eder;²⁵ “ah bir sabah olsa, bu uğursuz gece, hayal, hakikat, kendinden gelen her şeyi beraberinde alıp götürse, ben yine iki ile ikinin dört ettiği dünyada kendimi bulsam...” diye hayaller kurar;²⁶ “bu zifirî karanlık bir tarafından delinse, güneş, ay, yıldız ışığı, ecinni gözü, her ne olursa olsun biraz ışık gelse, tanıdığım bir şeyler görsem...” diye yalvarır.²⁷ Ancak bunların hiçbiri gerçekleşmez. Abdullah Efendi hikâyenin sonlarında kendini, her şeyin yabancı görüldüğü bir karanlık ve boşluk içinde bulur: “Bu taş kadar katı karanlık her hayali siliyordu. Onun hüküm sürdüğü yerde bir şey hatırlamak, bir şeye bağlanmak imkânsızdı.”²⁸ İçinden çıkmak için çabalasa da, bu katı karanlık Abdullah Efendi’nin saplandığı son bataklık olur.

Abdullah Efendi’nin ışığa duyduğu özlem, okuru tek tanrılı dinlerin kutsal kitaplarına, özellikle de Tevrat’a götürür. Tevrat şöyle başlar:

22 Tanpınar, *a.g.e.*, 100.

23 Tanpınar, *a.g.e.*, 101.

24 Tanpınar, *a.g.e.*, 93.

25 *A.g.e.*, 102.

26 *A.g.e.*, 102-103.

27 *A.g.e.*, 105.

28 *A.g.e.*, 105.

BAP 1

Başlangıçta Allah gökleri ve yeri yarattı. Ve yer ıssız ve boştu; ve enginin yüzü üzerinde karanlık vardı; ve Allahın Ruhu suların yüzü üzerinde hareket ediyordu. Ve Allah dedi: Işık olsun; ve ışık oldu. Ve Allah ışığın iyi olduğunu gördü; ve Allah ışığı karanlıktan ayırdı. Ve Allah ışığa Gündüz, ve karanlığa Gece, dedi. Ve akşam oldu ve sabah oldu, bir gün.²⁹

Tevrat'ın daha ilk cümlelerinde açıkça ortaya konulan bir karşıtlıktır ışık-karanlık ve gece-gündüz. İyilik ışık ve gündüzle, kötülük ise karanlık ve geceyle temsil edilir. Tanrı'nın ışığın iyi olduğunu görmesi, ışığı karanlıktan ayırması bunu işaret eder. Bu bağlamda Abdullah Efendi de, ışığı ve ışığın birincil kaynağı olan güneşi ararken, aslında, tanrısal iyiliğin kötülüğe galip gelmesini dilemektedir. Onun için tek kurtuluş yolu budur. Hikâye, kötülükten kurtulma yolu olarak insanoğlunun düşlediği en eski kaynağa, yani tanrısal ışığa gönderme yaparak Tevrat ile metinlerarası bir ilişki kurar.

Âb-ı Hayât'ın Peşinde

Su ve susuzluk da hikâyenin temel metinlerarası öğelerdendir. Susuzluğun pençesinde kıvranan ve içecek su arayan Abdullah Efendi, aradığı suyu hikâyenin son bölümünde bulur: “Koyu lâcivert örtülü masanın üstünde billûr sürahi, imkânsız derecede koyu kadife bir arşın ortasında bir güneş gibi parlıyordu.”³⁰ Bu tablodan yola çıkarak, Abdullah Efendi'nin bulduğu suyun “içeni ölümsüzlüğe kavuşturduğuna inanılan efsanevî su” yani âb-ı hayât olduğu söylenebilir,³¹ çünkü Abdullah Efendi'nin suyu bulduğu sahneyle âb-ı hayât efsanesi arasında belirgin benzerlikler vardır: Her ikisinde de “karanlıklar ülkesinde hayat suyunu arama” motifi görülür. Hızır ve İskender âb-ı hayâtı bulmak için karanlıklar ülkesine gider, Abdullah Efendi de aradığı suyu karanlık bir boşluğun içinde bulur. Âb-ı hayât gibi Abdullah Efendi'nin bulduğu su da, nurlar içindedir ve ışık saçmaktadır. Abdullah Efendi suya uzandığında, yedi-sekiz yaşlarında hasta bir çocuğun kendisine yaklaştığını görür. Çocuk ona bu suyun içmek için değil, seyretmek için olduğunu söyler ve içmemesi için yalvarır. Burada Abdullah Efendi-çocuk ikilisi İskender-Hızır ikilisiyle yer değiştirmiş gibidir. Ancak İskender'le Hızır'ın hikâyesinden

29 *Kitabı Mukaddes: Eski ve Yeni Ahit* (İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi, 1949), s.1.

30 Tanpınar, *a.g.e.*, 107.

31 Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Âb-ı Hayât,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, c.1 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), 1.

farklı olarak, ne Abdullah Efendi, ne de çocuk bu sudan içer, çünkü çocuk, Abdullah Efendi'ye güvenmez, sürahiye korku ve hasetle pencereden aşağı atarak yok eder. Böylece Abdullah Efendi ölümsüzlüğü elinden kaçıran İskender'in durumuna düşer.

Abdullah Efendi'nin tamlık hayali de pencereden aşağı fırlatılan sürahiyle birlikte yok olur, çünkü “âb-ı hayât, vahdet sırrına ermek” demektir.³² Carl Gustav Jung da âb-ı hayâtı içen Hızır'ın Öz-Ben'in simgesi olduğunu belirtir.³³ Buna göre suyu içemeyen Abdullah Efendi, vahdete kavuşamaz, parçalanmış benliğini bütünleyemez. Hikâyenin son cümlesi bu bağlamda oldukça anlamlıdır. Çocuk billur sürahiye pencereden attıktan sonra Abdullah Efendi suyun nereye gittiğini görmek için aşağıya bakar, ama “kendisi” dışında hiçbir şey göremez: “Sadece son derece muhtarip ve yorgun halli bir adamın ağır adımlarla köşeyi döndüğünü gördü. Ona böyle geldi ki bu kendisi, yani Abdullah Efendi idi.”³⁴ Dolayısıyla Abdullah Efendi hikâyenin sonunda parçalanmış benliğiyle baş başa kalır.

Sonuç

“Abdullah Efendi'nin Rüyaları” hikâyesi gerek gönderme yaptığı metinler gerekse metnin metaforik ve çok katmanlı yapısı dolayısıyla açık uçlu bir metindir. Ancak buraya kadar tespit edilen metinlerarası ilişkilerden yola çıkarak hikâyenin temel sorunsalının modern bireyin trajedisi olduğunu söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar kutsal kitaplara, mitolojiye, dünya edebiyatının tanınmış eserlerine göndermeler yaparak iyilik-kötülük, tamlık/bütünlük-parçalanmışlık ve tamlığın imkansızlığını, kahraman olmak-sıradan bir birey olmak arasındaki karşıtlığı işlemektedir. Abdullah Efendi arzuları, ilkel dürtüleri ile toplumsal normlar, idealler arasında bölünmüştür. Kişiliğindeki bu bölünme ve çektiği ızdırıp nedeniyle kendini bir tragedya kahramanı gibi hisseder ve öyle yaşar. Ancak esasında o arkadaşlarıyla meyhaneye gidip dertlerini unutmayı özleyen sıradan bir insandan başkası değildir. Hikâyedeki rüya atmosferi bu parçalanmışlıkla tamlık arayışının gerilimini yansıtır.

Metinlerarasılık, kurmaca metinleri kendisinden önce yazılmış metinlerle ilişki içinde okumamızı sağlar. Her metin, kendinden önceki metinlerden parçalar taşıdığına göre, bu parçaları ortaya çıkarmak ve yorumlamak, böylece metne anlamını vermek yazardan çok okurun işlevidir. Okur tarafından bulunan her yeni metinlerarası ilişkide, metnin anlamı yeniden üretilir. Bu açıdan bu hikâyede gösterilen metinlerarası ilişkilerden yola çıkılarak yapılacak okuma açık uçludur. Bu envanter çalışması ve bu bağlamda yapılan okuma alternatif

32 Âmil Çelebioğlu, “Edebiyat,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, c.1 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988), 3.

33 Dursun Ali Tökel, *Divan Şiirinde Mitolojik Unsurlar: Şahıslar Mitolojisi* (Ankara: Akçağ, 2000), 368.

34 Tanpınar, *a.g.e.*, 109.

okumalardan sadece biridir. “Abdullah Efendi’nin Rüyaları” derinlikli ve çok katmanlı yapısıyla okurları farklı okumalara çağırmaya devam etmektedir.

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