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Table of Contents

Emine Fişek

Active Agents or Vulnerable Victim? Representing Migration in Children's Theatre / Faal Bir Etken veya Kırılgan Bir Kurban? Çocuk Tiyatrosunda Göç'ün Temsili-----1

Burcu Karadaş Can

The Woman Question in *the Memoirs of a Survivor* and *Güneş Saygılı'nın Gerçek Yaşamı* / *Hayatta Kalma Güncesi* ve *Güneş Saygılı'nın Gerçek Yaşamı* Adlı Eserlerde Kadın Sorusu-----18

Merve Atasoy

A River's Autobiography: Fusion of Human and Nature in Alice Oswald's *Dart* / Bir Nehrin Otobiyografisi: Alice Oswald'ın *Dart* şiirinde İnsan ve Doğanın Birleşimi-----30

Aytaç Ören

An Interview with David Lodge/ David Lodge ile Röportaj-----41

M. Tarık Ablak

Edebiyat, Sanat ve Sosyo-Kültürel Tarih Açısından Kastamonu - Çatalzeytin İlçesi Tarihî Mezar Taşları / Historical Tombstone of Kastamonu – Çatalzeytin District in Literary, Artistic and Socio-Cultural Context-----51

Authors' Biographies -----72

Active Agents or Vulnerable Victim? Representing Migration in Children's Theatre

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Abstract

The relationship between childhood and migration is often represented through heavily conventionalized tropes. Images of children serve as shorthand for signaling migrant helplessness and the children in question are either depicted as pre-political, universally vulnerable victims or political agents-to-be. This article focuses on French playwright Sylvie Bahuchet's 2006 play, *La Révolte des Couleurs* (The Revolt of the Colors) and argues that children's theatre can avoid the binary that positions the child as either unequivocally vulnerable or politically charged. A thinly disguised retelling of Vichy France's participation in the Nazi genocide, Bahuchet's play is an excellent example of a public discourse that prevailed in France in the early 2000s and linked recent increases in the deportation of undocumented immigrants to memories of the Vichy Holocaust. I argue that Bahuchet's play uses a series of strategies, including distancing effects, the interplay of didacticism and agency, and de-spectacularization to consider children's experiences on their own terms. Ultimately, *La Révolte des Couleurs* serves as a good example of how children's political theatre might approach the question of migration and violence: Bahuchet's choices not only sidestep the recognizable binary that positions children as either victims or agents, they also create a theatrical language for representing an event that is often taken to indicate the limits of representation.

Keywords: Children's Theatre, Sylvie Bahuchet, Migration, the Holocaust, France

Faal Bir Etken veya Kırılgan Bir Kurban? Çocuk Tiyatrosunda Göç'ün Temsili

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Özet

Göç ve çocukluk arasındaki ilişki çoğu zaman alışılmış mecazlarla temsil edilir. Çocukları ön plana çıkaran görseller çocukluğu göçün beraberinde getirdiği çaresizlik için kolay bir sembol olarak kullanır, ve söz konusu çocuklar ya henüz siyasi kimlikler edinmemiş, evrensel mağdurlar olarak, ya da geleceğin siyasi etkenleri olarak temsil edilirler. Bu makale Fransız oyun yazarı Sylvie Bahuchet'nin 2006 yılında yazdığı oyunu *La Révolte des Couleurs* (Renklerin Ayaklanması) üzerinde durur ve çocuk tiyatrosunun çocukları bu ikileme, yani tartışmasız bir kırılganlık veya siyasi yüklenmişlik ikilemine ihtiyaç duymadan temsil edebileceğini öne sürer. Bahuchet'nin oyunu üstü kapalı bir şekilde Vichy Fransa'sının Nazi Soykırımında oynadığı rolü anlatır, ve 2000li yılların başlangıcında Fransa'da baskın olan ve belgesiz göçmenlerin sınır dışı edilmelerini Vichy Soykırımına bağlayan popüler bir söylemin iyi bir örneğidir. Bahuchet'nin oyunu yabancılaştırma etkileri, didaktiklik ve etkenliğin etkileşimi, ve gösterişçilik karşıtı stratejiler kullanarak çocukların tecrübelerini kendi terimleriyle ele alır. Nihayetinde, *La Révolte des Couleurs* politik içerikli çocuk tiyatrosunun göç ve şiddet konularına nasıl yaklaşabileceğini düşünmek için iyi bir örnek oluşturur: Bahuchet'in seçimleri çocukları mağdurluk veya etkenlik üzerinden konumlandırılan ikiliklerden kaçınmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda sıklıkla temsil ötesi olduğu söylenen bir olayın temsili için bir teatral dil oluşturur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Çocuk Tiyatrosu, Sylvie Bahuchet, Göç, Yahudi Soykırımı, Fransa

What kinds of representational strategies pattern the relationship between childhood and migration? In many ways, this is a simple query: the figure of the child has long been a cornerstone of humanitarian reportage and representation, serving as an immediate visual index of vulnerability and need.¹ Photographic depictions of suffering children are equally prevalent where mass migration and refuge are concerned; Liisa Malkki has noted that although visual representations of mass displacement often draw on an “imagined sea of humanity,” that is, mass scenes of anonymous crowds, women and children nonetheless emerge as centerpieces of migrant helplessness.² When considered in light of this historical record, the patterns of representation that have surrounded our contemporary “refugee crisis” (referencing the forced movements that have resulted from the international interventions and ongoing political conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the fallout from the Syrian Civil War), seem less than unique. At the same time, in an age when the advent of digital photography and the widespread availability of social media have fundamentally altered our experience of images, the figure of the child has circulated in unprecedented ways. Turkish photojournalist Nilüfer Demir’s photo of toddler Alan Kurdi, lying face down in the sands off the Bodrum coast made international headlines in 2015, only to be followed a year later by the iconic image of the so-called “boy in the ambulance,” a shell-shocked five-year-old whose dazed expression seemed to capture the terror of the 2016 siege of Aleppo by Syrian government forces.

In the artistic, cultural and political responses to this imagery, children have once again emerged as forced migration’s paradigmatic sufferers, emblematic of the need for forms of international protection that might supersede the political wrangling of individual nation-states. At the same time, the images have been used to criticize the refugee policies of specific states across Euro-America, emerging as political lightning rods in contexts like the pivotal Canadian elections of 2015. This brief outline reveals a dynamic that has been central to depictions of children in Western modernity. On the one hand, children, or the idea of childhood more broadly, are associated with a pre-political realm, endowed with an existence that somehow rests beyond the social and political experience of a given community. It follows, therefore, that the emotional registers through which adults respond to their plight, engage moral principles that are depicted as universal. On the other, children are framed as adults or even citizens-to-be, active agents in the social and political worlds in which they exist, and at times even voices of resistance against its machinations. The figure of the

¹ See Heide Fehrenbach and Davide Rodogno, “A Horrific Photo of a Drowned Syrian Child: Humanitarian Photography and NGO Media Strategies in Historical Perspective.” *International Review of the Red Cross* 900 (2015): 1121-1155.

² Liisa Malkki, “Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization.” *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no.3 (1996), 388.

child, in other words, can be both paradigmatically universal and politically particular.

Whereas scholars have long commented on the negotiation of this dilemma in the domain of humanitarianism and photography, in this article my goal is to shift our lens to theatre, with a specific focus on children's theatre, and ask: How does children's theatre negotiate the dilemmas of universality and particularity? What kind of agents does it see in its youthful actors and audience members? In what follows, I pose these questions from within an earlier iteration of migration "crisis": France during the first decade of the twenty-first century, another historical moment during which immigration, childhood, and ideas of citizenship appeared indelibly linked. My focus will be on French playwright Sylvie Bahuchet's 2006 play, *La Révolte des Couleurs* (The Revolt of the Colors), which features a classroom in which each student is an *enfant-couleur* or a child that is represented as a color.³ Over the course of the play, children whose color contains yellow slowly disappear from the classroom and their loving schoolteacher Madame Palette is replaced with the acerbic Madame Acétone, the mouthpiece of the newly established "Permanent Government" of the nation. A thinly disguised retelling of Vichy France's participation in the Nazi genocide, *La Révolte des Couleurs* is an excellent example of a public discourse that prevailed in France in the early 2000s and linked recent increases in the deportation of undocumented immigrants to memories of the Vichy Holocaust.

Bahuchet's choices, I argue, eased some of the tensions surrounding the figure of the child by shifting the issue of universality and particularity on to another register. The play was clearly saturated with the political climate of its historical moment, and sought to protest the immigration policies associated with then-Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy. In focusing on how these policies impacted undocumented children, however, Bahuchet's play abstracted from its particular political context, gesturing towards what has become a trans-historical context for thinking about political violence and ethical action: the Shoah or Holocaust. Whereas these choices might appear to exacerbate the binary that posits children as either universally recognizable figures of victimhood *or* political agents-to-be, *La Révolte des Couleurs* instead uses a series of strategies, including distancing effects, the interplay of didacticism and agency, and de-spectacularization to consider children's experiences on their own terms. Ultimately, *La Révolte des Couleurs* serves as an excellent example of how children's political theatre might approach the question of migration and violence: Bahuchet's choices not only side-step the recognizable binary that positions children as either unequivocally vulnerable or politically charged, they also create a theatrical language for representing an event that is often taken to indicate the limits of representation.

³ Sylvie Bahuchet, *La Révolte des Couleurs* (Arles: Actes Sud-Papiers, 2006).

Contexts: the *Sans-Papiers* and the Republican School

Although contemporary references to “the refugee crisis” tend to underline the uniqueness of our historical moment, “crisis” was a term that permeated public discourse in France during the first decade of the twenty-first century. This particular iteration of migration-related emergency centered on the figure of Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy, who had introduced a series of policies that would restrict immigrants’ rights on French soil. Whereas French immigration policy had historically privileged familial reunification for migrant workers, the Sarkozy Laws of 2003 and 2006 limited familial reunification and introduced a distinction between *immigration choisie* and *immigration subie*, in other words, immigration that was identified as serving France’s economic interests, and undesired forms of migration to which the French state was “subjected.” The question of desirable immigration was intimately linked to that of *intégration*, and an abstract set of values associated with French national identity, such as secularism and human rights. Upon his election to the French presidency in 2007, Sarkozy institutionalized these connections in the form of a pointedly named (but ultimately short-lived) Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Co-Development, which would take over the management of immigration from the Ministry of the Interior. This crisis reached a peak in 2007 and 2008, when police stations throughout the country were encouraged to fill their deportation quotas by any means necessary. Across urban landscapes in particular, this meant a greater presence of security forces, as well as an overall increase in identity checks and police roundups.

At the time, these developments were met with a robust civic outcry, and one context in particular drew the public’s ire: the classroom. News of *sans-papiers* children disappearing from their classrooms, or even being removed in the midst of an ongoing school day drew immediate comparisons with the roundup of Jewish children during the Second World War. At the same time, legislative changes began to *privilege* and *reward* undocumented students as a particular category of migrant. The Sarkozy Circulaire of 2006, for example, created an “exceptional” legislative category through which undocumented parents with children in the French school system could become candidates for regularization.⁴ Importantly, both the Sarkozy Circulaire and the immigrants’ rights groups formed to lobby on behalf of undocumented students, such as Réseau Education Sans Frontières (Network for Education Without Borders, or RESF) would rely on an image of the French school whose roots went deep in French history.

⁴ For more information, see the “Circulaire du 13 Juin 2006 sur les familles d’enfants scolarisés.”

In Republican ideology, the French school has served as the seat of *le lien social*, or the social bond. In other words, the Republican school is the space where citizens-to-be are cultivated as members of the national collective and participants in a common culture.⁵ The Sarkozy Circulaire sought to reward those children and teenagers who could be identified as the successful products of this cultivation: universal citizens whose identity construction appeared to override the particularities associated with categories of race, gender, ethnicity or religion. RESF, in contrast, underlined the school's historical relationship to citizenship, suggesting that the deportation of undocumented children ruptured the premise of *le lien social des citoyens* or citizenly bonds. In *La Chasse aux Enfants* (The Hunt for Children), an edited volume published in 2008, RESF members argued that the undocumented child-victim and the citizen-child witnessing the removal of this classmate existed in a symbiotic relationship whose rupture would result in psychic after-effects for *all* children.⁶ Needless to say, their comments implied that these early childhood experiences would remain with them well in to their adult lives.

La Révolte des Couleurs and the Politics of Memory

It is thus not a coincidence that the setting of Bahuchet's *La Révolte des Couleurs* is the Republican classroom. In the first scene of the play, Madame Palette invites the *enfants-couleurs* to join in the central ideological refrain of this space: "We are going to state our three keywords," she says, "the magical words of the great family of colors."⁷ As the children respond "*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*," Petit Rouge or Little Red is found to be yawning and is invited to re-state the final keyword. "*Mégalité*?" the confused child responds. Little Orange interjects: "Me, Madam! Me, Madam! It is "fraternity" and this means that in fact we are brothers and sisters from the same family."⁸ The keywords are subsequently written on the board and the scene ends with the children chanting in unison: "Yellow, orange, green, black, blue, pink, red, fragmented stars of humanity!"⁹ Over the course of this episode, Bahuchet employs several categories of sameness, transitioning from the image of fraternity and family to that of a diverse yet ultimately unified humanity, mirroring French

⁵ For more on the idea of a common culture and its complexity in the context of migration and globalization, see Trica Danielle Keaton, *Muslim Girls and the Other France: Race, Identity Politics and Social Exclusion* (Indiana University Press, 2006).

⁶ Miguel Benasayag, Angélique Del Rey, and RESF, *La Chasse aux Enfants: L'effet Mirroir de l'expulsion des Sans-Papiers* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008), 71-72.

⁷ Bahuchet, *La Révolte*, 8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

Republicanism's own investment in the continuity between national identity and universal humankind.

This atmosphere of joyful euphoria is interrupted in the following scene, however, when Little Yellow arrives wearing a yellow star on its belly. Madame Palette announces:

Good morning children. Today I have some bad news to announce: Last night, detergent products bombarded out country. We are no longer free. I received orders to erase our first magical word. Take a good last look at it. Close your eyes and inscribe it in secret in a corner of your mind.
*She slowly erases the word "liberté" from the board.*¹⁰

The future looks bleak, but the teacher quickly turns to the multiplication table to distract the children. By Scene 3, however, the detergent forces have established a "Permanent Government" and the color yellow has been deemed "disgusting."¹¹ *Enfants-couleurs* with traces of yellow, like Little Green and Little Orange, are also sporting yellow stars on their bellies. Little Blue tentatively ventures that its father has declared "the yellows" to be unclean because they do not wash themselves. As Madame Palette slowly erases "*Egalité*" from the board, Little Black retorts, "Listen to me: without yellow, there would be no sun."¹²

As these brief scenes immediately reveal, *La Révolte des Couleurs* is meant to represent Vichy France during the period of 1940-1944, when the northwestern half of the country was under German military occupation and Marshal Philippe Pétain's national revolution replaced the Third Republic's mantra with the slogan *Travail, Famille, Patrie* (Work, Family, Fatherland). Shortly after the Franco-German Armistice of 1940, Vichy administrators passed a series of anti-Jewish measures that would deprive Jews in metropolitan France, as well as in the French colonies, of their civic rights. Arrests and roundups of Jews began shortly thereafter and by 1942 mass deportations were being organized to extermination camps in Germany and occupied Poland. During the infamous 1942 *rafle* or roundup referred to as *Vel d'Hiv*, thousands of Jews were arrested by the French police and detained in the bicycle stadium *Vélodrome d'Hiver* before being deported to Auschwitz. Historians estimate that during the four years of Vichy rule, approximately 75,000 French and foreign Jews would

¹⁰ Ibid., 11.

¹¹ Ibid., 15.

¹² Ibid., 16.

be deported from France, the vast majority of whom would perish in camps like Auschwitz.¹³

Although consciousness of the Vichy Holocaust was a readily available dimension of French public discourse following the Second World War, *official acknowledgment* of French complicity is a relatively recent phenomenon, and is part of a broader memorial trend that emerged in France during the 1990s and sought to recognize experiences of violence that had been written out of official histories. There were two dimensions to this trend that are important to mention here. First, emerging memories of the Vichy Holocaust were often conjoined with memories of French colonization and slavery, with references to Vichy anti-semitism serving as a gateway for recognizing the racial violence of late colonialism, particularly the Algerian War (1954-1962).¹⁴ A good example of this is the 1997-1998 trial of Maurice Papon. An infamous police official who was revealed to have been instrumental in the Vichy Holocaust, Papon's extended and highly mediatized trial would also underline his pivotal role in the Paris massacre of October 17, 1961, when, as Chief of Police of Paris, he had ordered the deadly repression of Algerian protestors.¹⁵ Second, Papon's trial was indicative of a broader pattern by which the law was used to intervene in the domain of history and memory. 1990 witnessed the introduction of the Gayssot Act, which criminalized the denial of crimes against humanity, including the Holocaust. This would be followed by a 2001 law recognizing the Armenian Genocide and the Taubira Law of the same year, which recognized the Atlantic Slave Trade as a crime against humanity.

In short, Sylvie Bahuchet's *La Révolte des Couleurs* followed on the heels of a phenomenon that Debarati Sanyal labels "a memory war fueled by a hypertrophy of memory and a proliferation of groups jostling in the memorial marketplace for recognition of historical injustices."¹⁶ More specifically, it mirrored a broader set of French cultural products demonstrating that, in France, coming to terms with the Vichy Holocaust has often served as a vehicle for recognizing other forms of injustice. The multiple "uses of Holocaust memory,"¹⁷ for Sanyal, prompt a basic question: "what are the political stakes of bringing together seemingly disparate memories of violence within an

¹³ An important detail is that the vast majority of those deported were foreign Jews. According to Tyler Stovall, 88% of those with French nationality would survive the occupation and war. See Tyler Stovall, *Transnational France: The Modern History of a Universal Nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2015), 339.

¹⁴ Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 229.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 234-235.

¹⁶ Debarati Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 216.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

artwork?”¹⁸ When posed from within the context of Bahuchet’s play, the question becomes: what are the political stakes of referencing the Holocaust to address recent changes in immigration policy?

As abstract as these questions may be, they served as points of concrete debate during Nicolas Sarkozy’s tenure. A topic of particularly heated discussion was the use of the term *rafle* and references to the deportation of Jewish children to describe the roundup of undocumented students.¹⁹ RESF members, for example, were pointed in their position on this matter. On the one hand, they argued that the comparison was unfounded. On the other, they noted that what was significant about this comparative trend was that it supposed the French public to be so indifferent to injustice that “they could no longer react to anything other than to conditioned reflexes evoking genocide and Nazis.”²⁰ Upon his election to the French presidency, Sarkozy himself joined the fray, arguing that whereas violent political conflicts were abundant in human history, the Shoah was exemplary of *racist violence*. In 2008, he drew a direct link between memories of the Shoah, French school children and historically-minded citizenship, proposing that each primary school student would be assigned the memory of a Jewish child who had been deported from France and killed in an extermination camp. The public outcry that followed included the voices of prominent survivors, pushing Sarkozy’s office to retract the original proposal, even as they stated the need to “prevent the conflation (*amalgame*) between the Shoah and other tragedies.”²¹

Although these discussions were concerned with the universality of Holocaust memory and its connection to other experiences of loss, violence, and injustice, equally at stake was the role that children’s education should play in either highlighting or in downgrading these connections. Activists who used the memory of the Holocaust were in fact seeking to capitalize on the unambiguous outrage that the image of undocumented children’s *raffes* would trigger; meanwhile, Sarkozy’s administration underlined the uniqueness of this history, even as it argued for its universal usefulness as a tool of civic education in the multicultural French classroom. Whereas both groups were invested in underlining the Holocaust as *the* paradigm of recognition in French history, the first group targeted adult-citizens, the second, child citizens-to-be.

¹⁸ Ibid., 3.

¹⁹ This pointed use of the term *rafle* references earlier borrowings as well. As Rothberg notes, images of the *Vel d’Hiv* roundup were used to contextualize images of Algerian protestors who were held at the Palais des Sports in the days following the October 17, 1961 massacre, demonstrating the manner in which references to the Nazi occupation would serve as a vehicle for expressing outrage at other injustices (*Multidirectional Memory*, 242).

²⁰ Bensayag, Del Rey, and RESF, *La Chasse*, 82.

²¹ “Shoah à l’école: Sarkozy a ‘la volonté de ne pas céder’.” *Libération*, 17 February 2008.

Representing Children: Appropriating Agents

How did Bahuchet's play navigate this larger terrain? How did *La Révolte des Couleurs* negotiate the perceived universality of childhood as well as that of Holocaust memory? The answers to these questions necessitate a broader comment on children's theatre, as they resonate with the key questions that have occupied this domain. Perhaps not surprisingly, the study of children's literature and culture has traditionally been organized around the identification of educational goals, that is, the particular didactic purposes with which *adults* have endowed a variety of cultural artifacts (such as songs, picture books, novellas and performances) targeting children. As Marah Gubar notes, however, children's theatre occupies an awkward position within this didactic tradition, as it invites scholars to consider both reception and embodiment, and the multiple ways in which child audiences interact with, respond to, and in turn, shape both the development of a live performance and its intended educational uses.²² This scholarly shift corresponds to a broader transformation visible in the strategies of governments or arts funding agencies: Katya Johanson and Hilary Glow argue that since the 1980s, approaches to children's theatre have shifted from an "instrumentalist" method highlighting educational goals to an "intrinsic" method highlighting the values associated with aesthetic experience.²³ For Johanson and Glow, this shift negotiates two approaches to child audiences: the first emphasizes "becoming," that is, the idea that children are apprentice adults in need of cultivation; the second emphasizes "being," and thus the idea of children as receptive and responsive audience members already capable of aesthetic meaning-making.

Bahuchet's play necessitates a further question, however: how might we evaluate the strategies and processes of *political* children's theatre? A brief return to the premise of *La Révolte des Couleurs* will remind us of the play's pointed intervention. In 2006, Bahuchet was deeply critical of the French state's immigration policies, as well as how it sought to instrumentalize the memory of the Vichy Holocaust. Her own interest in the deportation of Jewish children had begun in 2003, when she had become involved with a civic association that sought to document the names, images and school records of students who had

²² Marah Gubar, "Introduction: Children and Theatre." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 36, no.2 (2012), v-xiv.

²³ Katya Johanson and Hilary Glow, "Being and Becoming: Children as Audiences." *New Theatre Quarterly* 27, no.1 (2011), 65.

been deported during the Second World War.²⁴ The association's goal was to produce commemorative plaques with the children's names and place them at the entrances of the schools that they had attended. *La Révolte des Couleurs* was the result of her search for a theatrical language that would integrate this period of French history into primary school students' consciousness in meaningful ways. When I met Bahuchet to discuss the play in 2008, she told me:

We must not traumatize them [the children], we must not make them feel culpable, we must not make them afraid, we must simply tell them to pay attention to the fact that racism can have very grave consequences, and that they must not engage in it. This is not the approach of our current president. His approach, which places the weight of a dead child on a living one, is absolutely catastrophic.

La Révolte des Couleurs, in other words, walked a decidedly delicate line. The goal was to introduce students to the vicious effects of racial othering; at the same time, the playwright had to do so without evoking registers of trepidation or alarm, or culpability or complicity. In many political children's theatre productions, artists achieve this effect by drawing on the visual excitements of puppetry, striking sets and imagery, and rhyming songs and intimate spaces. As Jack Zipes argues, however, this emphasis on the aesthetic can often work to negate political theatre's radical potential, absorbing the child in to "the culture industry, where it would be subjected to the forces of globalization, which turn everything into spectacle."²⁵ Instead, Zipes draws on Walter Benjamin's "Program of a Proletarian Children's Theatre" to call for "unspectacular dramas" that emphasize political awareness and even didacticism, but without negating children's intuitive agency, autonomy or spontaneity.

A hard bargain indeed, but I would argue that *La Révolte des Couleurs* achieves this in a number of ways. The play employs a series of Brechtian distancing strategies that evoke a basic meta-consciousness in the audience member. The setting of Bahuchet's play is Madame Palette's classroom, and the scenes feature *enfants-couleurs* engaging in basic learning tasks: the multiplication table, vocabulary exercises, etc. Bahuchet's portrayal of the learning process thus creates a template for considering the learning experience that is the play itself, and the kind of interactions and discussions that will follow the conclusion of the performance. Equally importantly, the *enfants-couleurs* represent children, but adult actors bring them to life on stage. This juxtaposition achieves another distancing effect that enhances Zipes' desired didacticism but also negates a rigid distinction between child and adult. Of course, the precise

²⁴ Bahuchet, Personal Interview with the Author, 21 February 2008.

²⁵ Jack David Zipes, "Political Children's Theatre in the Age of Globalization." *Theater* 33, no.2 (2003); 3-25.

reception of the Child Character-Adult Actor juxtaposition is impossible to evaluate without a broader consideration of child audiences' aesthetic experiences²⁶, but suffice to note that the *enfant-couleur* troubles the binary in which the child emerges either as a figure of universal victimhood, or a political agent-to-be. Bahuchet's Little Yellow is not depicted as an unidentified victim encountering a universal experience of racial violence, nor is Little Black an agent of political propaganda. Rather, the *enfants-couleurs* are depicted producing their own identity; they "appropriate [political prescriptions] on their own terms and use them to create their own world, one that functions according to relatively new rules."²⁷

This is visible in Bahuchet's use of the trope of revolt and rebellion, at once a nod to the political idioms of French Republicanism, and a broader gesture meant to underline the *enfants-couleurs*' agency. By the play's second act, the *enfants-couleurs* find themselves in an increasingly unbearable classroom. Madame Acétone, named after the flammable solvent, carries a cleaning spray and has already announced that she will disinfect the *enfants-couleurs*' classroom, just as the "Permanent Government" has disinfecting the nation. With time, it is revealed that this intervention does not merely implicate the physical space of the classroom but language itself: Madame Acétone announces that words that end with the suffix "ette," like "Palette," have been banned. In the final scene of the play, Bahuchet's *enfants-couleurs* are uncontrollably chanting words that end in "ette": lunette, allumette, sornette.²⁸ In response, Madame Acétone takes out a giant white eraser and proceeds to erase part of Little Black. This is when the students stage their revolt and chase the teacher out, amidst calls to have their friends Little Green, Little Yellow and Little Orange reinstated. As the teacher flees, Little Blue retorts, "You can send us to the country "over there" but you cannot stop us from thinking. You will end up all alone in a world without color!"²⁹ At stake here is the collectivity, spontaneity and agency that Zipes expects of a radical children's theatre, but the representation is simple, unspectacular and lacking investment in the figure of the child as an elevated representative of victimhood or humanity.

Representing Violence: Staging the Unspectacular

If Bahuchet's play attempts to ease some of the tensions surrounding the figure of the child, equally significant is its representation of Holocaust memory. If we return momentarily to Zipes's call for an "unspectacular" children's theatre

²⁶ Jeanne Klein, "From Children's Perspectives: A Model of Aesthetic Processing in Theatre." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 39, no.4 (2005), 40-57.

²⁷ Zipes, "Political Children's Theatre," 7.

²⁸ Bahuchet, *La Révolte des Couleurs*, 28.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

that sidesteps consumer ideology, we might note that Bahuchet's decision to stage the Shoah, a historical event whose commodification has long been at stake for survivors, artists and scholars alike, presents a particularly delicate problem. Given the paradoxical trend that renders the Shoah "as both an irreducibly singular event and a universal paradigm of racialized violence in the public sphere,"³⁰ how might a playwright go about de-spectacularizing its representation? Furthermore, how can children's political theatre represent an event that is often taken to defy representation, or at the very least, embody its limits?

In *La Révolte des Couleurs*, Bahuchet responds to this conundrum by employing a narrative dynamic that Rothberg calls "the mutual implication of daily life and mass murder," that is, the depiction of acts of extreme violence from within the quotidian routines of everyday neighborliness.³¹ For example, Scene 4 begins with stage directions that underline the fact that Little Yellow, Little Orange and Little Green are gone. When Madame Palette inquires after her missing students, their classmates reveal news of entire families who have disappeared and trains leaving for countries "over there," although nobody knows exactly where.³² Little Pink provides an eyewitness account:

Little Green, he lives close to me. I saw everything. The police came. They banged on the door and they said, "exit one by one." So, the entire family stood on the landing. The father, the mother, Little Green and his little one-year-old sister. They sent them. Little Green's mother was crying. Little Green's father was carrying the little one in his arms. Before climbing into the truck, Little Green turned around and made me a little sign with his hand. Their door was left open. Later, I entered their apartment. In the kitchen, their plates were still on the table, all cold. I saw that the little sister had not had time to finish her puree.³³

As this passage makes clear, Bahuchet chooses not to represent the event itself, relying instead on the narrative of Little Pink, whose eyewitness account creates a vivid documentation without calling for the arrangement of bodies in theatrical space. This dynamic of presence and absence is replicated in the substance of the narrative, the final portion of which focuses on the contents of an empty apartment, one whose threshold (the door) has been left open, symbolizing the

³⁰ Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity*, 218.

³¹ Michael Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 143.

³² Bahuchet, *La Révolte des Couleurs*, 17.

³³ *Ibid.*, 18.

violation of the former inhabitants' privacy, security, and self-certainty. The plates and the one-year-old's leftover puree testifies to the recent presence of consuming bodies, but also to the passage of time that has left their utensils and food items, literally, cold and functionless.

Juxtaposing the ordinary with the extraordinary allows the playwright to refrain from "traumatizing" the children while nonetheless cultivating an awareness of the continuity between everyday complacency and mass violence. Indeed, in Little Pink's narrative, the sounds that surround the herding of bodies into the police truck are marked as extraordinary (the loud banging, the crying) yet the brief communication between Little Pink and Little Green carries the familiarity of an everyday interaction. The familiar accompanies the strange and the ordinary accompanies the extraordinary, such that Little Pink's narrative both depicts the appalling and folds it into the reassuring image of an apartment that remains in place. These choices resonate with Zipes's call for the "unspectacular," but they are equally indicative of how references to the Shoah as paradigm or analogy for thinking about other experiences of injustice need not block such experiences from view. Instead, the play's aesthetic strategies draw on the historical circumstances of the Vichy Holocaust to produce a broader language for thinking about difference. In the process, neither the Holocaust, nor childhood are elevated into exemplary tropes of victimhood.

What, ultimately, do we make of *La Révolte des Couleurs*'s strategy for depicting difference? In many ways, the play's use of the idiom of *enfants-couleurs* for thinking about racial or ethnic difference appears a relatively straightforward choice: the students embody diverse points along the color palette but the colors yellow, orange, green, black, blue, pink and red are clearly not meant to be associated with any biological reality. The *enfant-couleurs*' diversity is reflected in their teacher Madame Palette, whose white outfit contains splashes of all of her students' colors. In contrast, Madame Acétone is depicted wearing a pristine white blouse, a black hood covering her hair and neck, dark sunglasses and bright red lipstick. Whiteness thus occupies a contradictory position. In Madame Palette, it embodies a color-neutrality. In Madame Acétone, a colorlessness associated with political violence and oppression. In a nation with a lengthy history of color blindness, these choices are rife with meaning. In French Republicanism, French national identity is often posed as commensurate with the universal values of the Revolution, like individual liberty and moral autonomy. In this framework, French citizens are first and foremost abstract subjects organized around a national identity, itself considered a placeholder for universal ideals. This means that they are unmarked by the forms of particularistic belonging associated with categories like sex and sexuality, ethnic or racial particularity, or religious affiliation and community. A concrete manifestation of this abstract political tradition is the fact that the French state does not gather ethno-racial statistics.

Needless to say, this political tradition has begged the question of how minority populations in France can lobby for the recognition of experiences of racist discrimination and violence when race itself is not an available category of political recognition.³⁴ *La Révolte des Couleurs* is an excellent example of how these conundrums are translated into the everyday idioms of cultural production. Madame Palette embodies the promise of Republican universalism, as she represents a classic Republican institution, the school, as a neutral space of universal inclusion. Madame Acétone, on the other hand, renders visible the dangers of assigning *whiteness* a seemingly neutral, un-raced universality, and the historical connection between this assignment and episodes of racial violence. These connections might, at times, prove too subtle for child audience members to fully grasp, but suffice to note that Bahuchet's play invites them to think of the social constructedness of racial identity, even as this constructedness is shown to have material effects.

Conclusion

When I met Bahuchet in 2008, the playwright had been touring with the play for almost four years. She had overseen productions in countless elementary schools, had participated in hundreds of showings, and reached thousands of students. Over the course of this time, the post-performance dialogues that accompanied the play's showings had intensified, turning what had begun as a meditation on Holocaust memory into a pointed critique of French immigration policy. Bahuchet remembered countless talk-back sessions that had underlined these parallelisms, revealing that memories of the Vichy Holocaust had become central to conversations on the immigration politics of twenty-first-century France. Despite these fraught cross-references, however, Bahuchet was quick to let me know that the play often elicited laughter, particularly in moments of commotion like the students' final revolt. She found that educators would reprimand the students' laughter, but she herself was a fan of these moments of euphoria, arguing that it would enhance the play's call to action.

The unpredictability of child audiences' reactions to the *enfants-couleurs*' revolt embodies the both the possibilities and the limitations of children's political theatre. On the one hand, Bahuchet's play is premised on the idea of children as mini-adults who cannot yet exercise civic rights yet who will one day be able to wield the full powers and responsibilities associated with democratic citizenship. On the other, the play refuses to trap child audiences in a process of endless "becoming," and acknowledges that they can speak a significant

³⁴ For an excellent volume addressing this issue, see Trica Danielle Keaton, T Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Tyler Stovall, eds., *Black France: France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

political-theatrical language of their own. Ultimately, in situating child audiences as both “being” and “becoming,” *La Révolte des Couleurs* achieves something far more important: it undoes the seemingly naturalized representational strategies that emerge at the intersection of childhood and migration. The *enfants-couleurs* are neither paradigmatically universal victims, nor vehicles of particular political propaganda. Instead, they are intuitive agents who, when faced with events of historical magnitude, navigate their own awareness of difference and loss.

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The Woman Question¹ in the Memoirs of a Survivor and Güneş Saygılı'nın Gerçek Yaşamı

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Abstract

Although *The Memoirs of a Survivor* by Doris Lessing and *The Real Life of Güneş Saygılı* by Erendiz Atasü are written in different cultural backgrounds in separate decades, they meet on common ground: both are semi-autobiographies, both take place in apocalyptic dystopias, and both authors of the novels are labelled as feminist writers. Both *Güneş Saygılı*, which details before the apocalypse, and *Memoirs*, recounting the aftermath of the catastrophe, portray the social and psychological struggles of women (and men) with regard to transforming gender roles in changing societies. In this context, the present article will attempt to reveal how gender roles and sexuality are represented in these two related novels, how these works address the woman question with regard to the radical changes in their fictional societies, and in the end will question whether they can be called as feminist texts regarding their portrayal of women and men amidst the social transformation in the stories.

Keywords: Lessing, Atasü, Feminism, Güneş Saygılı, Memoir

¹ “Many of the historical changes that characterized the Victorian period motivated discussion and argument about the nature and role of woman — what the Victorians called ‘The Woman Question’.” (“The Woman Question: Overview,” *The Victorian Age*, Norton, accessed November 8, 2018, https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/victorian/topic_2/welcome.htm)

Hayatta Kalma Güncesi ve Güneş Saygılı'nın Gerçek Yaşamı Adlı Eserlerde Kadın Sorusu

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Özet

Farklı kültürel zeminlerde ve zaman dilimlerinde yazılmış olsalar da Doris Lessing'in *Hayatta Kalma Güncesi*² ve Erendiz Atasü'nün *Güneş Saygılı'nın Gerçek Yaşamı* yarı-otobiyografi olmaları ve kıyamet distopyası anlatımları ve bu eserlerin yazarlarının da birçok eleştirmen tarafından "feminist" olarak tanımlanmaları ile ortak bir zeminde buluşurlar. Kıyamet öncesi (*Güneş Saygılı*) ve sonrası (*Günce*) distopyalara yer veren bu iki roman ayrıca kadın (ve erkeklerin), değişen toplumla birlikte dönüşmekte olan toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri içerisinde yaşadıkları sosyal ve psikolojik mücadelelerine yer verir. Bu bağlamda ilintili bu iki romandaki cinsellik ve toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin temsili ve eserlerdeki kurgusal toplumlarda yaşanan değişimin ışığında kadın sorununun ele alınışı bu makalenin ele aldığı konulardır. Yapılan incelemelerin sonucunda romanlardaki kadın ve erkek temsillerine dayanarak bu romanların feminist metinler olup olmadığı tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Lessing, Atasü, Feminizm, *Güneş Saygılı*, *Günce*

² The translation belongs to Püren Özgören. Doris Lessing, *Hayatta Kalma Güncesi*, trans. Püren Özgören (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2010).

Doris Lessing (1919-2013) and Erendiz Atasü (1947) are two women writers whose texts deal with the issues of sexuality and gender roles, especially through the experiences of female heroines. Although they were born into and have lived in different cultures and languages, both Lessing and Atasü are involved in related social movements. Lessing, having been influenced by the Socialist movements of 1940s and 1950s, inclined towards social and political themes in her works. As Watkins points out, "Lessing's work was associated with Communism and its aftermath in the 1950s."³ Moreover, Lessing has generally been associated with second-wave feminism and most of her works have been cited as feminist texts by many critics.⁴ While she gave up the Communist ideology - as she lost her belief in any grand narratives which claim to be able to save all - she admits that she was a follower of that ideology. she "resisted the reductive label of 'feminism',"⁵ though most of her novels have female protagonists. Likewise, Atasü, who has witnessed the great socialist movements around the world, and lived through the 1980s upheaval in Turkey, was of the belief that socialist way of life would solve many social problems including capitalist corruption. She is also a writer who is defined as a feminist. Different from Lessing, though, Atasü owns her identity as a feminist woman writer who addresses women's personal and social positions in her works with a critical approach.⁶ Regardless of the authors' intentions in their written texts, it is clear that their works have a common concern regarding women's social and psychological struggle, though in different context and content.

Two specific works by these authors, *The Memoirs of a Survivor* by Lessing (1974) and *Güneş Saygılı'nın Gerçek Yaşamı* (2011) by Atasü, despite having been written in very different times and cultures, feature very similar contexts and contents within the textual level. The first of the two analogies is that both have been rightly named as "semi-autobiographical" novels which means they involve certain personal experiences of the authors woven into the fictional world of the stories. Maureen Howard writes in her 1975 *New York Times* review for the *Memoirs* that Lessing describes her book as "an attempt at an

³ Susan Watkins, "'Grand Dame' or 'New Woman': Doris Lessing and the Palimpsest," *Literature Interpretation Theory* 17, no.3-4 (2006): 244.

⁴ Sarah De Mul, "Doris Lessing, Feminism and the Representation of Zimbabwe," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 16, no.1 (2009); Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "The Feminist Apologues of Lessing, Piercy, and Russ," *A Journal of Women Studies* 4, no.1 (1979); Gayle Greene, "Feminist Fiction and the Uses of Memory," *Signs* 16, no.2 (1991); Elayne Antler Rapping, "Unfree Women: Feminism in Doris Lessing's Novels," *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 3, no.1 (1975); Watkins, "'Grand Dame' or 'New Woman'."

⁵ De Mul, "Doris Lessing," 33.

⁶ Alev Önder, "Erendiz Atasü'nün *Kızıl Kale* Adlı Öykü Kitabında Toplumsal Cinsiyet," *Turkish Studies* 11, no.10 (2016): 462.

autobiography."⁷ *Güneş Saygılı*, too, as Aksoy says, is a semi-autobiographical work.⁸ While we follow Güneş Saygılı on her life journey from 1980s to 2010s, we also get glimpses of Atasü's own personal and political experiences. For that matter, the two novels are critiques of the past and projections to possible – but undesirable – futures. Though the works' apocalyptic visions seem to be predictions for future societies, they, on some levels, look back to the recent past as reminders of what happened and warnings for what could happen again. *Güneş Saygılı*'s point is more obvious in this regard, but Dooley argues that *Memoirs* is also "a metaphor for the past" as well.⁹ Greene in "Feminist Fiction and Uses of Memory" contemplates on remembering the past in specifically feminist fiction and how it helps women's writing. She cautions that in much of feminist fiction, memory should not be confused with nostalgia, for nostalgia refers to a yearning for the past.¹⁰ She suggests that "nostalgia and remembering are in some sense antithetical, since nostalgia is a forgetting, merely regressive, whereas memory may look back in order to move forward and transform disabling fictions to enabling fictions, altering our relation to the present and future."¹¹ In this sense, we can say that Lessing and Atasü's remembering is an urge to take lessons from the past and change for the better.

Another obvious thread that they both share is the dystopic and apocalyptic components of the novels. *Memoirs*, narrated by an unnamed middle-aged woman, tells the aftermath of a political and environmental catastrophe which left the country in a chaotic state. As Draine indicates, "[h]er 'memoirs' record, in terms of a particular life, how the institutions of a technological and bureaucratic society collapse from inner corruption."¹² *Güneş Saygılı* also includes apocalyptic and anti-utopic elements as Direnç points out;¹³ however, while *Memoirs* takes place almost completely in the post-apocalyptic period (except for the past scenes from behind the wall) and only implies, but does not explicitly display, what has led to this final stage,¹⁴ *Güneş Saygılı* builds up

⁷ Maureen Howard, "Doris Lessing Considers Her World and the World," *The New York Times*, June 8, 1975, <http://movies2.nytimes.com/books/97/09/14/reviews/lessing-survivor.html>.

⁸ Nazan Aksoy, "Erendiz Atasü'nün Romanlarında Feminist Kurgu," in *Erendiz Atasü Edebiyatı*, ed. Günseli Sönmez İşçi (İstanbul: Can, 2014), 51.

⁹ Gillian Dooley, "An Autobiography of Everyone? Intentions and Definitions in Doris Lessing's *Memoirs of A Survivor*," *English Studies* 90, no.2 (2009): 161.

¹⁰ Greene, "Feminist Fiction," 297.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 298.

¹² Betsy Draine, "Changing Frames: Doris Lessing's *Memoirs of A Survivor*," *Studies in the Novel* 11, no.1 (1979): 54.

¹³ Dilek Direnç, "'Yürekli Yaratıcılığın Büyük ve İstıraplı Mücadelesi': Erendiz Atasü'nün Yazan Kadınları/Kadın Yazarları," in *Erendiz Atasü Edebiyatı*, ed. Günseli Sönmez İşçi (İstanbul: Can, 2014).

¹⁴ Draine, "Changing Frames," 54.

towards that apocalyptic ending and reveals the reasons (mainly and roughly capitalism) behind the breakdown of society, politics, and environment, all of which are interconnected. Amidst all of the disarray, still, the novels do not fall short of underlining the sexuality of women and workings of gender systems, which are under the control and effect of patriarchal constructions. In the light of all these, therefore, the present article will attempt to reveal how gender roles and sexuality are represented in these two related novels, how these works address the woman question with regard to the radical changes in their fictional societies, and in the end will question whether they can be called as feminist texts regarding their portrayal of women and men amidst the social transformation in the stories.

The Memoirs of a Survivor by Doris Lessing is the narration of a catastrophic situation in which an unnamed town and possibly a whole country has found itself as a result of unstated chain of events. The narrator in this chaotic world is left with the care of a little girl named Emily Cartwright, and her cat-dog Hugo, by a man she does not know; but she does not find it strange in the new world order. Although the story, or "history" if we can trust the narrator,¹⁵ is told (maybe even written) through the perspective of the middle-aged woman, it revolves around Emily, who is about to become a young woman. As the known order has been dissolved, people, especially young children, have begun to set up their own social systems. They come together and form gangs, and start a new way of life of their own. Emily joins one of these groups, led by a young boy Gerald, in the blink of an eye. That is when Emily becomes a woman and that is when we can talk about the issue of gender in Lessing's work as well.

Emily is introduced as an "obliging and obedient"¹⁶ girl due to her upbringing by her strict mother. Yet, this changes when she begins to "portray" herself through making of new cloths from the old ones,¹⁷ which can be read as a metaphor for the changing social system. As De Rango asserts, "Emily's journey towards self-realization is possible partly because of the broken-down society in which she lives."¹⁸ After she becomes a part of a gang and begins to make her own clothes in different styles, Emily goes through a process of self-realization as well since "she was 'trying on' not a dress, but self-portraits."¹⁹ However, this self-realization intertwines with her first experience at being in love.²⁰ She falls in love with Gerald, the group leader, who is "the natural guardians of the

¹⁵ Doris Lessing, *The Memoirs of A Survivor* (London: Flamingo, 1995), 94.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁸ Emily De Rango, "Clothing in Doris Lessing's *the Memoirs of a Survivor*," *The Explicator* 71, no.4 (2013): 261.

¹⁹ Lessing, *Memoirs*, 52.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

younger ones, the distressed, the forlorn;"²¹ he is like a knight in shining armour who arrives to save the damsel-in-distress.

This *love affair* between Emily and Gerald, however, is not a new one that would change the man-woman relationship and liberate her from the traditional women's roles. Emily chooses to be the consort of the male leader, because, as the narrator explains, "she was in love,"²² instead of becoming a "chieftainess" of another commune in the broken-down society, which would be expected to result in the break-down of the gender order as well. The position in which Emily is placed, or prefers to be placed, reveals that not much has changed for the good of women. It also suggests, as DuPlessis observes, "certain psycho-social patterns are inevitable, that the laws of the world as we know them are 'unalterable'."²³ Gerald's attempt to take all the responsibility for the safety and survival of his little band as a man reinforces the essential roles of men as breadwinner and protector.²⁴ That Emily is not the only woman with whom Gerald has intimate and sexual relations takes back some of the rights that women have gained over their partners. The problem is not that Gerald has other women in his life but that Emily suffers from the situation, "Emily was suffering, she was in pain ... She wanted ... to be alone with Gerald."²⁵ Thus, she turns into "everywoman, a victim of emotional hurts,"²⁶ "the eternal woman at her task of weeping."²⁷ As Hoberstroh observes, "[a]s the narrator watches Emily attempt to create an identity, acting out different roles, she sees a version of herself, and, ultimately, of many other women. Unaware of the potential conflict between her own needs and society's expectations, a woman may ... find herself trapped in a situation which she has accepted without understanding."²⁸ Thus, Lessing's Emily, as the ultimate representation of the new woman in the new order, fails to escape the clutches of the roles of the old order's women.

Another representation of woman is Emily's mother, depicted through motherhood. The narrator gets glimpses of the lives of baby Emily and her mother through the "screenings" behind the wall. "The woman, the wife, and the mother" is seen experiencing guilt, anger and agony in her role as a mother. She occasionally takes it out on Emily, and in one particular scene, she openly laments the burden of the compulsory motherhood for every woman, "I simply

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 94.

²³ DuPlessis, "The Feminist Apologues," 6.

²⁴ Lessing, *Memoirs*, 93.

²⁵ Ibid., 74-75.

²⁶ Dooley, "An Autobiography," 160.

²⁷ Lessing, *Memoirs*, 145.

²⁸ Patricia Boyle Hoberstroh, "'I' and 'It' in Doris Lessing's *the Memoirs of A Survivor*," *Psychological Perspectives: A Quarterly Journal of Jungian Thought* 17, no.2 (1986): 175.

did not expect it, no one warns how it is going to be, it is too much ... No one has any idea, do they, until they have children, what it means. It's all I can do just to keep up with the rush of things, the meals one after another, the food, let alone giving the children the attention they should have."²⁹ The "complaint" of this stern and prim woman, burdened mother, vocalizes the burden of many women through the ages. However, the difference between Emily and her mother is the time period in which they live and experience womanhood. While Emily's mother is genuinely trapped in the roles assigned to her in a society filled with deep-seated traditions, Emily seemingly has the freedom to choose to be the woman she wants to be in a newly-constructed social order. Therefore, Emily's self-inflicted position is much more disheartening than that of her mother's in terms of gender roles.

Güneş Saygılı tells the story of a young woman, in analogy to *Memoirs*, named Güneş Saygılı over a period of thirty years. The novel is narrated by an omniscient narrator, but it is done mostly through the perspective of Güneş. We follow Güneş as she lives her twenties in the heat of 1980s political upheavals, military coup, her middle-age in 1990s religious conflicts and her old-age in 2000s ascent of capitalistic politics and eventually the destruction of a nation in a near future in a dystopic and apocalyptic atmosphere. Güneş's personal life is always intermingled with the social and political changes of the times. Although this political and social background is very important and effective in the ways that Güneş's personal life evolves, the novel gives more focus on her loves and heartbreaks. Through Güneş's relationship with various men and women, we can observe a gender order which is fictional but based on real situations.

Güneş Saygılı is an educated and intellectual daughter of two intellectual doctor parents who grew up in the aftermath of the foundation of Turkish Republic, which is referred to as enlightenment for Turkish society. Contrary to many young women who are abused and exploited by the male hegemony, her parents do not expose her to oppressive treatments. Her life, first of all, is told and built around her various relationships to men: Ali, her first boyfriend with whom she does not have a serious relationship, Doğan who affects and shapes Güneş's later personal life at great extents, and Şair (the Poet) who reawakens love in Güneş but then destroys it completely. Güneş is described by the narrator as "a girl who falls in love with the love itself before men", and as "a woman who is willing to consume her own self (ego) for the sake of her man."³⁰ These descriptions of her reveal to the reader that she is still trapped in a woman's role in which *her man* comprises everything in her life. Furthermore, in the union she volunteers with Doğan and Ali, she acts like a "female bird", who takes it up on

²⁹ Lessing, *Memoirs*, 60-61.

³⁰ Erendiz Atasü, *Güneş Saygılı'nın Gerçek Yaşamı*, (İstanbul: Everest, 2011), 14-15.

herself to make that place like home.³¹ She is so interested in the decoration and orderliness of the place that most of the time she is not as involved in the political activities as her male counterparts. Naim Atabağsoy argues that the reason for the women to be left in the background in the leftist movement of the Turkish Republic is that even the revolutionist men fail to revolutionize women's place in politics and keep up with well-established gender roles.³² However, throughout the novel, Güneş does not attempt to transform herself and women's roles in general from passivity to activity, nor does she protest openly about the unequal treatments of men and women within the movement.

On this point, Şayman Kaylı asserts that the women in Atasü's novels challenge the patriarchal hegemony not with words but through their unapologetic ways of living.³³ From this perspective, we can say that Güneş does not live strictly within the demands of patriarchy, either; she has sexual intercourse out of wedlock with more than one man throughout her life, she refuses to marry, and she chooses (or is forced to choose) not to have a child. On the other hand, it is not clear whether she refuses motherhood because she does not want to be a mother, or because the circumstances compel her to refuse motherhood. She gets pregnant with Şair's child, and when she tells Şair about the pregnancy, he reacts anxiously rather than joyfully to this news and does not show any interest in Güneş or baby; then she goes through an abortion.³⁴ At first, she, too, does not want to give birth to the child. Yet, after Şair's indifference, and especially after Zehra's (the uneducated wife of the maintenance man) constant nagging about motherhood, she starts to feel differently. Zehra warns her that she might regret not having a child later in her life when she cannot give birth to one, which makes Güneş question her feelings and desires on the subject, "A child... Does she desire a child despite everything? It was a need, rooted deep in the sea, an unmoving need like the rocks unseen from the surface of the sea... unseen because of its immobility;"³⁵ this immobility may refer to the static composition of gender norms and roles.³⁶ Atasü, in this process, remarks that the concept of motherhood and family are cultural constructions of patriarchal societies which wish to keep sexuality and women in control,³⁷ but the reader is left uncertain about whether Güneş is a strong woman who makes her choices

³¹ Ibid., 60.

³² Naim Atabağsoy, "Güneş Saygılı'nın Gerçek Yaşamı Romanında Türkiye Solunun Kadın Kimliğine Bakışı," *Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 34, no.1 (2017).

³³ Derya Şayman Kaylı, "Erendiz Atasü'nün Romanlarında Bedenin, Doğurganlığın ve Anneliğin İzini Sürmek," *Fe Dergi* 9, no.1 (2017): 30.

³⁴ Atasü, *Güneş Saygılı*, 140.

³⁵ Ibid., 139.

³⁶ Çimen Günay-Erkol, "Güneş Saygılı'nın Gerçek Yaşamı'nda Tarih ve Erkeklik," in *Erendiz Atasü Edebiyatı*. ed. Günseli Sönmez İşçi (İstanbul: Can, 2014), 141.

³⁷ Atasü, *Güneş Saygılı*, 138-140.

freely or a woman who is left to choose among the options presented to her by male authority.

As for the other female characters in the novel, Zehra, Müberra and Güneş's mother are also the victims of the male hegemony. Zehra and Müberra are similar to Emily's mother in terms of their almost-inevitable roles. They represent the uneducated, lower-class, migrant women of Turkey who come from the rural areas of the country. They are the women who internalize gender roles and do not and cannot develop a feminist consciousness; therefore, are imprisoned inside the confines of male authorities. Güneş's mother, on the other hand, is an educated woman who is the representative of the Turkish Republic's earlier periods. Yet, even she falls victim to the domination of male power on the fate of her daughter, Güneş's twin sister Ülker. When Ülker needs to have an appendix surgery, their mother protests against the appointed doctor, who is rumoured to operate drunk on patients, but their father, not wanting to sever his relationship with his doctor friend, ignores the warnings. In the end, Ülker becomes another sacrifice in the name of men's honour and authority. In this scenario, Ülker does not even have any saying in her fate, "Ülker said nothing; she just died."³⁸

Atasü's more obvious criticism of gender order can be observed through the behaviours and habits of male characters. Güneş's boyfriends Doğan and Şair, for instance, cannot overcome the urge to act or to feel in accordance with the alleged (but questionable) male nature. Doğan is a man who is in between his upbringing in the conventional manner, and his unconventional relationship with Güneş. After they have sexual intercourse, Doğan inwardly feels himself responsible towards Güneş because of his conservative nurturing which dictates that *a man's woman* is his responsibility. On the other hand, his leftist ideology suggests that he does not owe anything to her.³⁹ Likewise, Şair as a poet and a self-educated man is a man torn between conventions and revolutions. His bond to the cultural norms about gender relations bursts into sight after Güneş gains experience and fame as a result of her career as a writer. After her success, Şair shies away from Güneş's views on his poetry because the man in him commends that a man should be superior to *his woman*.⁴⁰ Especially after this turn of events, their relationship begins to deteriorate and eventually ends. Önder observes that the emphasis on male characters' inferiority complex despite the power assigned to them by patriarchal codes indicates the heavy burden of gender roles that the

³⁸ Ibid., 110.

³⁹ Ibid., 78.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 174.

system puts on each sex.⁴¹ As Atasü says, men cannot escape from the ancient male stuck in their spinal cord.⁴²

When it comes to the question whether or not these two novels can be regarded as feminist texts, it appears that they are not so powerful and empowering feminist novels. Especially Emily in *Memoirs* and Güneş in *Güneş Saygılı* are characters trapped within the traditional gender structures that exploit and debilitate women despite the liberating potentiality of the times in which they live and of the novel positions in which they find themselves. However, both novels present stronger arguments towards the end. After her disappointments and heartbreaks, Emily comes to full self-realization, recognizes her abilities and her power to take action in difficult circumstances, and emerges as an empowered young woman. She walks through the door opening on the wall side by side with Gerald with confidence. On the other hand, Güneş meanders to take control in her personal life and the political and environmental disasters around her, but in the end, with a dauntless resolution, she takes an entire building down to terminate the virus that has been spreading throughout the country, killing herself in the process. In her old age, she builds up the courage to destroy the destruction itself.

Another element that enables us to read these texts as feminist representations is the act of writing performed by women. In *Memoirs*, the narrator is the writer of the memoir who takes on the task of relaying the events of a society through personalized narratives. Similarly, Güneş becomes a successful and appreciated writer "who does not apologize from the world for being a woman" in her works.⁴³ Lessing's subtle employment of metafiction which "is a powerful tool of feminist critique, for to draw attention to the structures of fiction is also to draw attention to the conventionality of the codes that govern human behaviour" as Greene asserts,⁴⁴ further demonstrates the feminist aspect of the novel implied through the act of writing. Moreover, Şengül remarks that women authors who tackle the problems of women present alternative lives for other women.⁴⁵ In light of all this, we can say that *Memoirs* and *Güneş Saygılı* do not offer radical alternatives to women's unequal status and effective solutions for gender issues, but rather portray the existing gender structures, male/female hierarchies and the burden of the patriarchal order on both women and men. Nevertheless, the novels pose subtle yet substantial feminist appeals, through the critique of conventional gender norms, the acts of women's writing, and the final defying and empowering

⁴¹ Önder, "Erendiz Atasü," 469.

⁴² Atasü, *Güneş Saygılı*, 78, 89.

⁴³ Ibid., 159-160.

⁴⁴ Greene, "Feminist Fiction," 293.

⁴⁵ Mehmet Bakır Şengül, "Kadın Edebiyatı: Bir Varoluş Mücadelesi," *International Journal of Social Science* 44 (2016): 209.

acts of the leading women figures. It is only fair to say that both novels are the examples of feminist writing by women in their own styles.

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A River's Autobiography: Fusion of Human and Nature in Alice Oswald's *Dart*

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Abstract

Published in 2002 and awarded the T.S Eliot Prize, Alice Oswald's *Dart* subverts the human-centred perspective which is conventionally attributed to autobiographies. As the lyric 'I' and narrative 'I' are intertwined in each other throughout the poem, the readers are presented with a voice which is shaped by the coexistence of human beings and the river Dart in Devon. In the poem, the first person pronouns are used by different subjects such as a forester, a water nymph and a fisherman as well as the river itself. Thus, the autobiography comes out as a product of the mutual impacts that nature and living beings make on one another. During the examination of the eco-autobiographic structure of the poem, this paper is going to pay a particular attention to the process of 'mapping', which holds a significant place in eco-autobiographic studies and which is also frequently emphasized in Oswald's poem. In *Dart*, the process of mapping arises from the speakers' positioning of themselves within a natural space. Though mapping also requires the placement of borders among different speakers, the poem uses the borders as a point of interaction, which in the end, result in the merging of the speakers' voices. Consequently, in this alternative type of autobiography, spatiality rather than temporality becomes the dominant element which influences the autobiographical narratives.

Keywords: Alice Oswald, Dart, poetry, ecocriticism, autobiography

Bir Nehrin Otobiyografisi: Alice Oswald'ın *Dart* şiirinde İnsan ve Doğanın Birleşimi

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Özet

2002 yılında yayınlanan ve aynı yıl T.S Eliot ödülünü de alan Alice Oswald'ın *Dart* isimli şiir kitabı otobiyografilere atfedilen insan merkezli bakış açısını kırmayı hedefler. Şiir boyunca ' lirik ben ile ' anlatıcı ben' iç içe geçen okuyuculara insanlar ve İngiltere, Devon'daki Dart nehrinin eş yaşamı ile şekillenen bir özne tanıtılır. Şiirde birinci tekil kişi hem ormancı, su perisi, balıkçı vs. gibi isimler hem de nehrin kendisi tarafından kullanılır: bu anlatıcılar şiirde bir bütün halinde sunulduğu için hangisinin konuşmaya ne zaman başlayıp ne zaman bitirdiği çoğunlukla belirgin olmamaktadır. Bu da şiirde otobiyografinin canlıların ve doğanın karşılıklı ilişki ve etkilerinden doğduğu fikrini ortaya koyar. Bu makale şiirin eko-otobiyografik yapısını incelerken, bu tarz çalışmalarda önemli yer tutan ve Oswald'ın şiirinde de sıkça vurgulanan 'şiirde haritalama' sürecinin üzerinde duracaktır. Dart şiirinde haritalama konuş(turul)an öznelerin kendilerini bir doğal alan üzerine konumlandırmasıyla ortaya çıkar. Haritalama farklı konuşmacılar arasında sınır koymayı gerektirirken şiir sınırları bir etkileşim noktası olarak kullanır. Bu etkileşimin sonucunda konuşmacıların ifadeleri birbirine geçip şiirdeki nehir otobiyografisini oluşturmaktadır. Buna bağlı olarak bu alternatif otobiyografi türünde zamansallıktan ziyade mekansallık baskın unsur olarak karşımıza çıkar.

Anahtar sözcükler: Alice Oswald, Dart, şiir, eko-kritisizm, otobiyografi

Autobiography is perhaps the most human-oriented literary genre as it requires an agent that can speak on behalf of himself/herself. Besides, the narrator of an autobiography, who is both the subject and object of his narrative, inevitably adopts a self-centred attitude in his narrative as he foregrounds his own experiences and emotions. While autobiographies are conventionally grounded on a bias towards human perception and experiences, the word 'bio' (meaning 'life' in Greek) in the structure of the word 'biography' still implies a scope which can include living beings in general. However, the presentation of other natural beings' lives in the form of biography is not a case that is often observed in literary works. This being the case, *autobiography* of a natural entity apart from humans can lend itself only to the experimental forms of the genre. Alice Oswald's poem *Dart*, which was published in 2002 and won the T.S Eliot Prize in the same year, is an impressive work that seeks to formulate a life writing of a natural entity through its effective use of narrative structure. The poem incorporates the voices of various people who have different relationships with the river Dart (located in Devon, England) and it skilfully blurs the borders between the narrators and natural beings. In this way, Oswald puts forward a collective narrative which can include the life experiences of the whole natural environment.

In the light of the recent studies on *eco-autobiography*, this paper will argue that Oswald challenges the traditional understanding about autobiography as a human-centred genre through its lyrical and narrational outlooks. On the one hand, *Dart* remarkably nourishes from lyric poetry as it delineates the speakers' personal emotions, which are evoked by the river. On the other hand, these personal emotions become a significant part of the speakers' life experiences, which are recounted in the form of small narratives. The combination of the lyric 'I' and the narrative 'I' plays a major role in the construction of autobiographic narratives in Oswald's poem. Though the presence of different speakers seems to create fragmentation among the voices, the positioning of the speakers within the same natural space unifies them. The poem not just combines the voices of the speakers but also turns them into mouthpieces for the river. As the speakers narrate their physical relationships with the Dart, the river begins to 'speak' through its impact on their bodies and lives. In this way, the interaction between the speakers and the river brings about a shared voice: the word 'I', which is the fundamental component of autobiographies, begins to emanate from the whole ecosystem depicted in the poem. The extraordinary narrative structure of the poem, which is going to be scrutinized in the following pages, substantially contributes to this unification. During the examination of the eco-autobiographic structure of the poem, this paper is going to pay a particular attention to the process of 'mapping', which holds a significant place in eco-autobiographic studies and which is also frequently emphasized in Oswald's poem. In the poem, the process of mapping arises from the speakers' positioning of themselves

within a natural space. Though mapping also requires the placement of borders among different speakers, the poem uses the borders as a point of interaction (echoing Susan Stanford Friedman's argument about borders in *Mappings* even though she uses this idea in a feminist context), which in the end, result in the merging of the speakers' voices. Consequently, in this alternative type of autobiography, spatiality rather than temporality becomes the dominant element which influences the autobiographical narratives of the speakers.

One of the most salient elements that contribute to Oswald's ecocritical approach to autobiography is the harmonious incorporation of differences both in the form and the content of the poem. To break the disregard towards nature as well as the superiority ascribed to humans (which are often observed in many literary works and which have been a fundamental subject for ecological criticism); *Dart* blends different voices none of which is brought to the centre and foregrounds impact of the river on these voices. In such a structure, the speakers can dominate neither each other nor the natural setting. The miscellaneous voices which are presented in *Dart* range from those of a mountaineer, a chambermaid, a fisherman, the water researcher Theodore Scwenke to a canoeist, an oyster gatherer, a ferryman etc. What particularly strikes the eye regarding the representation of these voices is that the reader needs to depend on the short notes in the margins to learn the identities of the voices. Without these notes, it becomes rather hard to distinguish the voices which are blended into one another in one single poem. The notes in the margins function as a border which mostly serves a pragmatic purpose to help the reader follow the changes in the point of view. As a result of the detachment of the margins from the main body of the poem, the first person pronouns which are used by different voices merges into one another. While the identities of the speakers are placed in the margins; the emotions and perspectives aroused by the river are centralized in the poem as a whole. In this way, readers are invited to take the integrative aspect of the poem into consideration despite the constant variations in the perspective:

forester

and here I am coop-feeling in the valley, felling small sections to
give the forest some structure. When the chainsaw cuts out the
place starts up again. It's Spring, you can work in a wood and
feel the earth turning

woodman working on your own
knocking the long shadows down

waternymph

and all day the river's eyes
 peep and pry among the trees
 (...)
 Listen, I can clap and slide
 my hollow hands along my side
 imagine the bare feel of water,
 woodman, to the weinkled timber¹

In the quotation above, though the perceptions and impressions of the forester and the waternymph differ from one another, the natural force of the river on the bodies of the speakers plays a connective role in the poem. The mutual relationship between the speakers and the river constitutes not just a part of the speakers' lives, but a part of the river's life as well. In this example, one can notice that Oswald does not dismiss the differences and changes but impressively incorporates them in the narrative structure of the poem, which echoes the flux of river and water. Apart from the changes in the point of view, the poem also goes back and forth between poetry and prose, which creates an alteration in the rhythmical pattern of the poem. In this way, sense of unexpectedness which is often associated with water is reflected on the flow of the poem as well. Besides, the interplay of reality and fantasy becomes a salient element in the poem serving to the construction of flux as well. While the intervention of the waternymph's voice gives a dreamy mood to the poem in the previous quotation; in different parts of the poem, the social conditions and problems of workers at the Woollen Mill, fishermen and oyster gatherers are illustrated in a realistic manner. The coexistence of differences in the form and content of the poem substantially contributes to the sense of unity that arises from the ecological concerns of the poem.

In the poem, the unity of different voices is also significant in the sense that it prevents the humanization of the river. The representation of natural entities through the insertion of human attributes is particularly subject to ecological literary criticism mostly because such a representation puts the human perceiver on top of a hierarchy that disregards the natural being itself. Instead of imposing a single humanized voice on the river and presenting the narrative of the river's history with this constructed voice, Oswald chooses to focus on how the river Dart makes people speak in various ways. Here, the river is not a passive entity that is the subject of human gaze. As a consequence, the poem does not provide much space for the visual description of the river itself (even if there is description, it is embedded in the poem's active narrative) nor the characters celebrate the river by attributing human characteristics to it. Rather, Oswald's poetry emphasizes the activity of the river and its capability to make an impact

¹ Alice Oswald, *Dart*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2002), 11.

on the lives, perspectives and voices of different characters. In this way, a natural entity ‘speaks’ about its life without being personified.

In an interview with Madeleine Bunting in *the Guardian* where she criticizes the humanization of nature, Oswald states: “We’re colonizing it. We’re turning it into something human rather than what it is for itself. That spreads very quickly into the whole of your life and you then can begin to lead a kind of inert life of colonizing other people – colonizing everything. That’s what I am working against”.² Oswald’s poetic structure effectively prevents such a colonization that makes the human characters put their own viewpoint and perceptions on the top. In this poem which does not prioritize any of the voices in the narratives, the word ‘I’, which is repeatedly used by miscellaneous voices in the poem, begins to signify the collective existence of humans and nature. At the same time, since nature and humans are subject to change, the identity represented by the first person pronoun inevitably becomes mutable. Particularly at the end of the poem when a sealwatcher begins to speak, one can notice that the individuality of human melts within the whole natural space:

who’s this moving in the dark? Me.
This is me, anonymous, water’s soliloquy,

all names, all voices, Slip-Shape, this is Proteus,
whoever that is, the shepherd of the seals,
driving my many selves from cave to cave³

In these lines, the unity of human and water reaches its peak: the voice speaks as if he sees his reflection on water. Through this reflection, he becomes a part of the water. Turning into the “water’s soliloquy”, he begins to lose his clear-cut identity. This blend of identity gets more meaning particularly when the beginning of the poem is taken into consideration.

The Dart, lying low in darkness calls out Who is it?
Trying to summon itself by speaking...

the walker replies
An old man, fifty years a mountaineer, until my heart gave out,

so now I’ve taken to the moors. I’ve done all the walks, the Two
Moors way, the Tors, this long winding line the Dart⁴

² Alice Oswald, interview by Madeleine Bunting, *The Guardian*, July 13, 2012

³ Oswald, *Dart*, 48

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1

The beginning of the poem, which asks the very same question ‘Who is it?’, presents the mountaineer and the river as two distinct entities. Yet, as the poem progresses, the borders that separate these entities begin to blur. In the final part of the poem, instead of introducing himself as a sealwatcher, the speaker just uses the word ‘me’ since his identity is constantly subject to change. This is also observed in the speaker’s mention of the Greek river god Proteus whose name comes from the adjective ‘protean’ meaning ‘mutable’ and ‘flexible’. Such an approach is conveyed to the reader from the very beginning with the words of Ivan Illich: “Water always comes with an ego and alter ego”.⁵ The poem delineates the speakers, who almost become reflections on the surface of water, as the alter ego of the river and the first person pronoun stops signifying a single entity.

The small narratives in the poem are actually made up of the statements of various people interviewed by Alice Oswald herself and at the beginning of the book, she points to these conversations: “I’ve used these records as life-models from which to sketch out a series of characters – linking their voices into a sound-map of the river, a songline from source to the sea. There are indications in the margin where one voice changes into another. These do not refer to real people or even fixed fictions. All voices should be read as the river’s mutterings”.⁶ In this expression, the “sound-map of the river” is a phrase that needs to be paid a close attention as it indicates a placement within a space. As the voices tell their life experiences with the river, they position themselves in various points around the river and this substantially influence the language they use to depict their identities. This condition enables the readers to read the poem as eco-autobiography, which is a term that has recently been introduced by some scholars such as Peter Perreten. In *Handbook of Narratology*, Helga Schwalm defines this concept with these words: “By ‘mapping the self’ (Regard ed. 2003), eco-biography designates a specific mode of autobiography that constructs a ‘relationship between the natural setting and the self’ ... (Perreten 2003)”.⁷ In the essay “Eco-Autobiography: Portrait Place/Self-Portrait”, Peter Perreten points to Charles Bergman’s “‘The Curious Peach’: Nature and Language of Desire”, where he suggests that narratives about nature can help narrators find “a new self in nature”.⁸ In the light of this viewpoint, Perreten puts forward a new

⁵ Oswald, ‘foreword’ in *Dart*, iii

⁶ *Ibid.*, i

⁷ Helga Schwarm, “Autobiography”, in *Handbook of Narratology*. ed. Peter Hühn, Jan Christoph Meister, John Pier, Wolf Schmid. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter: 2014), 24.

⁸ Charles Bergman, “‘The Curious Peach’: Nature and Language of Desire,” in *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*. ed. Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 300.

understanding of autobiography which enables the narrators through their mutual relationship with a natural space. He suggests that in eco-autobiography “the autobiographical voice (...) is shaped by natural setting, and the structure and texture (...) also reflect the close interaction of author and the setting”.⁹ The “new self in nature” indicates a change in the narrator’s perception of himself and carries a different self-expression with it. The emphasis on alteration and flexibility in *Dart* demonstrate a parallelism with the emergence of a new self since the voices almost become the alter-ego of the river Dart.

In eco-autobiography, the body constitutes a fundamental element of narration since the influence of nature on the perception of the humans is directly related to their bodies: “the two bodies—the physical body of humans and the physical body of nature, the flesh and the planet—are written upon and through each other”.¹⁰ The connection between the body of the speakers and the river strikes the eye especially when the voice of a man named John Edmund, who was washed away in 1840, intervenes in the flow of the poem. Here, as John Edmund’s body unites with water which begins to fill his throat, his words are born out of his bodily connection with the river. As a result of this connection, Edmund’s words belong to the river as well. Just as Bergman states in the quotation above, the body of Edmund and the body of the river begin to be “written upon and through each other”:

all day my voice is being washed away
out of a lapse in my throat
like after rain
little trails of soil-creep
loosen into streams

if I shout out,
if I shout in,
I am only as wide
as a word’s aperture

(...)

this is my voice
under the spickety leaves,
under the knee-napped trees
rustling in its cubby-holes

⁹ Peter Perreten, “Eco-Autobiography: Portrait Place/Self-Portrait”. *Auto/biography Studies* 18, no.1 (2003): 2.

¹⁰ Charles Bergman, “‘The Curious Peach’: Nature and Language of Desire,” 282.

and rolling me round, like a container
 upturned and sounded through

and the silence pouring into what's left maybe eighty
 seconds¹¹

In this section, while the poem presents the readers with the ultimate incident of John Edmund's life, the very incident becomes a part of the river's history as well. Especially the words "this is my voice / under the spickety leaves (...)" mark the overlapping of Edmund's and the river's voice since they share the exact location. Hereby, the autobiographical accounts which are very often attributed to humans are presented as a part of the natural history. Through the construction of eco-autobiography within the poem, the borders which separate the narrator and his surrounding begin to shatter.

Susan Stanford Friedman in her *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* discusses the function of borders within the feminist scholarship. She argues that borders not just separate but they also present a space of communication:

Borders have a way of insisting on separation at the same time they acknowledge connection. Like bridges. Bridges signify the possibility of passing over (...) Identity is in fact unthinkable without some sort of imagined or literal boundary. But borders also specify the liminal space in between, the interstitial site of interaction, interconnection and exchange.¹²

The same approach to borders can be applied to the way borders are presented in Oswald's poem with ecocritical concerns. Since the poem presents the readers with a sound-map of different voices (as Oswald puts it), the notes in the margin function like local points in a map. Even though these local points suggest separation and clear-cut distinction, in the poem these distinctions are transcended through the emphasis on the common space that encompass the voices. While this common space constitutes one of the strongest elements of eco-autobiography, it also signifies the strongest difference of eco-autobiographies from conventional autobiographies:

¹¹ Oswald, *Dart*, 20-21.

¹² Susan Stanford Friedman, *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 3.

In a wider sense, eco- or topographical autobiographies undertake to place the autobiographical subject in terms of spatial or topographical figurations, bringing into play space/topography as a pivotal moment of biographical identity and thus potentially disturbing autobiography's anchorage in time. In any case, the prioritizing of space over time seems to question, if not to reverse, the dominance of temporality in autobiography and beyond since 1800.¹³

Contrary to many examples of autobiographies which mark the effect of the passing time on the narrators, in *Dart* the impact of space dominates the life experiences delineated in the poem. Here, personal change does not require a long amount of time as it is often the case in traditional autobiographies. The change arising from a contact with the nature is foregrounded in the poem.

To conclude, this essay has investigated the construction of eco-autobiography within Alice Oswald's *Dart*, which can bring a new understanding to ecocritical perspectives that investigates the impact of nature on narratives. While the borders between the self and the other constitutes an essential element of conventional autobiographies, the new approach to autobiography in *Dart* blurs the borders among different voices and delineates a collective life experience that combines nature and human. In this way, the poem leads the readers to re-examine the impact of nature on self-expression.

¹³ Schwarm, "Autobiography", 24.

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An Interview with David Lodge

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David Lodge ile Röportaj

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David Lodge, who was born in South London on 28 January 1935, is Emeritus Professor of English Literature of Birmingham, where he taught from 1960 until 1987, when he retired to write full time. He is a very distinguished contemporary British novelist as well as a critic. He is known for novels satirizing academic life, particularly “The Campus Trilogy”- *Changing Places*, *Small World* and *Nice Work*. He has also written on literary criticism such as *The Language of Fiction*, *Working with Structuralism* and *After Bakhtin*. His style shows the literary tendency of the post-war British neo-realism and has a deep impact on the English literature. His thoughts on New Criticism, Structuralism and Bakhtin’s theory of fiction open a new door to the British critical circle. Some of his books have been already translated into Turkish. Though 83 years old, Lodge is still active in the English literary arena and has written two brilliant memoir books in the last few years: *Quite A Good Time to be Born: A Memoir: 1935-1975* and *Writer’s Luck: A Memoir 1976-1991*.

Aytaç Ören (AO): Firstly, I must state that interviewing you is a great honor for me. Thank you very much for giving me this chance. I have some questions whose possible answers I have been pondering as one of your readers for a long time. Your place in English literature is both interesting and important as you were born in 1935, which we consider is one of the most critical dates in the 20th century, just before the Second World War, because you saw and experienced both the war years and the post-war years. You witnessed the changes of style and attitude in literature, especially the novel, after the war. And then you experienced the post-modern experiments in literature. I am trying to say that you are a traditional, modern and post-modern writer. You have been successful in combining these identities in yourself. You have a holistic view on literature. And so, as I understand from your books, you do not divide literature or novel as a traditional, or modern, or post-modern one. You believe that the modern novel is a continuation of the traditional novel and the post-modern novel is a continuation of the modern one. Is that right? Or do you have different thoughts about it?

David Lodge (DL): I agree with your description of my view of the evolution of the novel. Because I was for many years an academic critic I am very conscious of the history of the novel as a narrative form and I do not privilege one kind of fiction over another. The novel is an elastic form, constantly developing new techniques and effects – which sometimes revive features of earlier fiction with new applications.

AO: In these years, you were surrounded by many great writers. I do not know how many of them you have met so far, but T.S. Eliot was alive when you started your university education and during your working years at university. Bernard Shaw and James Joyce both died when you were younger. Maybe you were a friend of Beckett’s or E.M. Forster’s or Harold Pinter’s. We know that you knew

Graham Greene very well. You worked with Malcolm Bradbury together and he was a family friend, too. Kingsley Amis and Muriel Spark were nearly your contemporaries; and Evelyn Waugh... I really have difficulty in imagining this period you have been living in. You say in *the Quite a Good Time to Be Born, A Memoir 1935 - 1975*: "I drew my first breath on the 28th of January 1935, which was quite a good time for a future writer to be born in England..." Please tell me what breathing this atmosphere is like!

DL: Some of the writers you mention, like Shaw and Forster, were born long before I was, and so there was little chance that I would know them personally, as I did for instance in the case of Malcolm Bradbury and in a more limited way with Graham Greene. The British literary world is a small one, but very crowded, and it is normal for writers to meet each other and sometimes form friendships that are more than merely social. In my second memoir, I give a detailed account of what it was like to be a professional novelist in Britain at a particularly interesting and fertile period.

AO: In the first one of your memoirs, we see a photo of you as a child. And in the second one; *Writer's Luck, A Memoir: 1976 - 1991*, there is another photo of you as an adult. You believe the time when you were born is an example of your luck. What were your greatest chances? What were their positive effects?

DL: I was lucky to have lived through the Second World War when I was just old enough (5-10 years old) to have some memories of that epic event, and I lived through a fascinating period of social and cultural changes in post-war British society which gave me plenty to think about and write about. I was also lucky, like many writers, to have an English teacher at school who encouraged me to read serious modern literature and fortunate to belong to the first generation of British children to enjoy free secondary education and (until recently) free university education.

AO: We can understand from your two latest books that you are planning to write a memoir about your maturity, from 1992 to now. If this is true, I am very curious about the next one. Is there a book like that? You were an academician in the English Literature Department, at the University of Birmingham, where you taught from 1960 until 1987 and then retired. It seems that you retired so that you could write full time, as authorship is your priority. The first is about "before and during university and your first years at work", but the second is about "your mature years", mostly at university as a professor. The next one will be about the remainder of your experience as a writer, about what makes you what you are, a summary of David Lodge. What's your plan for that?

DL: It is of course impossible to get the details of a whole life into a book, even one that has three volumes. The author must select. The second memoir, *Writer's Luck*, is more detailed than the first. It deals with a much shorter period than the first volume, but is about the same length. Those were the years in which I established my reputation as a novelist and also diversified into new forms of

writing, drama and film, and I wanted to describe how this happened in some detail.

AO: And we know you have written many books since you retired. You have nearly 15 books, which were written before your retirement, but nearly 20 books after it. Your decision about the retirement looks to be a wise one. Now, do you regret getting retired early? And I am sure you had many plans for future before your retirement. Have you realized most of the plans you made for your retired self? From what perspective is this period different? I mean the period after 1987?

DL: I was very fortunate to be able to take early retirement from my university post, with a modest pension which gave me a certain amount of financial security as I started to earn my living as a freelance writer. Happily, it was not long before I was earning much more money from my books than I ever did as a professor. I never regretted the decision. But now I am an old man – 83 this year – and I feel I may be approaching the end of my creative career. But I have had “a good innings” as English cricketers say when they achieve a high score.

AO: In the preface of *Lives in Writing*, you say, “I have combined creative writing with the practice of literary criticism for more than fifty years, and I think of myself as primarily a novelist in the former capacity, and a critic and theorist of the novel in the latter. But as I get older I find myself becoming more and more interested in, and attracted to, fact-based writing...” The number of your works on literary theory has decreased in the last decades when compared with before. You are hosting many identities together, but being a novelist seems to outweigh the others. You wrote *A Man of Parts* (H.G. Wells) and *The Year of Henry James*, two facts-based novels. What made you think of doing that? Could you open the topic a little more?

DL: I think there are several reasons why I have been attracted to fact-based narrative rather than the purely fictional kind [in my later years]. Most novelists draw on their own experience in creating their fictions, but as they get older they find they have used up that source of inspiration and have to do research in new territory to create a plausible fictional world; or they take real historical persons and events and treat them with the psychological inwardness that is characteristic of the novel as a form. That is what I did in *Author, Author* and *A Man of Parts*.

AO: The subject will change a bit, but there seems to be uncertainty about your approach to or interest in poetry. You have written fictions (novels), non-fictions (theory books), some plays and some adaptations for television, but no poems. Is there a special reason for that? Does poetry have a different place in your life?

DL: I did write a few poems in the first half of my life. One of them, inspired by the death of Marilyn Monroe, was published in the *Spectator* and is included in *QAGTTBB*. Of course I read a great deal of poetry as a teacher, and for my own pleasure, and I published essays on Philip Larkin and Ted Hughes, but as a creative writer poetry was not my métier. I am basically interested in narrative,

and most modern poetry is lyrical. I can enjoy it and learn from it, but prose is my medium of choice. In the 19th & 20th centuries prose developed a wonderful capacity to represent human experience both objectively and subjectively in the novel.

AO: Let's switch again to another matter. You have written important theory books like *Language of Fiction*, *After Bakhtin*, *The Art of Fiction*, *Consciousness and Novel* and so on. They were written especially during your active work at university. Are your thoughts on fiction and non-fiction similar to before? Or can we say that your interest in theory books on literature has lost its importance over the years?

DL: Up to 1987, when I took early retirement from my professorial position at Birmingham, I pursued what I call in the memoirs "a twin-track career" as both scholar-teacher and creative writer. These two professions are often seen as incompatible, but from the age of 15 or 16 when I first became attracted to reading literature I was interested in understanding how those books worked on me as a reader, and put as much effort into writing the essays for my English teacher as I did with my early attempts at short stories. The same dual engagement continued when I was a student at University College London -- I wrote a short novel (unpublished) in my first long summer vacation and stories in a student magazine -- and later when I became a university teacher. While I was at Birmingham, I published a new novel and a new book of criticism alternately over some 25 years.

This was a period when academic literary criticism as practiced in the English speaking world was challenged and partly transformed by an intellectual movement emanating from Continental Europe, variously named at different stages of its development as Structuralism, Post-structuralism, and Deconstruction, eventually bundled together with several other new approaches with the label "Theory". I found some of these methodologies stimulating and useful in teaching and analyzing literature, and set myself to make them more accessible to British students and teachers in several critical books of my own and in two bulky Readers, which are still in circulation, containing selections of key texts.

I never saw these two activities, literary criticism and literary creation, as incompatible, but rather as symbiotic, "a close association of two organisms of different species that live together often to their mutual benefit," to quote a dictionary definition of symbiosis. Over time however the new theory-driven criticism seemed to me (and many others who were once stimulated by it) to become a stifling orthodoxy which was killing the pleasure principle in the experience of literature because of the esoteric jargon in which it was written; and one of the blessings of early retirement for me was that I no longer had a duty to read any of it. I still went on writing and publishing criticism, but for a general audience, not an exclusively academic one.

AO: We know your story of how you decided to write *The Art of Fiction* from the preface. It is really a literary hand-book. There are a lot of topics describing this art by giving well-chosen quotations from so valuable novels. The interesting thing about it is that you have been able to open specific literary topics to general readers. Your novels like *Nice Work*, *Small World*, *Thinks...*, *Author Author* involve many literary subjects, but at the same time the ordinary reader can read and enjoy them. How did you do that? Literature is material for your fiction, a subject in which you are a specialist, but your audience is both massive and general. How can that happen?

DL: I like to think that is because I regard all writing as essentially communication between writer and reader. I believe that the secret of good writing is to read and re-read your own work in progress as if you hadn't written it, and then revise it. This should be a continuous process but it can be assisted by reading the text aloud, and by putting it aside for a time so that it is not totally familiar when you return to it. Then you see how to improve it, and discover new possibilities in your own material in the process. Your readers may not grasp every nuance in your book, but they will enjoy it more in consequence. And I try to build into a novel the information a reader needs to understand and appreciate it. *Nice Work* for instance has an intertextual dimension: its plot has much in common with Victorian novels about conflicts in society caused by the Industrial Revolution. I couldn't assume that all my readers would be familiar with all or indeed any of these novels so I made my academic heroine give a lecture on them which tells readers what they need to know.

AO: And Birmingham. You weren't born there, but it seems to be your hometown. Perhaps it can be said that Birmingham, Rummidge in your novels, is a background of some of your fictions. What are your thoughts about the real Birmingham and its fictional reflections? In one of your works, *Changing Places*, when one of your fictional characters, Mary Makepeace says while looking down from the plane, "There's a great dark smudge over there. That must be a big city." Your American professor, Morris Zapp, tells her, "It's probably Rummidge. A great dark smudge sounds like Rummidge." We can find enough information about this great dark smudge in *Nice Work*. Rummidge was a big industrial city in the Victorian period. You give Birmingham with its historical identity to your audience. We can also read its historical background. This point is very important for you, right? And you think the Victorian period has left indelible marks on England and English literature, right?

DL: Yes, certainly. As regards my relation to London and Birmingham: they are my two home towns but I think you always feel you belong to the place you were brought up in. Though I have lived in Birmingham much longer than anywhere else, I still identify as a Londoner. I have no desire to move back to London, though I am glad it is only 90 minutes away by train, and go there frequently. Birmingham, under the fictional name of Rummidge, is the setting of several of

my novels. At first, as in *Changing Places* and *Small World*, I exploited the negative opinion British people in general have about Birmingham for purposes of comedy, but got to know the city and its inhabitants better I gave a more realistic and sympathetic account of it – in for instance *Nice Work*. But I will never feel as if I am a native of the place – more like an adopted son. There are hundreds of novels set in London, but not many set in Birmingham and I think it was an advantage to me as a young novelist to have this largely unexplored territory almost to myself. Its character was certainly formed in the nineteenth century, but it has been modernized in various ways, though not always elegantly, and is now a vibrant multicultural city almost unrecognizable as the one I first came to in the 1960s, and there are a number of new young writers who live here and describe it.

AO: You could have derived Rummidge from “rummage”, I think. It means “to search for something by moving things around carelessly and looking into, under, and behind them.” Is that right?

DL: The fictional name of Rummidge is derived from “Brummagem”, the dialect word historically used to refer to the city. But the word “rummage” has appropriate associations too, of untidiness.

AO: And how do you choose the fictional names?

DL: As regards the names of fictional characters, you will find an answer in the chapter on “Names” in *The Art of Fiction*. They have to seem appropriate but not too obviously symbolic. Place names are invented in the same way.

AO: The Academy is very ironically portrayed in your novels. There are some academicians who try to work at their desks for hours, but cannot write anything, others who try to speak to a computer program called ELIZA about personal problems, who steal their students’ academic work, who see the academic conference as a touristic opportunity, and soon. You send very strong messages to us by using the academy in this way, don’t you? Is the academy in your fictions different from the real one?

DL: The sub-genre of the campus or academic novel always tends towards comedy, satire and irony, for the simple reason that the institution is dedicated to the pursuit of wisdom and truth, but the people who inhabit it have usual human failings such as greed, jealousy, lust, deceitfulness etc., so there is always an ironic contrast between the ideal and the reality. However, my rendering of the academic world is not wholly negative. The heroine of *Nice Work* for instance is a conscientious and caring teacher.

AO: Many people including me think that you are an important figure in developing campus novels. After *Lucky Jim* by Kingsley Amis, you have great contributions to this type. What is your thought about the campus novel? What do you think about your role in it?

DL: I think that Malcolm Bradbury and I extended the form of classic campus novel, which is typically set in a single location, for example Mary McCarthy’s

The Groves of Academe and Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim*, into the global campus novel, exemplified by my *Small World* and Malcolm's *Rates of Exchange*. Such novels involve travel to different countries and the clash of different cultures.

AO: There are many different academic characters in your novels. But one must be you. Which character do you think is closer to you? Which one symbolizes you in your novels? Professor Philip Swallow?

DL: I think I have a few traits that belong to each of these characters, but I'm not going to tell you what they are.

AO: Your characters are really different from each other. You are very successful in drawing them. But I can't help putting this question to you. "Swallow" is a bird name. In "Siegfried Von Turpitz," "turbit", without "z", reminds us of a bird name, too. Robyn is pronounced similar to "robin", a bird name too. Desiree calls Philip's surname "Sparrow" several times by mistake. I want to know whether you have used these bird names on purpose. I think birds symbolize "freedom" and "strength" in mythology and is there a relationship with that here?

DL: I wasn't conscious of the bird theme. "Turpitz" is meant to evoke the word "Tirpitz", the name of a famous German battleship in the Second World War, which inflicted much damage on British ships until it was eventually destroyed by bombing, or more likely scuttled by its commander. The fictional character of Turpitz in the novel was a German tank commander in the war. In the plot he is the chief opponent of the young hero Persse McGarrigle.

AO: I want to ask some questions about the same topic. You seem to be a master in finding very original and ironic character names. For example, Felix Skinner (a publisher), Cheryl Summerbee (a booking clerk at the Heathrow Airport), Miss Sybil Maiden (it reminds us Disraeli's *Sybil or Two Nations*), Arthur Kingfisher and so on. Perhaps Wilcox is taken from *Howards End* by E.M. Forster. The meanings of these names are very suitable to the stories in your novels. The names of your fictional characters are a puzzle, right? They have some extra and secret meanings, don't they? How do you choose them? What affects or inspires you while making up them?

DL: I would refer you again to the chapter on "Names" in *The Art of Fiction* which, among other things, explains the links between my Wilcox and Forster's. The name contains the words "will" and "cock". These businessmen have strong wills, and are, at the beginning of their stories, male chauvinists. The elderly female don called Miss "Sybil" is an allusion to the prophetess of Delphi in classical mythology, where Philip actually meets Miss Sybil Maiden, the retired Cambridge don. As you know, *Small World* is full of intertextual references to folk tales, classical mythology and medieval and Renaissance chivalric romances.

AO: Your novels are generally structured with two main stories. Two different cities, two different people, two different worlds are generally brought together.

Is this a strategy which you follow in writing a novel? What's your aim in that? Do you think comparison will open your readers' horizon?

DL: Yes, I am attracted to binary structures in my fiction, plots which unexpectedly bring together two different and contrasting professions, or cultures, or value systems, which creates conflict and generates narrative. It may also derive from my temperamental dislike of extreme dogmatic opinions. I can usually see two sides to every argument.

AO: This question is about me as a translator of some of your works. What do you think about translators? In *Small World*, there is a translator who sends letters to the writer of the book he is translating. He asks many questions about possible translation problems. The hero Persse meets him and other translators in a pub in Tokyo. We see that they can translate some English words into Japanese with a little difference. At the end of the book, for example, one of them says "narrow world" which implies *Small World*. What is your thought about translation and translators? Are they the second writer of a work?

DL: My books are published in more than thirty countries, so I am very indebted to translators, and have established friendships with several of them, particularly in France where my books are very popular. The character of the Japanese translator in *Small World* was inspired by Susumu Takagi who has translated most of my books, and is currently working on my memoir, *Writer's Luck*. He is devoted to my work and is the best proof reader I have ever known, finding errors that all the English editors missed. I paid tribute to all my translators in the dedication to *Deaf Sentence* which was a particularly hard challenge to their skills because of the comical verbal confusion caused by the hero's deafness.

AO: As far as I remember, you believe translation of a novel is more difficult than a non-fiction book. For example, when I wanted to translate one of your books, you said it would be more difficult than non-fiction translation, as far as I remember. Is it really hard? Why do you think so?

DL: I don't remember saying that, but I was probably thinking that dialogue is more prominent in fiction than in non-fiction, and it is often difficult to find equivalents for idioms, slang words, puns, regional varieties of English etc. in another language.

AO: And I am sorry again. There are too many questions to ask you, and I know asking all of them is not possible. I see the topics are constantly keeping changing. Patricia Waugh was one of your students. You understood how important the term, metafiction, was and you directed Waugh to study this term and its function in novels. In her book, she thanks you for that. So I can understand you pay attention to educating students during and after university, and even your readers with your books. And you have a great social responsibility. Do you think most academicians are like you? Writers and their social responsibility are another matter, but what's your thought about that?

DL: Not many academicians write novels, so in that respect I was not a typical academic. For 27 years I led a double life as both novelist and academic. I tried to keep them separate, and to do my best in each capacity, but it became increasingly difficult as I became more senior in the academic profession, with more serious responsibilities to the University as an institution, to students and colleagues. A novelist is responsible only to his own idea of artistic integrity, which may have effects that upset some readers.

AO: And my country. You have been to Turkey only once? Your impressions about Turkey? Is there anything to say about our literature or novel, the Turkish one?

DL: Yes, I have been to Turkey only on one occasion, early in the 1980s, to attend a conference of Turkish university teachers of English and English Literature in Ankara with some other British scholars, after which we transferred to Istanbul for a few days. It was a fascinating experience for me. Some traces of the impressions it made on me it can be glimpsed in the fictional Turkish episode in *Small World*. I have to confess that I know nothing about Turkish literature, past or present. There are so many books written in English-speaking countries or in translation from the major European languages, that I never find enough time to investigate the literature of other countries.

AO: Like your readers, I wonder what kind of person is behind these works and also I know this interview will seem to be incomplete and left half finished. Maybe I will have a chance like that in future once again. What do you want to say as last words?

DL: I would like to thank you, Aytac, for your interest in my work and in the great effort you have made to translate my books and make them accessible to Turkish readers.

AO: Thank you very much for this precious interview. It was a great pleasure for me to talk to you about these matters. Thanks again.

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Edebiyat, Sanat ve Sosyo-Kültürel Tarih Açısından Kastamonu - Çatalzeytin İlçesi Tarihî Mezar Taşları

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Özet

Kastamonu iline bağlı az nüfuslu bir sahil ilçesi olan Çatalzeytin'in tarihi mirası içerisinde tespit edebildiğimiz tek yazılı kaynak ilçedeki mezar taşlarıdır. Sahada yapılan araştırmalar sonucunda ilçede kırk üç tane mezar taşı tespit edilmiştir. Bu mezar taşları yaklaşık olarak 1775-1935 tarihleri arasına aittir. Bunların sadece üç tanesi 1854 öncesine ve geri kalan kırk mezar taşı bu tarihten sonraki seksen senelik döneme aittir. Bu mezar taşlarının büyük bir kısmı ilçe merkezinde, bir kısmı da yakın köylerde bulunmaktadır. Bu taşların her birinin üzerinde Osmanlı Türkçesi ile yazılmış birer kitabe vardır. Bölge halkı tarafından okunamayan bu mezar taşları, bir mezar taşı istisna olmak üzere akademik olarak da ele alınmamıştır. Bu kitabeler tarihi, sanatsal ve edebi yönden büyük önem taşımaktadır. Çatalzeytin İlçesi'ndeki bu mezar taşları okunarak edebiyat, sanat ve sosyo-kültürel tarih bağlamında tartışılmıştır. Mezar taşlarının makale içerisinde "giriş" olarak isimlendirilen kısmı edebi yönden eleştiriye tabi tutulmuştur. Ayrıca bu metinlerin İstanbul'daki mezar taşlarıyla benzeşen ve farklılaşan noktaları Zeytinburnu mezarlıklarıyla yapılan karşılaştırma üzerinden taşra-merkez ilişkisi bağlamında değerlendirilmiştir. Bu metinler arasında bir tanesi muhtemelen mahalli bir şaire ait bir mahlas içermesi, tam tarih ile ölünün vefat yılına işaret etmesi ve hece vezniyle ebced hesabı içermesi yönünden ayrıca dikkat çekicidir. Sanat ile ilgili bölümde mezar taşlarındaki motif ve serpuşlara değinilmiş, ayrıca mezar taşları hat sanatı açısından değerlendirilmiştir. Son bölümde ise ilçenin sosyal ve kültürel tarihi mezar taşlarından edinilen veriler ışığında ortaya konmuştur. Bu kısımda mezar taşlarının ilçenin tarihini ortaya koyan birincil kaynaklar olduğunu görmekteyiz. Çünkü bu mezar taşları başka hiçbir yerde bulunmayan bilgiler sağlayarak Çatalzeytin ilçesinin sosyal, kültürel, sanatsal ve edebi kodlarının tespitine katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Çatalzeytin, Kastamonu, mezar taşı, kitabe, sosyo-kültürel tarih, taşra ve şehir mezarlıkları

Historical Tombstone of Kastamonu – Çatalzeytin District in Literary, Artistic and Socio-Cultural Context

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Abstract

The only written historical evidence of civilization in the sparsely-populated coastal Çatalzeytin District of Kastamonu Province are the existing tombstones. After thorough investigation, the area's researches discovered forty-three pieces of tombstones that are dated approximately between 1775-1935. Three of them are dated before 1854, leaving the other forty to belong to the span of eighty years after 1854. Most of them are placed in the center of the district and the others are in the near villages. Because each of them has an inscription written in Ottoman Turkish, the residents have not been able to figure out what is written there. Except for one, the tombstones have not been the matter of any research until now, although having historical, artistic and literal significance. After being studied, all these tombstones were discussed and debated in terms of their literate, artistic and socio-cultural history. The part of the tombstone texts which is named in the article as "introduction parts" is criticized literally. In this part, the similar and different points between Çatalzeytin and Zeytinburnu Cemeteries' Tombstones were compared in the context of the cultural relation of the capital and a far province of Ottoman Empire. One of these texts is particularly interesting because it contains most probably the name of a provincial poet and abjad calculation. Within the artistic perspective, the patterns and headgears of the tombstones are touched upon. Besides, the tombstones were evaluated calligraphically. In the last part through the data on the texts the socio-cultural history of the district is examined. In this part, as is seen, the tombstones are the only primary sources of past history of there. Because these tombstones provide information which is not available anywhere else, they contribute to determinant social, cultural and literary codes of the district.

Keywords: Çatalzeytin, Kastamonu, tombstones, inscription, socio-cultural history, the capital and province cemeteries.

GİRİŞ

Kastamonu iline bağlı az nüfuslu bir sahil ilçesi olan Çatalzeytin'in tarihi mirasını bir kale, bir hamam, sade ahşap evler ve çeşitli mezar taşları oluşturmaktadır. İlçenin az dışında kalan ve kitabesi bulunmayan Ginolu Kalesi'nin, tam olarak bilinmemekle beraber 9. veya 11. yüzyılda inşa edildiği düşünülmektedir.¹ Osmanlı dönemine ait hamam da kitabesizdir. İlçe merkezinde yer alan ve kitabesi bulunan cami Cumhuriyet dönemine aittir. Dolayısıyla ilçe sınırları içerisinde tespit edebildiğimiz Osmanlı dönemine ait tek yazılı kaynak ilçedeki mezar taşlarıdır. Yaptığımız araştırmalar sonucunda ilçede kırk üç tane mezar taşı tespit ettik. Bu mezar taşlarının büyük bir kısmı ilçe merkezinde, bir kısmı da yakın köylerde bulunmaktadır. Bu taşların her birinin üzerinde Osmanlı Türkçesi ile yazılmış birer kitabe vardır. Bu kitabeler tarihsel ve edebî yönden büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Çağlar Köyü'ndeki bir mezar taşı üzerinde bulunan balık figürüyle ilgili Eyüp Nefes² ve Özgür Yeni'nin³ birer makalesi bulunsa da bu iki makale de sadece tek bir mezar taşını konu edinmektedir. Dolayısıyla edebî ve sanatsal kıymeti dolayısıyla akademik ilgiyi hak eden bu mezar taşları üzerine kapsamlı bir çalışma bugüne kadar söz konusu olmamıştır.

İlçedeki mezar taşları taş işçiliği ve hat sanatı açısından da büyük değer taşımaktadır. Daha da önemlisi, bu kitabeler ilçenin tarihi ve sosyal kodlarıyla alakalı çok önemli bilgiler ihtiva etmektedir. Bu makalede öncelikle bu araştırmanın üzerinde durduğu bağlam olan tarih ve edebiyat ilişkisi ele alınacak, ardından tarih ve edebiyatın adeta iç içe geçmiş olduğu Çatalzeytin mezar taşları edebî inceleme ve eleştiriye tabi tutulacaktır.

Osmanlı'nın payitahtına bağlı küçük bir yerleşim yeri olan Çatalzeytin'deki mezar taşlarını daha sağlam bir zeminde anlamanın tek yolu, bu mezar taşlarını merkezdeki benzer mezar taşlarıyla bağlantılı olarak incelemektir. Bu karşılaştırma için Süleyman Berk tarafından titiz bir çalışmanın ürünü olarak ortaya konulan *Zamanı Aşan Taşlar: Zeytinburnu'nun Tarihi Mezar Taşları*⁴ isimli eser tercih edilmiştir. Bu tercihin temel sebebi Zeytinburnu'na ait bu mezar

¹ Erdal Eser, "Kinolus (Ginolu) Kalesi", *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 2 (2004), s. 181.

² Eyüp Nefes, "Kastamonu-Çatalzeytin İlçesi Çağlar Köyü Merkez Camii Haziresi'nde Bulunan Balık Figürlü Bir Mezar Taşı", *Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 16 (2003).

³ Özgür Yeni, "Kastamonu-Çatalzeytin İlçesi Çağlar Köyü Merkez Camii Haziresi'nde Bulunan Balık Remizli Yeniçeri Mezar Taşı" *The Journal of Academic Social Sciences* 60 (2017).

⁴ Süleyman Berk, *Zamanı Aşan Taşlar: Zeytinburnu'nun Tarihi Mezar Taşları* (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi, 2006), s. 24.

taşı metinlerinin yayımlanmış olması sebebiyle kolay ulaşılabilir oluşudur. Bu karşılaştırma, ilçedeki ve Zeytinburnu'ndaki mezar taşlarının ortak olan ve olmayan ifadelerinin tespit ve tahlili şeklinde gerçekleştirilecektir. Ardından gelen bölümde bu mezarlar taş işçiliği ve hat sanatı açısından değerlendirilecek ve son bölümde mezar taşı kitabeleri çerçevesinde ilçenin sosyo-kültürel tarihi sorgulanacaktır.

Tarih, Edebiyat ve Mezar Taşları

Mezar taşları tarih ve edebiyatın birbirine en çok yaklaştığı alanlardandır. Zira yapısı ve ihtiva ettiği bilgiler itibariyle tarihsel belge olan mezar taşları, üzerindeki manzum ve mensur ifadeler sebebiyle edebiyatın da doğrudan ilgi alanına girer.

Türk tarihçilerinin başucu kaynaklarından biri olan *Tarih Araştırmalarında Usûl*⁵ isimli eserinde Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu mezar taşlarını "Lahit ve Mezar Taşları" başlığı altında ele alır ve mezar taşlarının tarih ilminin önemli kaynaklarından biri olduğunu şu cümlelerle ifade eder:

Mezar taşları, biyografilerin yazılmasında kütüphane ve arşiv malzemesinin boşluklarını doldurabilecek kaynaklardır. Nitekim, *Sicill-i Osmanî* müellifi Mehmed Süreyya Bey, eserini hazırlarken İstanbul'daki hazireleri dolaşarak mezar kitabelerinden topladığı notları, geniş ölçüde kullanmıştır. Mezar taşı kitabeleri sadece biyografî yazımında değil, yerleşme yerlerinin tarihlendirilmesinde de büyük iş görür. Mezar taşlarının üzerindeki ölüm tarihleri XVII. veya XVIII. yüzyıla kadar inen bir köyün, XIX. yüzyılda kurulduğu elbette iddia edilemez. Şu hâlde mezar taşları, yerleşme yerlerinin tarihlendirilmesinde kullanılabilir kaynaklardır.⁶

Bu tarihi kaynağı yeteri kadar değerlendirme konusunda gereken ilgiyi gösterdiğimiz söylenemez. Mezar taşları konusunda önde gelen uzmanlarımızdan birisi olan Necdet İşli de *Yeniçeri Mezar Taşları*⁷ başlıklı çalışmasında mezar taşları ile ilgili araştırmaların yetersizliğine şu şekilde dikkat çeker:

Tarihimizde üzerinde az durulmuş mevzulardan biri de mezar taşlarımızdır. Orta Asya'dan Avrupa'ya uzanan imparatorluk sahasında Hititlerden Osmanlı'ya birçok medeniyetin mensubu şahısların mezarları

⁵ Mübahat Kütükoğlu, *Tarih Araştırmalarında Usûl* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014).

⁶ Kütükoğlu, *A.g.e.*, s. 27.

⁷ Necdet İşli, *Yeniçeri Mezar Taşları* (İstanbul: Turkuaz Yayınları, 2006).

gibi mezar taşları da bize emanet edilmiş durumda iken, değil Selçuki, Bizans mezar taşlarını tespit Osmanlı dönemi mezar taşlarımızı dahi tespit edememişiz. 19. yüzyıl sonu ve 20. yüzyıldaki iki üç çalışma hariç tutulursa bu konunun son 40 sene içinde çözümlenmeye çalışıldığı dikkati çekiyor.⁸

Bu konuda yapılmış birkaç araştırmayı zikrettikten sonra "Osmanlı devri mezar taşlarının ancak çok az bir kısmı gün yüzüne çıkmış bulunuyor."⁹ diyen müellif, bu kıymetli eseriyle "yer yüzünde hiç örneği kalmadı" muamelesi gören yeniçeri mezar taşlarını itiraza mahal bırakmayacak bir açıklıkla, örnekleriyle beraber gün yüzüne çıkarmıştır.

Hans-Peter Laqueur isimli Alman müsteşrik Osmanlı dönemi mezar taşlarıyla ilgili *Hüve'l-Baki* isimli titiz ve kapsamlı eserinde mezar taşı araştırmalarıyla ilgili şu tespitte bulunur:

Osmanlı mezar taşlarının büyük bir kısmı -elde kalmış olanların yüzde doksandan fazlası- tek başına ele alındıklarında çok az şey söyler. 1324'te ölen Ormanalı kuruyemişçi Abdullah Efendi'nin mezar taşı tek başına ele alındığında ne ilginçtir, ne de önemli bir bilgi verir. Ancak bu mezarın yakın çevresinde Ormana kökenli iki-üç yüz kişinin daha mezar taşı dikkate alındığında, durum bütünüyle değişir.¹⁰

Bu alıntı mezar taşlarının mukayeseli olarak incelenmesi fikrini ortaya koyması dolayısıyla mühimdir. Bu makalede de Çatalzeytin mezar taşları hem kendi içinde hem de İstanbul'dan bir örnekle mukayese edilerek incelenecektir. Laqueur'ün işaret ettiği mezar taşını aynı bölgeden göç etmiş kişilerle beraber olması anlamlı kılarken Çatalzeytin mezar taşlarını bazen aynı aileye mensup olmak, bazen aynı lafızları ihtiva etmek, bazen farklı olaylara işaret etmek, bazen de merkez mezarlıklarına benzemek anlamlı kılmaktadır.

Mezar taşlarının tarihsel belge olma niteliğinin sık sık vurgulanmasına karşılık, edebî eser olma hüviyeti genellikle gözden kaçırılmaktadır. Laqueur mezar taşlarının tarihsel yönünün yanı sıra edebî kıymetinin de olduğuna şu ifadelerle değinmiştir:

Mezar taşlarından tek tek kişiler hakkında biyografik ve sanat tarihi ile ilgili bilgilerin yanı sıra -daha önceki bölümlerde değinildiği gibi- tarihsel topografya ve demografi, sosyal ve idari tarih, kıyafetler ve aile yapısının geçmiş gibi alanlarda da bilgi edinebiliyoruz. Bütün bunların ötesinde

⁸ İşli, *A.g.e.*, s. 10.

⁹ İşli, *A.g.e.*, s. 11.

¹⁰ Hans-Peter Laqueur, *Hüve'l-Baki* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2014), s. 168.

burada hiç değinmediğimiz dil ve edebiyat tarihi hakkındaki bazı bilgileri de bu kaynaklardan edinmemiz olasıdır.¹¹

Hele de başka dokümanların mevcut olmadığı durumlarda mezar taşları çok daha vazgeçilemez bir hâl alır. Laqueur 19. yüzyıla ait bir ansiklopediden bu meseleye dikkat çeken şu satırları aktarmıştır:

Mezarların büyük önemi ya da değişik halkların tarihi mezarlarının önemi, mezarların bulunduğu yerden, mezarın iç ve dış biçiminden, süslemelerinden, mezar taşı yazılarından vs. kaynaklanmaktadır. Yalnızca dinî inançları değil, bir halkın kültürünü genel olarak yansıttığı için, mezarlar ilginç ve güvenilir kaynaklardır. Özellikle de yazılı belgeler bulunmadığında, veya hiç var olmadığında mezar kalıntıları tek ya da en güvenilir kaynaklar olmuştur.¹²

Çatalzeytin mezar taşları tam da bu açıdan büyük bir öneme sahiptir. Çünkü ilçe sınırları içerisindeki yegâne edebî ve tarihî belge hatta sanat eseri bu mezar taşlarıdır. Bu sebeple bu ilçenin mezar taşları aynı anda hem edebî eser olarak ve hem de tarihsel bir doküman olarak incelenecektir.

Mezar Taşlarının Bölümleri

Süleyman Berk *Zamanı Aşan Taşlar: Zeytinburnu'nun Tarihi Mezar Taşları* isimli eserinde "Mezar Taşı Kitabelerinin Yapısı" başlığı altında beşli bir tasnife yer verir. Bu tasnife göre mezar taşlarını şu beş bölümde incelemiştir:

1. Başlık ve sembol
2. Serlevha
3. Kimlik
4. Dua
5. Tarih

Berk bu tasnifi yaptıktan hemen sonra farklı tasniflerin de mümkün olduğuna, ayrıca bazı bölümlerin kimi zaman bulunmadığına ve kimi zaman farklı sıralamalarla geldiğine işaret eder.¹³ Bu makalede ise daha farklı bir tasnif takip edilecek, başlık ve sembol kısmı taş işçiliğiyle bağlantılı olarak sanat yönünün incelendiği bölümde ele alınacaktır. Berk'in "kimlik" olarak isimlendirdiği bölüm bazı mezar taşlarında uzun manzumeleri, manileri, nasihatleri, hatta

¹¹ Laqueur, *A.g.e.*, s. 168-169.

¹² J.S. Ersch, J.G. Gruber (ed.), *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, I, Bd. 77 (1864) s. 158, "Grab" (Hasemann). (Alıntılayan: Laqueur, *A.g.e.*, s. 172.)

¹³ Berk, *A.g.e.*, s. 24.

mevtanın biyografisini içerebilmektedir. Bu bölüm sadece biyografik bilgilerden oluşsaydı tamamının kimlik olarak adlandırılmasında hiçbir engel olmazdı. Fakat bu bölüm genellikle biyografi harici unsurlardan, özellikle de edebî metinlerden oluşmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu kısmı iki başlık altında ifade etmek daha hassas karşılaştırmalara imkân sağlayacaktır. Süleyman Berk'in "kimlik" olarak adlandırdığı bölümün ilk kısmını "giriş" ve ikinci kısmını "kimlik" olarak adlandırabiliriz. Edebî eser olma yönü ağır basan "giriş" kısmını kimliğin bir parçası olarak incelemek, buradaki edebî malzemeyi gözden kaçırmaya sebep olacaktır. Buna göre mezar taşlarındaki metin kısmını beş bölümde inceleyebiliriz:

1. Serlevha
2. Giriş
3. Kimlik
4. Dua
5. Tarih

Çatalzeytin mezar taşlarının serlevha ve dua bölümleri Osmanlı mezar taşlarının tipik özelliklerini taşımaktadır. Örneğin ilçedeki kırk üç mezar taşından yirmi beş tanesinin serlevhası Osmanlı dönemindeki en yaygın serlevha ibaresi olan "Hüve'l-Bâkî"dir.¹⁴ On mezar taşının serlevhası ise yine yaygın ifadelerden olan "Âh mine'l-mevt"tir. Diğer serlevhalar da yine çeşitli örneklerini görebileceğimiz "Hû", "Allah Bâkî", "Âh mine'l-firâk" gibi ifadelerle sahiptir. Dua bölümü de neredeyse istisnasız bir şekilde ölünün ruhuna Fatıha talebinden oluşmaktadır. Bu durumdan ötürü serlevha ve dua bölümleri için ayrı başlıklar açılmamıştır.

Çatalzeytin mezar taşlarının "giriş" bölümleri makalenin ilk kısmında Zeytinburnu mezar taşları ile mukayeseli olarak ve edebî yönden, kimlik kısımları ise üçüncü bölümde sosyal tarih açısından ele alınacaktır. Yukarıda saydığımız beş bölümün sonuncusu olan tarih bölümü, mezar taşlarının hangi döneme ait olduğu sorusuna bir cevap olarak şu şekilde ele alınmıştır:

İlçedeki Mezar Taşlarının Tarihlendirilmesi

Çatalzeytin ilçesinde tespit edebildiğimiz kırk üç mezar taşından otuz dokuz tanesinin hangi yıla ait olduğu bilinmektedir. Tarih kısımları üç mezar taşında beton altında kalmış ve bir tanesinde kırılmıştır. Tarihini bildiğimiz bu otuz dokuz taş içerisindeki en eski tarih hicri 1189 (1775/1776)¹⁵ senesidir. Bu tarihe

¹⁴ Laqueur, *A.g.e.*, s. 82.

¹⁵ Makaledeki hicri-rumi-miladi tarih hesaplamaları 1351 yılı hariç olmak üzere Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun online Tarih Çevirme Kılavuzu aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bkz: <http://www.ttk.gov.tr/genel/tarih-cevirme-kilavuzu/>

ait iki tane mezar taşı bulunmaktadır. Bu iki mezar taşından bir tanesi Nuh oğlu El-Hac Hasan Ağa'ya aittir. Diğeri ise Eyüp Nefes ve Özgür Yeni'nin makalelerine konu edildiği Hacı Ali Ağa'ya ait olan mezar taşıdır. Bu ikisinden başka bin yüzlü tarihlere ait mezar taşı bulunmamaktadır. Bu iki taştan sonraki en eski mezar taşı Hacı Hüseyin Efendi'ye aittir ve 1214 (1799/1800) tarihini taşımaktadır. 1271 (1854/55) tarihine kadar başka mezar taşı görülmemektedir. Dolayısıyla bu ilk üç mezar taşı ilçe tarihi açısından paha biçilemez bir kıymete sahiptir. 1271-1299 (1854/55) - (1881/82) yılları arasına ait sekiz mezar taşı tespit edilmiştir. Geri kalan yirmi sekiz mezar taşı ise 1300-1351 (1882-1933/35) yılları arasına aittir. İlçenin en yeni Osmanlıca yazılı mezar taşı 1351 (1933/35) tarihini taşıyan Samancızade Duvarcı Yusuf Usta'nın taşıdır.

En eski tarihli üç taşı saymazsak, ilçedeki mezar taşlarının hepsi seksen yıllık bir dönemi kapsamaktadır. Bu birbirine yakın tarihlere ait oluş bir dönemi daha yakından tanımayı sağlasa da diğer taraftan farklı dönemlerde mezarlıkların ne tür değişimler geçirdiğini tespit etmeyi zorlaştırmaktadır. Çatalzeytin özelinde bakıldığında "daha eski" diyebileceğimiz örneklerin tikel oluşu bu tarihsel gelişimi takip etmeyi adeta imkânız hâle getirmiştir. Özetle ifade edilecek olursa, ilçedeki ilk ve son mezar taşının yaklaşık 1775-1935 yılları arasında tarihlendiğini, 1854 yılı itibarıyla mezar taşlarının yoğunlaştığını ve en fazla mezar taşının 1881 sonrasındaki kırk yıl içerisinde yer aldığını söyleyebiliriz.

EDEBİYAT AÇISINDAN ÇATALZEYTİN MEZAR TAŞLARI GİRİŞ METİNLERİ

Çatalzeytin'deki mezar taşlarının giriş kısımlarında kullanılan ifadelerin bir kısmı benzerdir. Bu tekrar eden giriş kalıpları arasında Çatalzeytin'de en yaygın olarak kullanılan şu beyittir:

Ziyaretten murâd bir duâdır
Bugün bana ise yarın sanadır

Bu beyit beş mezar taşında geçmektedir. Bazılarında "bir duadır" derken bazı taşlarda sadece "duadır" şeklindedir. Bu ifade sadece Samancılar Köyü'nde kullanılmıştır ve üç tanesi Sağıroğlu ailesi fertleri içindir. Beyit mefâîlün mefâîlün feûlün vezniyle yazılmış gibidir. Fakat "murâd bir" ifadesinin mefâîlün tefilesine uymadığını unutmamak lazım. Bu beyit *Zamanı Aşan Taşlar* isimli eserdeki iki mezar taşında geçmektedir¹⁶ ve ikisinin de ilk mısraı "Ziyaretten murâd olan duadır" şeklindedir. Bu hâli ile vezin bozulmamaktadır.

Bu ifadenin çok ilginç bir örneğini Laqueur'un eserinde görürüz. 1938'de ölen Yedikuleli Konstantin'e ait Karamanlıca (Grek harfleriyle Türkçe) mezar taşında

¹⁶ Berk, *A.g.e.*, s. 227, 240.

"Ziyaret etmeden murad bir duadır. Bugün bana ise yarın sanadır" ifadesi yer almaktadır.¹⁷

Sık tekrar eden giriş metinlerinden biri de şu dördlüktür:

Emr-i Hak'la türlü emrâz geldi benim tenime
Bulmadı sıhhat vücûdum sebab oldu mevtime
Âkıbet erdi ecel rıhlet göründü cânıma
Okuyup bir Fâtiha ihsân edeler rûhuma

Bu dördlüğe üç yerde rastlıyoruz: Yüzbaşı İbrahim Efendi'nin validesinin, Hacı Hüseyin Efendi'nin ve Duvarcı Yusuf Usta'nın kitabelerinde. Dördlük aruz ile, fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilün vezni ile yazılmıştır. Ama ne yazık ki imalelerde boğulan, başarısız bir uygulamadır. Ayrıca ilk iki ve son iki mısra arasında rediflerle bir ses uyumu yakalanmış olsa da kafiye kullanılmamıştır. Bu dördlük mevtanın ölüm sebebi hakkında fikir vermektedir. Bu metnin uzun süre hastalıkla pençeleştikten sonra vefat eden kişiler için kullanılıyor olduğu açıktır.

Üç mezar taşında rastlanan, dolayısıyla yaygın kabul edebileceğimiz bir diğer beyit ise şudur:

Fenâdan bekâya eyledi rıhlet
Ede kabrini Hak ravza-yı cennet

İlk mısraı basit bir haber ve ikinci mısraı sade bir duadan ibaret olan bu beyit on birli hece ölçüsüne göre yazılmıştır. Bu beyit aynen Zeytinburnu Çamlık Mezarlığı'ndaki Yusuf Ağa'nın kitabesinde de geçmektedir.¹⁸

Aşağıdaki dördlük ise üç mezar taşında ufak farklarla birlikte yer almaktadır. Dördlüğün Kara Halilzade Nazif Ağa'nın zevcesi Zekiye Hanım'ın taşındaki şekli şudur:

Âh ne yazık oldu bana gençliğime doymadım
Çâresiz bir derde düştüm bir ilâcın bulmadım
Yaktı yandırdı vücûdum şehri kahr-ı elem
Gül gibi soldum cihânda ne olduğum bilmedim

Hacı Hasanzade Halil Kaptan'ın mezar taşı "ah yazık" diye başlamakta, Lütfiye Hanım'ınki ise ikinci mısra "ilacım" şeklini almakta ve üçüncü mısra "Yaktı yandırdı vücudum gül gibi soldum" demektedir. Dördlük fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilün vezindedir. Fakat ilk mısra iki imale gerektirmekte ve son mısraın sonundaki "ne olduğum bilmedim" kısmı vezne uymamaktadır.

¹⁷ Laqueur, *A.g.e.*, s. 20.

¹⁸ Berk, *A.g.e.*, s. 247.

Aşağıdaki dörtlük ise sadece iki mezar taşında görülmektedir: İnce Mustafazade Şakir Kaptan'ın eşi Nazmiye Hanım'ın mezar taşıyla İnce Mustafazade Osman Efendi'nin mezar taşında. Bu durumda muhtemelen Osman Efendi Nazmiye Hanım'ın kayınbiraderidir. Tabii İnce Mustafazade ile bu zatın torunlarının kastedilme ihtimali de unutulmamalıdır.

Beni kıl mağfiret ey Rabb-i Yezdân
Bi-hakkı Arş-ı A'zam, nûr-ı Kur'ân
Gelüp kabrim ziyâret eden ihvân
Edeler rûhuma bir Fâtiha ihsân

Bu dörtlük mefâilün mefâilün mefâilün vezninde yazılmıştır. Dört mısra da zengin kafiye ile kafiyelenmiştir. İlk beyit bir duadır. İkinci beyit ise ziyaretçilerden Fatiha istemektedir. Dolayısıyla çok sanatsal bir ifade ile karşı karşıya olduğumuzu söylemek pek mümkün değildir. Bununla beraber bu dörtlük Süleyman Berk'in eserindeki altı mezar taşında geçmektedir.¹⁹ Bu hâliyle Zeytinburnu mezarlıklarında örneğine en çok rastladığımız metin budur.

Ey felek bâğ-ı fenâyı bana zindân eyledin
Soldurup bir gonca-i cismim tâk-ı hazân eyledin
Çok murâdım vardı Yâ Rab gitti eyvâh gençliğim
Âkıbet câm-ı ecelden bana dermân eyledin

Bu şiir Yeniçerizade Sadık Efendi'nin kitabesinde "gonca cismim" "âh gençliğim" ve "buna derman eyledin" şeklinde geçmektedir. Ahmed Rasim bin Hacı Osman'ın yukarıya aldığımız kitabesindeki "gonca-i cismim" şekli vezne uymamaktadır ve doğrusu diğer kitabede geçen "gonca cismim"dir. Sadık Efendi'deki "âh gençliğim" ifadesi de vezne uymaz. Yani iki nüshanın da birbirini vezin itibarıyla tamamlayan yönleri vardır. Bu iki mezar taşına da örnek olan bir başka mezar taşı olduğu muhakkaktır. Şiir, fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilün vezninde yazılmıştır.

Kara Osman oğlu Hacı Hafız Efendi ile Yeniçerizade Hacı İsmail Kaptan'ın kitabeleri aynı beyitle başlar:

Bakup geçme ricâm budur ey Muhammed ümmeti
Mevtânın diriden hemân bir Fâtihadır minneti

¹⁹ Berk, *A.g.e.*, s. 52, 93, 180, 187, 245, 327.

Beyitte aruz kullanılmamıştır. Aynı beyit "hemân" kelimesi eksik olarak Merkez Efendi Mezarlığı'ndaki muhallebici esnafından Mehmed²⁰ Ağa'nın mezarında da geçmektedir.²¹ İkinci beyitte Hafız Efendi ziyaretçilerinden Fatiha istemekte, İsmail Kaptan ise İhlas Suresi okumalarını istemektedir. Hafız Efendi'nin ikinci beyti ile Merkezefendi'deki ikinci beyit neredeyse aynıdır. Her hâlükârda bu beyitlerde kafiye dışında bir ahenge rastlanmaz.

Yüzbaşı İbrahim Ağa'nın pederi Es-Seyyid Mehmed Ağa'nın mezar taşı şöyledir:

Çün ecel geldi ona olmaz aman
Cürmünü affeyle yâ Rabbe'l-Mennân
Mağfîret kıl olmasın hâli yaman
Mazhar-ı nûr-i şefâat kıl her zamân

İnce Mustafa oğlu Hüseyin Bey'in mezar taşında ise üçüncü mısra dışındaki üç mısra bulunmaktadır. İlk ve üçüncü mısralarda fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilün vezni açıktır. Ama ikinci ve dördüncü mısraların vezinlerinde problem vardır. Dörtlük bu hâliyle Zeytinburnu Eski Topkapı Mezarlığı'ndaki Kavak Fatma Hanım'a ait 108 numaralı mezar taşında da geçmektedir.²²

Ümmügülsüm Hanım'ın "[b]ir kuş idim uçtum yuvadan ecel ayırdı beni dört çocuğumdan" diye başlayan kitabesiyle Hacer Hanım'ın "[b]ir kuş idim uçtum yuvadan ecel ayırdı beni anadan babadan" diye başlayan kitabesi birbirine benzemektedir. Yalnız biri çocuklarından, biri ebeveyninden ayrılmaktadır. Bu durumda çocuk sahibi olan Ümmügülsüm Hanım'ın ana babasıyla anılan Hacer Hanım'dan daha ileri bir yaşta olduğunu düşünebiliriz. Zaten Ümmügülsüm Hanım İbrahim Efendi'nin eşi olarak tanıtılırken Hacer Hanım Yüzbaşı İbrahim Ağa'nın kızı olarak tanıtılmaktadır. Hacer Hanım'ın mezar taşı dua ve şefaata isteyen bir beyitle bitmektedir. Bu dörtlük, hece sayıları dahi tutmayan bir mâni görünümündedir. Ümmügülsüm Hanım'ın mezar taşı ise kimi kafiyeli, kimi kafiyesiz, kimi uzun, kimi kısa on iki satırlık bir giriş ihtiva etmektedir. Bu on iki satır gâh öğüt vermekte, gâh dua etmekte, gâh mevta ile ilgili ana babasının olduğu, şehit olduğu gibi bilgiler vermektedir.

Çatalzeytin kitabeleri arasında bunların dışında giriş kısmı birbirine benzeyen mezar taşı tespit edemedik. Bu metinler arasında ilçede üretilmiş orijinal metinler varsa bu metinleri İstanbul'da benzerlerini görmediklerimiz arasında aramak daha doğrudur. Tabii ki bu durum aşağıda zikredeceğimiz beyitlerin daha orijinal

²⁰ Makale boyunca mezar taşlarından alıntılanan ifadelerde mümkün mertebe uzatmalar ve eski imla kullanılmış, bunun dışında TDK'nın imla kuralları esas alınmıştır. Bugün "Mehmet" olarak yazılan isim makalede birçok yerde geçtiği için, imla bütünlüğünü sağlamak amacıyla tüm makalede "Mehmed" şeklinde yazılmıştır.

²¹ Berk, *A.g.e.*, s. 52.

²² Berk, *A.g.e.*, s. 266.

olduđu, ilk metin olduđu manasına gelmiyor. Çünkü bu mezar taşları bütün mezar taşlarıyla karşılaştırılmış değildir. Zaten bugün ayakta kalan mezar taşları yok olanların yanında çok küçük bir oranı temsil etmektedir. Bir de ilçeye bağlı köylerde ulaşamadığımız birçok mezar taşının bulunması mümkündür. Zeytinburnu İlçesi'ndeki birkaç hazire ile yaptığımız karşılaştırmalarda dahi birçok benzerlikler tespit edildiği düşünülürse herhangi bir mezar taşı metninin etkileyen metin oluşundan bahsetmenin ne kadar zor olduđu anlaşılır. Zira daha eski tarihli olduđu düşünülen bir mezar taşından çok daha eskisinin başka bir yerde bulunması mümkündür.

Yukarıda karşılaştırdığımız Çatalzeytin ve Zeytinburnu mezar taşı kitabe metinlerindeki etkileme-etkilenme ilişkilerini göstermek için mezar taşları üzerindeki tarihleri de karşılaştırmak mümkün olabilirdi. Ama Çatalzeytin mezar taşlarının çoğunun 19. yüzyıl sonu ve 20. yüzyıl başına ait olduđu düşünülürse bu geç dönem metnlerinin merkez mezarlığındaki üç beş asırlık metinlere etki etmiş olması hiç muhtemel görünmemektedir. Başka bir ifadeyle, bu iki bölgenin etkileyen ve etkilenen tarafları mezar taşlarının üzerindeki tarihler dikkate alınmaksızın bellidir. Diğer taraftan taşranın merkezi bu bağlamda etkileyip etkilemediğini tespit etmek için öncelikle merkez mezarlıklarında geçen bütün metinlerin kronolojik olarak tasnif edilerek metinlerin ilk geçtiği mezar taşlarının belirlenmesi lazımdır. Ancak bu aşama tamamlandıktan sonra taşradaki bir mezar taşının merkeze etki edip etmediğini araştırmak mümkün olacaktır.

Şişman Mehmed Ali Bey'in kitabesindeki şu dörtlük fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilün veznini nispeten başarılı bir şekilde uygulamıştır:

Nüş edip câm-ı kazâdan şerbeti
Eyledim fânî cihândan uzleti
Kalmadı vaktim vasiyet edeyim
Verdi bana Hak şehâdet devleti

Dörtlüğün ilk mısraı ölümü kaza kadehinden şerbet içmek olarak nitelemiştir ki bunun ilçedeki mezar kitabeleri arasındaki en soyut ifadelerden biri olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Bununla beraber diğer mısralar yine düz anlatıma devam etmektedir.

Benzer bir güçlü benzetmeyi Hacer Hanım'ın kitabesinde görmekteyiz. Genç yaşta vefat eden bu hanım için yazılan kitabenin giriş kısmı şöyledir:

Takdîr-i Haktır, tağyîr olunmaz
Emr-i İlâhî yerini buldu
Pek tâze idi bu duhter-i pâk
Berg-i cemâli açıldı soldu
Cennette dursun vâlidesiyle
Hûri melekler yoldaşı oldu

Yaz Fevzi târîh seng-i mezâra
Hâcer Hanım Firdevs'i buldu

Burada geçen "berg-i cemali açılıp soldu" ifadesi daha sanatsal bir teşbihe benzemektedir. Bu kitabenin önemli özelliklerinden bir tanesi de şairini bildiğimiz tek eser olmasıdır. "Yaz Fevzi" ifadesi ile eserin Fevzi isimli bir şaire ait olduğunu öğreniyoruz. Ama ne yazık ki bu Fevzi Bey ile alakalı başka hiçbir bilgiye sahip değiliz. Sondan bir önceki mısradaki tarih yazmaktan bahsedildiğinde sonraki mısramın ebcet hesabı ile düşürülmüş bir tarih olması beklenir. Nitekim son mısramın değerleri toplandığında Hacer Hanım'ın vefat tarihi olan 1312 (1894/1897)²³ tarihi karşımıza çıkar. Dolayısıyla bu şiirde tam tarih düşürülmüştür. Şiirin aruzlu olmadığı hâlde ebcet hesabı içermesi de ayrıca ilginçtir. Çünkü ebcet hesabı genellikle aruz vezniyle yazılan şiirlerde bulunur. Her hâlükârda bir tam tarih bulunuşu hem mezar taşını hem de metni çok kıymetli kılar. Zira ilçede ebcet hesabı ile tarih düşürülmüş olan tek eser budur. Başka bir ilçeden veya İstanbul'dan birinin Hacer Hanım'ın ismiyle ısmarlama vefat tarihi düşürmesi pek muhtemel görünmemektedir. Bir de ısmarlama olarak dışarıdan getirtilen bir şiir aruzla yazılmış olurdu. Dolayısıyla ilçede Fevzi mahlaslı bir şairin yaşamış olduğunu düşünebiliriz. Tarih düşürmek matematik ve ebcet bilmeyi gerektirir. Bu yüzden bu mezar taşı Çatalzeytin'de eğitimli kişilerin bulunduğunu gösteren bir ipucu olarak kabul edilebilir.

Pakize Sıdika Kadın'ın mezarındaki "Gülşen-i fânide pek çok durmadım" mısraı ile başlayan dörtlüğü aruzun güzel kullanıldığı örneklerden bir tanesidir. Aruzu kendini hissettiren örneklerinden biri de İnce Mustafa oğlu el-Hac Ali Efendi'nin kitabesidir. "Câm-ı ecelden nûş etme" benzetmesi yukarıda gördüğümüz "câm-ı kazadan şerbet nûş etme"yi andırmaktadır. Nazım şekli olarak kıta şeklinde yazılmıştır ve dolayısıyla ilk mısraları kafiyesizdir. Bu bir kusur olmasa da ahenk açısından şiiri zayıflatmıştır. Bir de ilk mısradaki "dünyayı gözden terk etme" ifadesi pek yaygın bir kullanım değildir. İnce Mustafazade Hacı Ali Efendi'nin zevcesi Hatice Hanım'ın kitabesi ise ilk iki mısramında mefâilün mefâilün mefâilün mefâilün veznine tamamen uygun iken sonraki iki mısramında belirgin sapmalar göze çarpmaktadır. Pehlivan oğlu Abdullah Efendi'nin kızı Faika Hanım'ın kitabesinde fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilün vezni kullanılmıştır. Şiirde "ağlasın" redifinin kullanılması ise bu şiiri etkili ve acıklı hâle getirmiştir.

Kara Halilzade Mehmed Ağa'nın dünya hayatının geçici bir misafirlikten ibaret olduğunu ifade eden mezar taşı diğer taşlar gibi ölünün arkasından yakınmaktan ziyade geride kalanlara nasihat vermek üzere yazılmış gibidir:

²³ Mezar taşında yazan bu tarihin hicri mi, rumi mi olduğu belirtilmediği için bu dört yıl içerisinde tam olarak hangi yıla işaret ettiğini tespit mümkün değildir.

Ey gönül gâfil olma bu dünya bir misâfirliktir
 Her gelen mihmân olup bilmez acep kâşânedir
 Bir kefendir âkıbet sermâyesi şâh u gedâ
 Pes buna mağrûr olan mecnûn değildir yâ nedir

Son üç mısra fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilâtün fâilün veznine mükemmel bir şekilde uymaktadır. Buna karşın ilk mısraın bu vezinle alakası yok gibidir. Bu da dörtlüğün daha önceden var olan üç mısraın başına vezinden anlamayan biri tarafından alakasız bir mısra eklenmesiyle oluştuğunu düşündürür. Son mısradaki "pes" bağlacının kullanılması böyle bir ihtimali iyice kuvvetlendirmektedir. Hatta bu üç mısraın daha önceki yüzyıllara ait bir şairden alındığını bile düşünebiliriz.

Pehlivan oğlu Hacı Halil Ağa'nın kitabesi de benzer bir şekilde nasihat odaklıdır:

[Rikkat]²⁴ ile nazar kıl şu mezârım taşına
 Âkil isen gâfil olma aklını al başına

İlçedeki mezarlar arasında Nuh oğlu el-Hac Hasan Ağa'nın kitabesi gibi giriş cümlesi taşımayan mezar taşları da vardır.

İlçedeki mezar taşlarının giriş kısımları incelendiğinde kitabe metinlerinde genel olarak üç farklı tavrın geliştiği sonucuna varabiliriz. Bunlardan birincisi aruz vezniyle yazılan kitabelerdir. Bu kitabeler "câm-ı kazadan nûş etmek" gibi, vefat eden genç kızın güle benzetilmesi gibi divan edebiyatından izler de taşımaktadır. Ayrıca burada kullanılan şiirlerin bir kısmının İstanbul'daki mezar taşlarında da kullanıldığını görmekteyiz. Bu ise mezar taşlarındaki metinleri derinlemesine araştırmadan o bölgeye mâl edemeyeceğimizi göstermekte ve aynı zamanda İstanbul'daki kültürün taşraya ne ölçüde ve ne şekilde etki ettiğini de ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

Çatalzeytin'deki mezar taşlarında gördüğümüz ikinci tavır mâni türüne yakınlaşan veya halk edebiyatına bağlanan metinlerdir. İlk tavır ile ikinci tavır kıyaslandığında aruzla yazılan şiirlerin hece ile yazılan şiirlerden daha çok olduğu göze çarpar. Aslında bu şaşkıncı bir durumdur. Payitahta çok da yakın olmayan bir ilçede yerel kültürün daha baskın olması beklenirdi. Hâlbuki Çatalzeytin mezar taşları bunun aksini ortaya koymaktadır.

Üçüncü olarak da bu iki gruba da girmeyen kitabeleri sayabiliriz. Bunların bir kısmı vezin veya kafiye itibarıyla ilk iki gruba dâhil edilemeyenlerdir. Ayrıca giriş kısmı olmayan mezar taşlarını da burada kabul edebiliriz.

²⁴ Kitabenin büyük oranda kırılmış olan ilk harf hem dal (د) hem ra (ر) olarak okunmaya müsaitse de ra harfine daha çok benzemektedir.

2. SANATSAL AÇIDAN ÇATALZEYİN MEZAR TAŞLARI

Mezar taşları üzerine yapılan sanatsal bir değerlendirmenin tabii ki edebiyatı da kapsamı gerekmektedir. Fakat bir önceki bölümle kitabelerin edebî yönü etraflıca ele alındığından bu bölümde mezar taşları taş işçiliği ve hat sanatı açısından incelenecektir.

Osmanlı mezar taşlarında genellikle erkek mezar taşları bir serpuşla, kadın mezar taşları da çiçek motifleriyle süslenir. Çatalzeytin mezar taşları incelendiğinde kimi başlıklı olan on iki civarında çiçek motifli kadın mezar taşı, on iki tane kavuklu mezar taşı ve on tane fesli mezar taşı tespit edilmiştir. Kavukların ve feslerin çeşitleri varsa da bu çeşitlerin tespiti ayrı bir uzmanlık gerektiğinden ve bunların tespiti bu makalenin sınırlarını aştığından genel sınıflandırmayla yetindik. Hacı Hüseyin Efendi'nin kâtibi sarığının ve Hacı Ali Ağa ile Paşazade Hacı Mustafa Bey'in koskocaman bir sarığının olduğunu da belirtelim. Bir de Meşhur Şişman Mehmed Ali Kaptan'ın mezar taşındaki fes istisnai bir durum olarak çiçek motifleriyle donatılmıştır. Bunun sebebi de muhtemelen kendisinin şehit olmasıdır.

Bu mezar taşları arasında çok iyi hat örnekleri göze çarpar. Aslında genel itibarıyla iyi hattatların elinden çıktığını düşündüren birçok dolgun yazıyla karşılaşırız. Örneğin Zikriye Hanım'ın, Mehmed Ali Kaptan'ın, Hacı Osman Efendi'nin, Faika Hanım'ın, Nuh oğlu Hasan Ağa'nın, Seyyid Abdullah Ağa'nın mezar taşı kitabeleri fevkalade güzel sanat eserleridir. Ama ne yazık ki ilçedeki hiçbir mezar taşında hattat imzası bulunmamaktadır. Bu sebeple bu zarif yazıların nerede ve kimler tarafından yazıldığını kesin olarak bilemiyoruz. Bu yazıların yakın merkezlerdeki ve İstanbul'daki meşhur hattatların yazılarıyla karşılaştırılmasıyla yazıların nerede yazıldığının tespit edilmesi mümkün olabilir.

İlçedeki mezar taşları arasında yirmi yedi tane talik yazı tespit ettik. Dolayısıyla mezar taşlarının çok büyük bir kısmında talik yazı kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca dört tane sülüs kitabe bulunmaktadır. Bunların dışında rika ile yazılanlar ve herhangi bir yazı çeşidine dahil edilemeyecek kadar özensiz yazılmış yazılar da vardır.

Bu mezar taşlarının ilçede mi, yakın bir merkezde mi, yoksa payitahtta mı hazırlandığı bilinmemektedir. Sürpriz bilgi ve belgeler gün yüzüne çıkmadığı sürece eldeki bilgilerle tespiti de pek mümkün görünmemektedir. İster taşrada ister merkezde üretilmiş olsun, 19. yüzyıl civarında İstanbul'daki sanat ve edebiyatın imparatorluğun çeşitli yerlerine kuvvetli bir şekilde intikal ettiğini Çatalzeytin mezar taşları üzerinden takip etmek oldukça mümkün görünmektedir.

3. SOSYO-KÜLTÜREL TARİH AÇISINDAN ÇATALZEYİN MEZAR TAŞLARI

Mezar taşları sosyal ve kültürel tarih araştırmacılarının vazgeçemeyeceği eşsiz kaynaklardan bir tanesidir. Bu durumun iki mühim sebebi vardır. Birincisi: Osmanlı mezar taşlarının kimi zaman ölüyle ilgili birçok yan bilgiyi ihtiva etmesidir. İkincisi de mezar taşlarında karşılaştığımız bu bilgilerin genellikle başka hiçbir kaynakta bulunmamasıdır. Bu bağlamda Çatalzeytin'deki mezar taşlarına göz attığımızda ilçenin sosyo-kültürel kodlarıyla alakalı birçok ayrıntı ile karşılaşırız. Bu ayrıntıları kabaca aileler, meslekler ve dini yapı olarak ele alabiliriz.

a. Aileler

Çatalzeytin mezar taşlarında en çok karşımıza çıkan aile İnce Mustafazadeler ailesidir. Bu aileye mensup sekiz kişinin mezar taşı tespit edilmiştir. İnce Mustafazadeler ilçenin merkezindeki mezarlıkta yatmaktadır. Bundan sonra dört mezar taşıyla Sağıroğulları gelmektedir. Bu dört mezar Samancılar köyünün arkasındaki aile mezarlığındadır. Yüzbaşı İbrahim Ağa'nın annesi, babası ve kızı da bir aileyi teşkil etmektedir. Bunun dışında ancak ikişer mensubunun mezar taşını tespit edebildiğimiz Kara Halilzade, Paşazade, Yeniçerizade, Samancızade, Pehlivanoğlu, Medanoğlu aileleri mevcuttur.

Mehmed Ali Kaptanzade Mustafa Efendi büyük ihtimalle Çatal Zeytinli Meşhur Şişman Mehmed Ali Kaptan'ın oğludur. Oğul rumi 1324 (1908/1909) yılında anlaşıldığı kadarıyla boğazındaki bir hastalıktan dolayı vefat etmiş, babası da rumi 1325 (1909/1910) yılında şehit olmuştur. Görüldüğü üzere iki mezar taşı üzerinden bir ailenin dramını takip etmek mümkündür.

İbrahim Efendi isimli bir zatın üç evlilik yaptığını Zikriye Hanım'ın mezar taşından anlamaktayız. Zira Zikriye Hanım İbrahim Efendi'nin üçüncü eşi olarak tanıtılmaktadır. Bunun çok eşlilik olup olmadığı hususunda kesin bir delile sahip değiliz. Şayet çok eşlilik değilse hicri 1333 (1914/1915) yılında vefat eden Ümmügülüm Hanım'ın İbrahim Efendi'nin birinci veya ikinci eşi olduğunu düşünebiliriz. Hicri 1337 (1918/1919) yılında on dokuz yaşında vefat eden Zikriye Hanım'ın da aynı zatın üçüncü eşi olması mümkündür. Yalnız yukarıda Yüzbaşı İbrahim Efendi olarak geçen zatın aynı kişi olmaması kuvvetle muhtemeldir. Çünkü Yüzbaşı İbrahim Efendi'nin kızının hicri 1281 (1864/1865) yılında vefat ettiğini biliyoruz. Aynı kişinin yaklaşık yarım asır sonra üçüncü evliliğini yapması matematiksel olarak imkânsız olmasa da pek muhtemel değildir. Bu ve benzeri ilişkiler ancak arşivlerde yapılacak çalışmalarla kesinlik kazanabilir.

Bu saydıklarımız dışındaki mezarlarda yatanlar, izlerini/akrabalarını mezar taşlarında takip edemediğimiz kişilerdir. Bu durum şüphesiz ki kimsesiz

oldukları anlamına gelmiyor. Peki niçin herkesin mezar taşı yok? Bu soruya verilebilecek iki cevap var. Birincisi, mezar taşı yaptırmanın belli bir zenginlik veya makama sahip olmayı gerektirdiği olabilir. Diğer bir ifadeyle fakir halkın mezar taşı kitabeleri olmayabilir. Hele de mezar taşları merkezden hazır olarak geliyor ise bunun belli bir servet gerektireceği muhakkak. Ama yukarıda belirtildiği üzere bu taşların nerede üretildiği belli değildir. Birçok aile ferdinin mezar taşlarının bugün elimizde bulunmayışının diğer bir sebebi de mezar taşlarının zamanla yok olması veya talan edilmesidir. Zira tarih boyunca dikilen mezar taşlarının çok az bir kısmının günümüze ulaşabilmiş olduğu muhakkaktır.

b. Meslekler

Çatalzeytin ilçesinde geçtiğimiz asırda yaygın olan meslekler neydi? Böyle bir meseleyi araştırmak kolay değil. Belki arşivlerde, şeriye sicillerinde taramalar yaparak belli verilere ulaşmak mümkün olabilir ama yine de böyle bir çalışmanın nasıl bir sonuç ortaya çıkartacağı meçhuldür. Böyle bir araştırmanın belki de tek alternatif kaynağı ilçedeki mezar taşı kitabeleridir. Zira mezar taşlarında kişiler genellikle meslekleriyle tanıtılmaktadır. Bu da bize bölgedeki meslekler hakkında önemli bilgiler sağlamaktadır.

Karadeniz'in kıyısındaki bir sahil ilçesinde en yaygın olması beklenen meslek nedir? Tabii ki denizcilik. Mezar taşlarında beş yerde kaptan kelimesi geçmektedir. Mehmed Ali Kaptan'ın ismi kendi taşında ve oğlunun taşında geçmektedir. Dolayısıyla ilçede ismini bildiğimiz dört kaptan var: Hacı Hasanzade Halil Kaptan, Yeniçerizade Hacı İsmail Kaptan, Meşhur Şişman Mehmed Ali Kaptan ve İnce Mustafazade Şakir Kaptan.

İlçede çeşitli devlet memurlarının bulunduğunu da yine mezar taşlarından öğreniyoruz. Örneğin akrabalarına ait üç mezar taşında adı geçen Yüzbaşı İbrahim Ağa muhtemelen bir askerdir. Tabii kendisinin İstanbul'da hizmet edip etmediğini, yüzbaşı sıfatını katıldığı bir savaş dolayısıyla mı yoksa ilçede yürüttüğü bir görev sebebiyle mi aldığını bilmiyoruz. Ne yazık ki Yüzbaşı İbrahim Ağa'nın kendi mezar taşı henüz tespit edilemedi. İbrahim Ağa'nın kendi mezar taşında hayatıyla ilgili daha çok bilgi bulabilirdik.

"Samancı oğlu Mustafa Kethüda" Samancılar köyündeki mütevazı bir mezar taşına sahiptir. İlçe sınırları içerisinde bir kethüda bulunmaktadır ama görevini ve vasfını tespit etmek maalesef çok zor. İlçenin üçüncü en eski mezar taşı olan Hacı Hüseyin Efendi'nin mezar taşı da kethüda kavuğu olarak adlandırılan bir serpuşa sahip. Buradan yola çıkarak ilçede -muhtemelen farklı tarihlerde- iki kethüdanın yaşamış olduğunu söyleyebiliriz.

Bir mezar taşında geçen "koca muhtarın zevcesi Fadime Hatun yatıyor." ifadesindeki "muhtar" kelimesi özel isim değilse, bu zat çok sevilmiş olacak ki, bölgede koca muhtar olarak anılmaya başlamış. Bir de yukarıda ismi geçen

Meşhur Şişman Mehmed Ali Kaptan'ın süvari olduğu belirtilmektedir. Bu süvarilik sıfatından askerî vazifesi olduğunu anlayabiliriz.

Merkezdeki iki kişinin lakabı "Yeniçerizade" olarak geçmekte. Ama bu yeniçerinin kim olduğu da bilinmemektedir. Eyüp Nefes'in Çağlar Köyü'nde bulunan mezar taşındaki balık figüründen hareketle balıkçı olabileceğini düşündüğü²⁵ Hacı Ali Ağa'nın aslında bir yeniçeri olduğunu Özgür Yeni'nin makalesinden öğreniyoruz. Özgür Yeni bu balık figürünün mevtanın mensup olduğu 25. bölüğün remzi olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.²⁶ Mezar taşları ilçe merkezinde bulunan bu iki yeniçerizadenin Hacı Ali Ağa'nın torunları olması mümkündür.

Paşalı köyünün isminin nereden geldiği konusunda birçok senaryo üretilebilir. Ama köyde bulunan iki mezar taşından bu ismin gerçek bir paşaya işaret ettiğini öğreniyoruz. Paşazade Hacı Mustafa ve eşi Zarife Hanım. Paşanın kim olduğu yine de belli değil. "Paşa" kelimesinin bir makama işaret ediyor olması daha güçlü bir ihtimal olsa da bir şahsın özel ismi olmasının önünde herhangi bir engel bulunmamaktadır.

"Yaz Fevzi" ibaresiyle başlayan beytin bir tarih mısraı içerdiğini, bu şiirin muhtemelen ilçede yaşayan Fevzi isimli bir şair tarafından yazıldığını, ebceci bilen kişilerin bulunmasının ilçenin eğitim seviyesi için bir ipucu olabileceğini yukarıda belirtmiştik.

Maalesef mezar taşlarında geçen meslekler arasında pek fazla zanaatkâra rastlanmamaktadır. Kunduracı Hasan Usta, Duvarcı Yusuf Usta'dan başka meslek erbabı görünmemekte. Bir de aile ismi olarak gördüğümüz "Samancızade" ifadesinden saman ticaretiyle meşhur bir dedenin bulunduğunu öğreniyoruz. Memurlara ve kaptanlara ait birçok mezar taşına karşılık ustalara, mermercilere, bakkallara rastlamamız mezar taşlarının daha yüksek bir kesim arasında yaygın olduğu fikrini kuvvetlendirmektedir.

Mezar taşlarında karşımıza çıkan sıfatlar/meslekler arasında en ilginç ise soytarıdır. Soytarı oğlu Abdullah Efendi'nin kerimesi merhume Pakize Sıdika Kadın'a ait mezar taşından dedesinin soytarı olduğunu öğreniyoruz. Ama maalesef dedesinin ne mezar taşı ne de ismi elimizdedir. Soytarı ismi bu kişiye insanların taktığı bir lakap olabilir. Ama böyle olsaydı bu aşağılayıcı lakabın torununun mezar taşına kadar intikal etmesi pek mantıklı olmazdı. Bu durumda bunun bir mesleği ifade etmesi daha makul görünmektedir.

c. Dini Yapı

Osmanlı mezarlık kültüründe mezar taşları üzerinde tekrar eden belli dualar vardır ve bu duaların bulunması ölünün dini hassasiyetini göstermek bakımından

²⁵ Nefes, *A.g.e.*, s. 211.

²⁶ Yeni, *A.g.e.*, s. 496.

çok bir şey ifade etmez. Çünkü bu dualar neredeyse her mezar taşında bir şekilde yer almaktadır. Buna karşılık mezar taşlarının kimlik bölümünde bir kelimenin bulunup bulunmaması dindarlık için önemli bir ipucudur. Bu ipucu "el-hâc/hacı" kelimesidir. Çatalzeytin'deki beş mezar taşında el-hâc, sekiz mezar taşında hacı ibaresi geçmektedir. Hacı Mustafa Bey'in ve Hacı Ali Bey'in isimleri eşlerinin mezar taşında ve el-Hâc Osman Efendi'nin ismi oğlunun mezar taşında tekrar edilmektedir. Dolayısıyla ilçede mezar taşları üzerinden tespit edebildiğimiz hacıların sayısı ondur.

Bunun dışında iki mezarda es-seyyid ve bir mezarda seyyid ifadesine rastlamaktayız. Seyyid Abdullah Ağa'nın başındaki seyyid kelimesinin özel isim mi yoksa sıfat mı olduğunu bilmiyoruz. Ama es-seyyid kelimesinin ehl-i beytten olmaya işaret ettiği ortada. Yalnız İnce Mustafazade İbrahim, Ali, Osman, Davud, Şakir ve Ahmed Rasim Beylerin hiçbirinin önünde olmayan es-Seyyid sıfatının kardeşleri veya yeğenleri olan Hüseyin Bey için kullanılması çok şaşırtıcı bir durumdur.

Yirmi yedi yaşında vefat eden Mehmed Ali Kaptanzade Mustafa Efendi'nin mezar taşı, ilçede tasavvufi faaliyetlerinin bulunduğunu ortaya koyar:

Âh mine'l-mevt
İhvandan Fâtiha, Hüdâ'dan rahmet
Bula rûhu rûz-ı cezâda izzet
Geldi boğaz illeti etti şehâdet
Dört yetimi ile ebeveyni kaldı dünyâda hasret
Tarikat-ı aliyye-i Kâdiriyye'den Mehmed Ali
Kaptanzâde Mustafa Efendi
Ruhuna El-Fâtiha

Mustafa Efendi, Kadiri tarikatına mensuptur. Bu mezar taşı olmasaydı ilçedeki tasavvufi durumla ilgili en ufak bir fikre bile sahip olamayacaktık. Bu yüzden bu mezar taşı ilçenin dinî hayatını ortaya koymasından önemlidir.

SONUÇ

Çatalzeytin gibi küçük bir sahil ilçesinde kırktan fazla mezar taşı tespit edilmiş olması ilçenin kültürel ve maddi zenginliğinin basit bir göstergesidir. Bu mezar taşlarının İstanbul'un herhangi bir ilçesindeki tarihî mezar taşlarıyla kıyaslanmış olması bu metinlerin büyük ölçüde orijinal olmadıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Bu şiirler özgün olsalardı şüphesiz ki bu çalışma çok daha büyük bir edebî keşif hâlini alırdı. Diğer taraftan bu benzerliğin tespiti de edebiyat tarihi açısından önem taşımaktadır. Evet, bu metinler Çatalzeytin'de üretilmemiştir, buna mukabil İstanbul'da ortaya çıkan mezarlık kültürünün ilçeye ne şekilde ve ne tür tahriflerle intikal ettiği buradaki birçok örnek üzerinden incelenmiştir. Başka bir

ifadeyle bu mezar taşları divan şiiri kültürünün taşraya intikalini sembolize etmektedir. Diğer taraftan ilçedeki tek tarihsel edebiyat vesikasının bu mezar taşları olduğu da dikkate alınmalıdır.

Mezar taşları aynı anda hem tarihsel değere sahip edebi eser, hem de edebi değere sahip tarihsel belgelerdir. Buna bir de sanat eseri oluşunu ekleyebiliriz. Bu ilginç doğası itibariyle mezar taşlarının ne tarih, ne edebiyat, ne de estetik araştırmaları tarafından dışlanması söz konusu olabilir.

Çatalzeytin ilçesinde hat ve taş işçiliği açısından bu kadar güzel örneklerin bulunması da ayrıca kayda değer bir durumdur. Bir kısmı birinci sınıf olan hat eserlerinin İstanbul'dan mı intikal ettiği yoksa taşrada mı üretildiği çok mühim bir meseledir. Bu meselenin aydınlatılması zikredilen mezar taşlarının hat ekolleri ve hattatlar bağlamında değerlendirilmesiyle mümkün olabilir. Mezar taşlarında baskın bir şekilde tespit edilen talik yazının Kastamonu'da veya çevre merkezlerde hangi hattatlar tarafından yazıldığı konusunda yapılacak bir araştırma bu sanat eserlerinin yerel mi yoksa merkezi mi olduğunu gün yüzüne çıkartacaktır.

Maalesef taşradaki mezarlıklar hakkında çok fazla kaynağa sahip değiliz. Hâlbuki bu mezarlıkları arşivlemediğimiz sürece tarih karşısında yavaş yavaş yok oluşlarını izlemeye mahkûmuz. Bu açıdan tarihî mezarlıkların kayıt altına alınması büyük önem taşımaktadır. Diğer taraftan bu arşivleme çalışmalarının ardından yapılacak mukayeseler edebiyatın Osmanlı coğrafyasına intikalinin bir haritasının çıkartılmasını sağlayacaktır.

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M. Tarık Ablak İstanbul'da dünyaya geldi. 29 Mayıs Üniversitesi'nin İslam ve Din Bilimleri Bölümü'nde lisans ve Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü'nde yan dal eğitimini tamamladı. İngilizce ve bilimsel hazırlık döneminin ardından şu anda Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eski Türk Edebiyatı Bölümü'nde yüksek lisans ders dönemine devam etmektedir. İngilizce, Arapça ve Farsça bilmektedir. Evli ve bir çocuk babasıdır.