

BEYOND NUMBERS AND FIGURES: DIFFERENT FORMS OF SUBJECTIVITY
IN LATE PERIOD KURDISH NOVEL

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Rakamların Ötesinde: Son Dönem Kürt Romanında Öznellik Biçimleri
Beyond Numbers and Figures: Different Forms of Subjectivity in Late
Period Kurdish Literature

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the constitution of subjectivities and identities of Kurdish people under the shadow of Kurdish problem. It is a fact beyond all doubts that Kurds are members of a society for whom the possibility of a peaceful life is constantly at stake. This makes every Kurdish individual inextricably linked to the political unrest. The political nature of life for Kurds is thoroughly reflected in the content and forms of their literature. Therefore, this thesis is an attempt to understand subjectivity in contemporary Kurdish literature. Inspired by reality, Kurdish literature serves as a complementary framework that provides further insight into the sources and outcomes of this political question. The literary works at hand brought me to three conclusions about how being a free subject turns out to be an impossible quest for many Kurds since the solutions of this political problem is continuously belated to an unspecified time in the future. First, physical violence does not only mutilate the body of a political convict, but it also estranges the individual from the society and turns the individual into a living dead. Second, as a Kurd, you might be stigmatized as a convict in the eyes of the law even if you are not politically engaged. Moreover, you cannot emancipate yourself from the socio-psychological imprisonment enforced by the unrest in question. Third, this political problem results in melancholia that pervades the lives rendered so fragile and so vulnerable through perpetual loss. The term subjectivity is thus made redundant by the political turmoil created by all structures of power so resilient in destroying any agent or individual attempting to open the path for freedom.

Key Words: subjectivity, violence, loss, melancholy, imprisonment

ÖZET

Bu tezde Kürt sorununun gölgesinde öznellik ve kimlik oluşum biçimleri incelenmiştir. Şu şüphesiz bir hakikattir ki huzurlu bir hayat Kürtler için her zaman için tehlike altında olan bir kavram olmuştur. Kürtler her zaman için politik karmaşanın bir parçası olmuştur. Politikayla iç içe geçmiş hayatlar Kürtlerin ürettiği edebi eserlerin içerik ve formlarına da yansımıştır. Bu yüzden bu tezde son dönem Kürt edebiyatına bakılarak Kürtlerin öznelliklerini yaşama biçimleri anlaşılmasına çalışılmıştır. Hakikatten esinlenen Kürt edebiyatı bu politik meselenin nedenleri ve sonuçlarını anlamaya dair önemli bir kaynaktır. Bu doğrultuda incelediğim edebi eserler çözümü henüz saptanmayan bu politik sorundan ötürü özgür birey olmaları neredeyse imkansız olan Kürtlere dair üç sonuç ortaya çıkarmıştır. Birincisi, bedene yönelik şiddet siyasi bir suçlunun bedeninde yarattığı tahribin yanı sıra bu kişiyi topluma karşı yabancılaştırmakta ve hatta onu yaşayan bir ölüye dönüştürebilmektedir. İkinci olarak, politik meseleler ile angaje olmamayı tercih etmek bile kişiyi suç oluşturabilecek durumlardan uzak tutmaya yetmemektedir. Yani bu sorunun yarattığı kaos ortamı kişilerin sosyo-psikolojik bir hapsoluştan kurtulmasına engel teşkil etmektedir. Üçüncü olarak, bu sorun sürekli olarak kayıplara yol açtığından kayıp karşısında kırılmalı ve zedelenmiş hayatlarda bir melankoli kültürü yaratılmıştır. Hülasa, özgür ve huzurlu bir hayata yönelik bütün çabaları bastıran egemenlerin yarattığı bu kaos ortamında öznellik anlamını yitirmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: öznellik, şiddet, kayıp, melankoli, hapsolme

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I focus on the novels *Hadım (Eunuch)*, *Birini Öldüreceğim (I Am Gonna Kill Someone)*, *Lehî, Spinoza'nın Günlüğü (The Diary of Spinoza)*, and *Kifayetsiz Hikayeler Müsabakası (Contest of Inconclusive Stories)*. These novels are originally written in Kurdish and are all associated with the outcomes of Kurdish problem in different geographies since there is only a limited number of academic studies on Kurdish literature, I hope that this study will be a valuable contribution to the field. I have noticed that looking at literature will shed light on the history of the Kurdish problem because Kurdish literary texts have always been preoccupied with the Kurdish problem as all minor literatures are. Moreover, as Deleuze and Guattari have maintained, minor literatures are deeply related to social construction of subjectivity and identity.

Researchers on Kurdish problem have been preoccupied with historical facts, events, mass killings, war zones or the Kurdish military movement. That is to say, there has been little interest in more personal realms of life, individual experiences, hidden and unspoken details. While the political implications of Kurdish problem are widely discussed, the everyday experiences of Kurdish people go unnoticed most of the time. Thus, I hope this thesis will provide a complementary framework for the outcomes of Kurdish problem on a more subjective level.

The Kurdish problem has afflicted this country and especially its Kurdish citizens the way a natural disaster recurrently afflicts an area with devastation and ravage. The threats of this disaster are still pervasive at macro and micro levels of life as the solutions for the problem have not yet been found. In this study, I wish to demonstrate how the atmosphere of oppression and suffocation are rendered in the five Kurdish novels under discussion. The term subjectivity refers to all the moments that shape the way someone answers the question “Who am I?” The answers to this

question bear serious importance for a better understanding of the further complications of this problem. Literature offers a realm where stories inspired by reality or fiction can be told in minute details. It is as if literature sheds light into the backyard of stories normally narrated with a general description of place, time, figures and people involved as it is conventionally done in newspapers, bulletins or historical narrations. Reading the stories of the oppressed with details of feelings, characters or relations provides a deeper insight into what is going on in the actual lives of these people.

Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser elaborate on the relationship between power and the influence of power on subjectivity. Their theories guide my analysis between power and constructed subjectivities vis-à-vis the Kurdish problem:

“First, the subject is a subject to itself, an “I,” however difficult or even impossible it may be for others to understand this “I” from its own viewpoint, within its own experience. Simultaneously, the subject is a subject to, and of others, in fact, it is often an “Other” to other, which also affects its sense of subjectivity... Third, the subject is also a subject of knowledge, most familiarly perhaps of the discourse of social institutions that circumscribe in terms of being. Fourth, the subject is a body that is separate (except in case of pregnant women) from other human bodies; and the body, and therefore the subject, is closely dependent upon its physical environment.” (Cagnier 8)

From this delineation, it can be understood that there is a constant tension between imposed subjectivity and chosen subjectivity. To understand the way a myriad of limitations and unavoidable constraints shape the way people comprehend their being, Althusser ponders over the most important structures that create the illusion between what is imposed and what is chosen. To Althusser, being a free subject is a total

fiction and deception. What creates this delusion between what happens to the subject and what the subject would (not) choose is ideology. There are tools that in/directly create conditions for the impossibility of a free subjectivity. Every social formation is a direct result of how domination puts its ideology at work. The state which is “a machine of repression” (*Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* 92) vis-à-vis its citizens create all the conditions for a harsh intervention in the interests of subjects through what Althusser calls state apparatuses. As put forth by Althusser, the police, the courts, the prisons, the army, and even the head of the State, the government and the administration are repressive state apparatuses (92). To reinforce the rotation of all its citizens, the state reinforces its power through ideological apparatuses, which include religious institutions and belief systems, all forms of educational systems and institutions, family, law, communication systems like television, press or radio and all forms of art by regulating the way these apparatuses are operated (96). Michel Foucault, Althusser’s student, has a similar criticism of modernity, ideology and subjectivity. To Foucault, the tools of ideology shape all the relations between members of society as the state exerts its power not only through repressive, menacing, disciplinary and therefore negative methods but also in progressive way through such mechanisms as language, all forms of discourse, career systems, family, etc. Foucault describes the unceasing control of the state ideology on citizens and their constant surveillance through the metaphor of panopticon, a form of prison control in which all the prisoners are under the total and constant surveillance of a prison watchman. Discourses are created to reinforce the control of the panopticon. With a special interest in discourse in literature, science, philosophy, religion and fiction, Foucault underlines what is articulated is under the influence of what has been said before:

“All manifest discourse is based on an 'already-said'; and that this 'already-said' is not merely a phrase that has already been spoken, or a text that has already been written, but a 'never-said', an incorporeal discourse, a voice as silent as a breath, a writing that is merely the hollow of its own mark. It is supposed therefore that everything that is formulated in discourse was already articulated in that semi-silence that precedes it, which continues to run obstinately beneath it, but which it covers and silences” (*The Archeology of Knowledge and Discourse on Language* 25).

My analysis of the novels will thus follow the Foucauldian and Althusserian paradigms of power. The first work I analyzed, *Hadım* is a novella written by Selahattin Bulut who spent 8 years in Diyarbakır Prison. Analyzing this novel, I tried to understand the influence of violence, imprisonment, discipline and torture as extreme tools of repression on subjectivity. The question I sought an answer for is what happens to a prisoner when he is released after the continuous exertion of severe violence on his body.

In the second chapter, I analyzed two serially published novels called *Birini Öldüreceğim* and *Lehî*. Again, in the book, there seems to be some autobiographical reflections from the writer’s life. The writer, Fırat Cewerî is a prolific Kurdish writer who has preferred to live in Sweden to escape censorship by the Turkish authorities. Similarly, in the novel, we read about the story of a woman who used to be a guerilla fighter and who tries to escape from her own country because of her past as a guerilla fighter. She finds out, however, that wherever she goes is prison as she cannot get rid of the ideological and political imprisonment of her past.

My analyses of the novel by Şener Özmen rest on the disaster discourse of Maurice Blanchot and Blanchot writes in *the Writing of the Disaster*:

“The disaster ruins everything, all the while leaving everything intact. It does not touch anyone in particular; “I” am not threatened by it, but spared, left aside. It is in this way that I am threatened; it is in this way that the disaster threatens in me that which is exterior to me—an other than I who passively become other.” (1)

I have long been wondering why the themes of sadness and pain are such deeply engraved themes in Kurdish art. In a movement sparked and kindled with the feelings of insubordination, determination and resolution, it is strange that almost all forms of art are inspired by these emotions, which is at the same time quite natural considering the extension of losses in the history of the Kurds. I will look at the way the countless characters in Şener Özmen’s two novels called *Spinoza’nın Günlüğü* and *Kifayetsiz Hikayeler Müsabakası* are doomed to lose and fail. Şener Özmen lives in the heart of a troubled land. Perhaps, Özmen did not have any intention of portraying his characters as victims of a painful history. However, I analyzed them as such especially considering the fact that none of his characters reach any achievement in their lives, which fits unfortunately well into the nullifying and disorienting effect of melancholia as it is theorized in Western Culture.

CHAPTER I: AFFLICTED SUBJECTIVITIES IN LATE KURDISH LITERATURE-CASTRATED BODIES & EFFACED SOULS

In *Hadım*, Selahattin Bulut tells the story of a man called Jehat who newly arrives in his family house having spent long years in Diyarbakır Military Prison after the 12 September 1980 coup d'état. The name of the book itself refers to the violent acts committed in the Prison. The protagonist Jehat is a hadım. Hadım means "eunuch." Jehat is castrated in the prison and thus becomes sexually impotent. Throughout the book, we observe how castration and the resulting loss of libido leads to Jehat's isolation from others and his dissociation from life itself.

The author does not give much information about what goes on in Jehat's life before he is imprisoned or what he goes through while he is in prison. However, the climax in the novella is actually the moment when Jehat is castrated in the prison through very violent torture. This climactic moment appears with flashbacks, it becomes the theme that haunts the whole plot revealing the psychological terror and physical injury.

Physical mutilation is accompanied with an emotional mutilation. His menaced life leaves behind the scars of a malady, one of which is quite expectedly a defective mind. This can be seen in Jehat's withdrawal from life. It is as if the loss of sexual organ stands for the loss of desire to live. It would be enlightening to look at the post complications of sexual assault to understand why Jehat ends up with such incapacibilities after the sexual assault he was exposed to in prison. According to a research carried out by Lunde and Orthman, men and women report psychosomatic problems, including headache, loss of appetite and weight, sleeplessness, palpitations, dizziness and exhaustion. Survivors may express deep feelings of shame, guilt, anger, anxiety, emotional de-sensitisation, suicidal thoughts, nightmares and loss of interest

in sex, leading to post-traumatic stress disorder. Men may describe impotence for which no physical cause can be found or pre-mature ejaculation. Jehat is seen to experience most of these complications (289-91).

Besides, the long lasting isolation in prison acts as a barrier against his involvement with people outside the prison. It is as if the years he spent in prison ended in a mental imprisonment and created a distance from life. The depressive mood of his return to his family house and how he is incapable and unable to get adapted to civil life outside the prison is reflected in every minute of the novella. He has lost his sense of joy, his desire to live and to be with others like “normal” people. Totally indifferent to his family members who have missed him a lot, Jehat has also lost his appetite and is not interested in anything that would satisfy his physical or emotional needs. He pays no attention to his mother’s attempts to unite him with a girl. People around him especially his parents obsessively try to make sense of his continuous physical and mental decline even after he is released. The only moment when Jehat acts with the hopes of recovery is when he seeks a remedy for his sexual impotence and eventually decides to visit a doctor. The visit, however, does not help for the wound lies deep. Bulut finalizes the novella with despair, an expected ending considering the protagonist’s irrecoverable loss both in emotional and physical sense. The final scene portrays this despair when Jehat goes to a brothel but cannot have sexual intercourse. What he only manages to do is to go there and get naked with his hands covering his genitals. It is as if he is covering his loss. He leaves the brothel and gets lost never to recover his physical and physic health.

Although the violence and oppression against Kurds is widely covered in the journalistic area, individual traumas and personal experiences find very little

expression. So, the novella translates political discourse of a collective experience in and through language and literature.

The southeastern part of Turkey is a region mostly made up of Kurdish population. Also, the region has been the site of armed clashes, which has resulted and still results in warlike conditions. This means that generations of people living in the region have inherited burdened subjectivities. Narratives are loaded with loss and mourning. Being born in Diyarbakir for example means to be born into a world where the boundaries between peace and violence and conflict are always blurred, where there is not a permanent feeling of well-being, where one cannot hope to be peaceful and safe for any extended period.

The question of castration and castration anxiety in *Hadım* text can be perceived as an example of subjectivity where the body and soul have been made to suffer as a result of Kurdish identity. In some Kurdish literary texts, there are characters who are either afraid of being castrated or have already been castrated.

In *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, subjectivity refers to “that which we would (but maybe unable to) know, that which we do (or believe ourselves to) know, and individual or cultural ways of knowing-or of trying to know” (388). With the help of this definition, it can be understood that the way we know the world has its effect on the way we experience our existence. How our knowledge of the world relates to our way of existence is an epistemological question.

As Selahattin Bulut transforms his experience of the Diyarbakır Prison into fiction, he gives an ironic name to his authorial persona: Jehat. Jehat means competent in Kurdish. The verbal irony which rests on a situational reality for Jehat’s incompetence is the outcome of prison literature.

According to Foucault, the control mechanism of the panopticon targets the soul more than the body (*Discipline and Punish* 29). The scar that physical leaves on the body cannot be erased as it gets imprinted on the soul or the psyche. As Helen Cixous puts it, “the world of masculinity is always governed by a rule” (42). It is a world that is ruled by order. In a world governed by rule, there are also punishments. When you transgress the boundaries, there are punishments awaiting you. Castrating the body is only one of these punishing practices.

This political link between discipline, punishment and castration can be thought together within the borders of the psychoanalytic theory especially because it is the sexual organ that has been the object of the panopticon. From a psychoanalytic point of view, the state can be regarded as the phallus. The phallus is the transcendental signifier according to Lacan. It is the primary organizer of the structure of subjectivity. It is the phallus that is said to constitute the a priori condition of all symbolic functioning. This has important implications as far as the body is concerned. “The body is not sexed, does not recognize itself as say female or male without having gone through the castration complex” (Cixous 46). Castration complex is the process that reminds man of his masculinity. As Cixous puts it, the castrated male is left “in a state of distressing and distressed undifferentiation, unbordered, unorganized, unpoliced by the phallus, incoherent, chaotic and embedded in the imaginary in [his] ignorance of the Law of the signifier.” That is perhaps why as a prisoner emancipated after years of imprisonment and torture, Jehat does not know where to go, where to belong, who to see, what to desire or what to do. He does not have the phallus to reign him, to fulfill him with the passion of doing and being better, doing the best. The phallus is exactly what directs one into the path that might provide answers for such questions. To Cixous, like the woman who lacks the phallus, the

man who is castrated is feminized. The feminine in the masculine world is not the one who does, but who is done. As a matter of fact, phallus is the term that defines our desire to be complete and orderly. By being castrated, the subject loses the desire to be complete and orderly.

Lacan says that “the unconscious castration complex functions as a knot in the dynamic structuring of symptoms in the analytic sense of the term, in other words, in the dynamic structuring of what is analyzable in the neuroses, perversions and psychoses” (27, *Ecrits*). It is inevitable for a person who as a political convict has spent years in prison to develop some neurotic tendencies. His muteness, his detachment from real life after he leaves the prison, his disconnectedness and alienation, his inability to desire and his mutilated libido are all implications of his neurotic character. While looking for the roots of his neurosis based on Lacan’s claim, the reader can learn that it is not the castration complex but the castration process itself that has pulled Jehat in such a mute and passive derision. This is Jehat’s reminiscence of his prison torture:

“There were a group of policeman at the door. Looking at me with bad intentions, they were grumbling against me. All of a sudden, I saw some police clubs going up and down. They started to hit my head with regular intervals. I do not remember how long it lasted, I could no longer stand on my two feet, I was short of breath and I fell onto my knees. They stopped hitting me for a while. Then, they made me have a doggy-style position. They grabbed my feet and hands tightly; one of them put oil on the police club and inserted it through my anus. My anus was torn apart. I had broken out into a sweat and violently collapsed onto the ground”¹ (60).

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

In the myth, Oedipus blinds himself to atone for the unwitting incest he committed with his mother. Psychoanalytic theory interprets this as self-inflicted castration. Lacan questions “the link between killing the father and the pact of the primordial law, if we include here the fact that castration is the punishment for incest” (Ecrits 272). According to Lacan, there is a strong relationship between the subject and the phallus. As it is known through the psychoanalytic theory, phallus is the signifier that plays an active role in shaping the signified. In Jehat’s case, Jehat is deprived of his penis the signifier that would connect him to the phallus, the signified. He is left unblemished. He is unnamable. His position in the universe is no longer fixed. He is not part of the orderly world anymore. His sexual and psychological dysfunction has been determined by fascist brutality. The anxiety experienced inside the prison has been internalized by Jehat and has caged him in a world of spiritual darkness. The past does nothing but makes his present horrible. It has its lethal power to frustrate and finally to destroy. Not only his body but also his soul is pathologically scarred.

Sexual torture has been used in many prisons to shatter the identity of political prisoners. Deprived of their masculinity, political prisoners have also been deprived of their capacity to reproduce. This is intentional enforcement of power by the hegemonic state. It does not kill, but inflicts the victim with permanent paralysis. It transforms the victim into a living dead.

CHAPTER II: AN IMPOSSIBLE QUEST-DISSOCIATION FROM THE WRECKAGE OF THE PAST

In Fırat Cewerî's novel series called *Birini Öldüreceğim* and *Lehî*, the stories of three different characters called Temo, Lehî and Alan are interwoven together. In these two novels, the partly told biographies of these three characters overlap. The first novel called *Birini Öldüreceğim* opens with the obsessive desire of a man called Temo to kill someone. His name is barely mentioned throughout the novel. Having spent 15 years in prison as a political convict, he lives alone with his mother, totally alienated from life outside. Sometimes he leaves home to go outside with a repetition of his inner voice driven by murderous desire. Though never directly expressed, it is understood from the city descriptions that he lives in Diyarbakır, a province mainly populated by Kurds. Temo is appalled and feels resentment for the way the people in his hometown have been going through cultural assimilation and corruption since he left the city 15 years ago. People do not speak their native language. They do not live with a sense of collectivity. A lot of people are unemployed. Kids are abandoned on the streets and lots of them are beggars. Prostitutes publicly look for clients. All these disgust the protagonist. Temo goes to a café to find a prostitute. That way, he meets Diana. However, contrary to Temo's expectations, Lehî/Diana cannot sleep with him. She feels he is different from the other men she has had to sleep with and tearfully to tell him her story. We learn that Diana/Lehî used to be a guerilla, a fighter in the mountains. She and her friends are ambushed by soldiers and she is captured but later released by a Turkish commander. However, bad luck follows hard behind her and she is captured again by village guards. The guards offer her to be a defector and give information about the location of her fighter friends. In return, she is to be released with a huge sum of money paid to her. She rejects this offer. This time, the village

guards force her to work as a prostitute for them. She is enforced to work as a prostitute until she meets Temo. She desperately asks Temo to help her escape from the city. Despite his inward desire to kill this woman as well, Temo decides to help her and sets off to go and see her the next day. However, he gets hit by a car. In this car, the reader meets Alan, a Kurdish writer who lives in Sweden and who comes to Turkey for a conference. In the previous parts of the novel, the reader learns that Alan used to be a very close friend of Temo in their youth. Temo does not like him. He disdains Alan's choice of becoming a writer and betraying their youthful ideals of Kurdish patriotism. Temo is killed in the accident caused by the car driven by Alan. Alan cannot recognize the crashed man, but finds a note that has Lehî's address on it. He goes to visit Lehî, who he supposes is Temo's girlfriend. The first novel ends with the meeting of Alan and Lehî.

Alan meets Lehî and she tells him about her tragic story. Through a fake passport, Alan manages to take Lehî to Stockholm where he lives with his wife. His relationship with his wife is a constantly deteriorating one and comes to a halt when he finally falls in love with Lehî. However, Lehî resists any feeling of attraction for him. Meanwhile, Temo magically leaves the morgue where he is put as a dead person. In both novels, there are numerous schizophrenic moments like this where it is difficult to differentiate between the real and the imaginary, especially in parts where Temo speaks. Temo leaves the morgue and kills his mother, thus realizing his obsessive dream to kill the mother. Meanwhile, the writer gets divorced from his wife and falls pray to acute depression. He dies a depressed alcoholic man. Lehî can never hold onto her new life and is never emancipated from her life in the past.

These two novels should be classified under trauma literature. When we read these novels, we see that the characters experience all the complexities of the trauma such as flashbacks, nightmares and compulsive repetitions.

Throughout these novels, freedom is repetitively mentioned as an unachieved state of being. Alan attempts to find freedom, but fails to do so because he cannot emancipate himself from the burdens of his Kurdish identity even in a country where different identities are most welcome. Lehî seeks for freedom, but cannot escape from her previous identities as a prostitute and as a Kurdish guerilla. Temo has completely given up his search for freedom, but has instead chosen the way to exterminate people so that they will not seek for freedom as he sees such a quest meaningless and unachievable. In this chapter, the derivations of their inability or incapability to have a voice over their fate will be analyzed. There will be attempts to understand how this endless ruination and incessant destruction create a lack of authority for these characters to designate either a present or future life for themselves and leave them speechless over their lives.

In his article called “Meaning, Madness and Political Subjectivity” Sadeq Rahimi quotes the famous Turkish film scenarist Ayşe Şasa: “A society that does not come to peace with its roots cannot decide its future” (5 Rahimi). These few words are a complete summary of what Alan, Temo and Lehî go through. Although the writer does not make it fully clear, the reader assumes that Temo has left the prison. He is supposedly free from the prison walls of being a captive. He is no longer handcuffed. He is not to be exposed to violence anymore. The confinement of 15 years is over. He can go out freely. He isn’t to be questioned about what he has done in the past. He can make new friends and see the old friends of his if he wants. He can

fall in love. Or he can join the Kurds who are still struggling for the salvation of their people, namely Kurds. If nothing, he can live in peace with his old mother without doing anything else. However, no option in his new life attracts him. He is just drawn to the idea that he can kill a person or many people. The only thing that concerns him is to obliterate someone from life, which in turn will guarantee his own destruction. After such long time of abnormalization in the prison, he cannot adapt to the daily routines of his new life by getting adapted to its routines. Behind all his incapacities lies his poisonous life in prison or his whole past. His body might have been released; however, his soul is still imprisoned.

As for Lehî, she tells about her suffering since she was forced to leave the army. By sharing her suffering, she feels she has the right to ask for help and support from a person that is completely unknown to her. She is to construct her new selfhood through the support of someone else because her previous self was also structured through her being a member of an oppressed community. Lehî is completely aware of the fact that her subjectivity is something formed by the others. Lehî who hopes to attain a new self understands that this will not be easy from the moment she steps into Stockholm. Foucault talks about pure subjectivity as an inherently impossible state of being. To Foucault, there is a form of power, which derives from an institution of power, group, elite or class. Foucault says: "This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of

power which subjugates and makes subject to.” (“Subject and Power” 6) Within this tension between the public and the private evolves not only the constitution but also the unconstitution of Lehi’s selfhood. She has become part of history through violence and criminality. She does not have a sense of belonging to this world. Lehi struggles for an inclusion into her new life, but she fails to do so because she cannot destroy her previous identities.

The way the past is remembered affects the way the future can(not) be imagined. In Hegel’s philosophy, remembrance of entire history of man, and the way it is comprehended-the remembrance of past- directly decides on what is to take place in the future. For freedom to get realized, there must be reconciliation between past and present. Unless the past is redeemed, either the future or the present cannot be salvaged. However, the past can be too bad and destructive to be remembered, like in the case of Lehi. Still, it should not be left behind and forgotten. In case left behind and forgotten, or not redeemed or salvaged, the past haunts the present and the future. The wounds of the soul do not heal without the erasure of the scars. However, for Lehi, the scars of the past never heal. Lehi says “My adventure is a scar of our society, it is an unseen scar, those who see it close their eyes, they shut their mouths, they run away as if they have seen a ghost, they do not regard it as a reality.” (55) When Lehi looks behind, she sees a total sum of chaos that does not emancipate her from her paralyzed state. Her escape does not bestow a real escape from the pains in the past and at present.

What brings Temo and Alan to the idea of death is “the failure of Eros, lack of fulfillment in life, which enhances the instinctual value of death” (*Eros and Civilization* 98). They have dedicated their full life to the salvation of their folks.

However, Temo has ended up with imprisonment of fifteen years and Alan has gone through another form of imprisonment. To Freud, when Eros, the instinct of survival, the desire for life and achievement is suppressed by a life of repetitive regression, the death drive emerges from obscurity and launches a rebellion. However, this pattern does not work in Temo's and Alan's cases because when life in the past has been such a burden ending up with frustration, life at present become a tribute to death. "As long as there is the uncomprehended and unconquered flux of time-senseless loss, being contains the seeds of destruction which perverts good to evil and vice versa" (110). Marcuse makes a clear difference between unconscious repression (the repression of sexual desire, violence etc.) and surplus repression (the repression posed by the states, by work life, capitalism etc.). To Marcuse, the severity of surplus repression provides the standard of measurement of how much an individual or a group is victimized (80). The distinction between the unconscious repression and surplus repression can be defined like the one biological and historical sources of human suffering. Since violence is part of everyday life among Kurdish people, they either experience it themselves or hear about someone who has been exposed to it throughout their life. The events of violence as both a collective and an individual experience continue to poison the future of these people as well. Their repression is not only innate and natural, but it is also social, political and historical. That is why their attempts for a freer life diverge towards directions they do not desire to pursue.

In his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud points out that traumatic events that occur in one's life have their effects as repetitive happenings that are not avoidable because the traumatized person feels retraumatized again and again by seeing the spirit left behind the trauma as his fate or destiny. In his work, Freud underlines how the mind has a strong tendency towards pleasure and does whatever it

can to avoid unpleasure. However, under circumstances of survival, the mind gets a shield called the reality principle and tries to endure unpleasure for as long as it can till it moves to the realm of pleasure again (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 9-10). To Freud, traumatic neuroses give way to subsequent illnesses. The patient of a trauma re-experiences at least the fright of the trauma either in real life or in dreams or in both. That is to say, they go on to suffer from reminiscences. This repetition compulsion prevents survival and maintenance of life. Freud observed this situation in many of his patients, who insisted on not recovering, which brought about not only a recurrence of the illness, but also the scolding of the patients by the therapist. Freud observes this also in the lives of some normal people. “The impression that is given is of being pursued by a malignant fate or possessed by some ‘daemonic’ power” says Freud (21). And this compulsion to repeat dominates the pleasure principle. We can remember Lehi’s case. She is a prostitute, hating to have sex with her clients. Each time, she feels as if she is being raped. While having sex with a man she met in Sweden, she felt as if she was again being raped although she really desires the sexual intercourse. This can be understood through her following words: “When he touched my body, I recalled the moment when those policemen in that strange house unleashed their smashing bodies over my tender body and I got frustrated.” (*Lehi* 109). The appearance of that violent rape at such a moment of romance is just one of the numerous examples of how Lehi’s effort to experience happiness is hindered by her past traumatic experience. She says: “Though physical wounds leave some scars, mental scars are even worse; they never leave you in peace and overwhelms you with endless pain.” (14)

The compulsion to recall pain, Freud attributes to thanatos or death drive.

Similarly, Temo is completely driven by thanatos, but not eros. He wants to

exterminate himself as well as those around himself. At one moment, he confesses this through his following words while he was imaginarily talking to his friend Alan:

“I don’t want to come to Sweden with you. The only place where I would like to go is prison. The prison is my homeland, my country, and my world. I have got used to living here for 15 years, I cannot exist somewhere else; everywhere else is foreign to me and hurts me.” (122-123)

Cathy Caruth a writer of trauma and its after-effects has investigated whether this repetition of the traumatic experience occurs knowingly or unknowingly. In her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, Caruth refers to Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism*. As a Jew who was evicted by Nazis from the place where he was born, Freud had gone through a trauma. He shared the trauma of the Jews just by being born as Jewish. He didn’t choose it. So, Caruth points it out “history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas” (Caruth 24). Lehi, Temo and Alan had no authority over the determination of their identity. However, they endured all its complexities and the problems brought about by it. Each of them was hindered at different times from their attempts to bring salvation to their people and thus to themselves.

There are numerous ways the past haunts the present and future of these characters. Lehi cannot get assimilated in her new life, to her new name and identity in Stockholm. Lehi says to herself:

“I have got rid of all the atrocities and tragedies of life. However, I was not comfortable even in here. Some nights, I am woken up by scary nightmares and find my body soaked to skin due to sweating. Sometimes, I fall into deep dream, go back to past times getting away from the present.

Sometimes, I feel myself as a child and play with the kids in the village.
Sometimes, I find myself walking up to the mountains with my weapons girded on my body. Sometimes I see that I am a whore strolling from café to café to find a client and hating myself sleeping with ugly men with disgusting saliva in their mouth” (*Lehî* 114).

In Stockholm, one day *Lehî* finds herself among a crowd of demonstrators mostly consisting of Kurds. She feels a deep sense of belonging and cannot help joining them. Having gone stray away from the group that she really felt part of, she is now back in the place where she really wants to be. Actually, she tries to forget and erase all the traces of her past, but she fails to do so. Or perhaps she chooses to fail to do so. However, her fragmented identities do not let this sense of belonging to last as she notes: “On the one side it was easy to maintain my life with my new identity; on the other side, I was torn apart by my two and even three separate identities.” (173)
What all these characters are going through is defined as post-traumatic stress disorder. Psychiatry, psychoanalysis and neurobiology have been increasingly interested on the effects of violence in psychic disorder.

The way Alan, *Lehî* and Temo perform their individualism does not correspond to the liberal concept of individualism. This is the kind of an individualism in which they are drawn into a chain of unchosen events. Judith Butler disputes with the liberal concept of individualism. To Butler, being an individual not affected by the destiny of the other people is an impasse not only for oppressed people but also for all people. With a prescriptive tone of voice, Butler notes that distance and lack of concrete bounds do not and actually should not prevent a sense of receptivity to the suffering of the others. (Ab)normally, physical proximity is viewed as a condition for knowing the other people and facing their pain. However, Butler

talks about an ethical bondage of solidarity that (should) emerge beyond space and time. Butler's proposal is as it follows:

“Ethical obligations do not emerge only within the contexts of established communities that are gathered within borders, are unified by the same language, and/or constitute a people or nation. What necessitates this ethical receptivity is the precarity of life. Obligations to those who are far away as well as to those who are proximate cross linguistic and national boundaries and are only possible by virtue of visual or linguistic translations, which include temporal and spatial dislocations” (“Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation” 137).

What is happening at some point in the world is also elsewhere. And this condition of prevalence is not limited by consent, an established agreement, boundary or a bond. This is exactly what Butler means by precarity. Precarity means that one's life is also the life of others and this unchosen exposition to what is happening out there in the life of the other does not only sustain life but it may also destroy it. Precarity involves the difficulty and necessity of an ethical bondage indefinable by legally set boundaries, contracts or relations. In Butler's words, “I am already bound to you, and this is what it means to be the self I am, receptive to you in ways that I cannot fully predict or control” (141). That is why we can choose where we live, what we do, with whom to live. However, we cannot choose how we feel toward humanity and towards those with whom we cohabit the earth. Looking from this perspective, Alan's inability to control the extent of his psychological deterioration can be understood better. He has chosen to go elsewhere away from a place where as a Kurd he would have been more oppressed and humiliated. He has the chance to do what he really wants. At least he can write despite all the oppositions from his wife. He is

known as a Kurdish writer in his country. This is something that he would probably not have been able to realize if he had stayed in his country. Practical changes in his life have not blessed him with a positive state of being, though. Joy, peace and rest are not feelings that are commonly experienced in his life. And he goes to his country just for a conference and finds himself in a chain of events. He has to save the life of a woman forced to be a prostitute, who used to be a guerilla fighter. He falls in love with this woman who is in a total psychological ruin. He kills a man in an unfortunate accident. He is literally stuck by the unchosen character of earthly cohabitation.

Butler mentions that nearness and farness do not create a difference in how intensively one is affected by turmoil. However, in the case of Alan, there is not the state of farness. For Alan, it is national nearness which actually reinforces the possibility of being more severely affected by what is happening to his people physically away from him. Similar things can be said about Lehî who has chosen to be an ordinary person after such long time of sheer suffering, fighting, pain and she has escaped from her life in her country and has gone to a country of freedom. In her own words, she has fled to a country of freedoms. However, Lehî's inability to retreat into freedom can be understood better when Butler's words are recalled: "There is an unchosen condition of freedom and that in being free, we affirm something about what is unchosen for us" (143). Lehî chooses to change her name, where she lives, with whom she won't live and which job she won't do any longer. Yet, she cannot choose how she will feel after all the disasters that happened to her and to her people. She cannot open her heart to those men that love her. She cannot befriend Alan, the man who saved her life. She cannot pull herself out of the depression she has uncontrollably found herself in.

When we look at Temo's case, the fact that his insanity is not a biologically pre-given condition, but a result of the torture and violence he went through in prison proves that the question of unchosenness can take even worse dimensions. Though not stated directly in the novel, it can be understood that Temo was receptive to the oppression his people were exposed to. He did not take the route of impassivity against the reality of his people. He resisted against it. He worked for their salvation. However, he was not allowed to reach the end of the road. Temo had his own preferences and choices. However, there were things unchosen for him, which cost him his freedom and his mental health. His life was actually as precarious, vulnerable and threatened as his people, his community. A life in freedom was granted neither for him nor for his people. What has been happening out there to others has happened to him as well.

CHAPTER III: FORCES OF MELANCHOLIA, SUFFERING, SORROW AND PAIN AS THE MAIN THEMES OF KURDISH ARTISTIC PROJECTS

Şener Özmen is a contemporary Kurdish artist living in Diyarbakır. In his own words, he has preferred to live in troubled lands and maintain his artistic production there. In an interview, Şener Özmen, the author of the books which I will try to analyze in this chapter replies the question of “What is peace?” by saying “It is a person’s retreating into his/her little problems now.”² In another interview on his artistic work called *Schizo-Notebook*, the author has a similar statement:

“[...]Not that I was unfamiliar with abrupt cuts. There was a reflection of this in my life and in the geography that I lived in; I was permanently being hacked at, we were being hacked at. Just as it looked like we were attaining inner peace, a bomb would explode at the busiest corner of the city. People kept dying all the time.”³

These two comments from the artist take me to the exact point that I would like to ponder over throughout this chapter. As a derivation of being born into a very troubled society and geography, Kurds have most often not had the chance to experience a sense of peace and retreat into their own life and focus on solutions for an individual, for a family or a personal problem. Such a concentration has always been disrupted by the need to focus on bigger, more societal and more communal troubles. It seems that in Özmen’s writing, one can read the novelization of such an impossibility of evasion from a question which has afflicted Kurds for decades. This chapter has the intention of understanding what are the effects of such a constant

²“How to Tell of Peace to a Living Dove” Interview with Kurdish Artist Şener Özmen.

³ Interview with Şener Özmen by İz Öztat and Azra Tüzünoğlu in the book titled *A Şener Özmen Book*.

paralysis by the unsolved Kurdish problem. While seeking possible answers to such paralysis, the expectation is that an unavoidable involvement in and a compulsive preoccupation with an unceasing problem creates stress, pain and melancholia.

The novels of Özmen will be read with the hypothesis that the Kurdish problem has shaded people's life in the way someone becomes fixated to the lost object and goes through a melancholic suffering rather than mourning over it and replacing another object with the lost one. The inspiration of such an insight has been Sigmund Freud's theories on loss and the human psyche's various reactions to it.

First I will attempt to summarize Özmen's novels notwithstanding the fact that their complex structures do not lend themselves to straightforward resumes.

In the novel called *Spinoza'nın Günlüğü/Spinoza's Diary*, there are numerous characters whose stories take place in different Kurdish regions across Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq. The writer makes use of fake names to refer to these places. However, through the knowledge about the nations of the characters, it is understood that these places are from different Kurdish regions across Mesopotamia. The character Spinoza is barely seen throughout the novel. He can be thought of as the imaginary friend of the characters that appears from time to time. He appears in different settings and partially witnesses the stories of the characters. Perhaps, that is why the book becomes the diaries of Spinoza. Thus, the novel's fragmentary structure suits its mnemonic narration.

The novel starts with the story of Yasin. Yasin is an unsuccessful university student. Then, he becomes a painter, albeit an unsuccessful one. He has problems with his girlfriend, Nurşen and because of emotional problems, he quits university and finds himself back in his hometown called Zex where his parents live. Zex, the place he chooses to escape to, is the homeland of death, betrayal, factions, fear, hatred and

corruption (*Spinoza'nın Günlüğü* 18). It is a place where even cats are shot to death during a gunfight between armed forces at night. Yasin loses his cat to a gunshot, for example. Losses are followed by losses. In Zex, loss is part of the daily life. All of a sudden in the middle of the day, the dead body of a villager can be thrown out in the square of the town. People are indifferent to the idea of death, a kind of death by which even the corpse is deprived of its parts. Within this dark portrayal of the setting, life does not flash a smile at Yasin, either. It is clearly understood that Yasin's father does not like his son because of his failures in life and he constantly humiliates him. To Yasin, Zex is a place deprived of hope where people who have fought on the mountains eventually return and become the modern lawyers, pharmacists and businessmen of "their uncivilized society." And what is worse, Yasin has managed to become nothing (12). Back in Zex, not having managed to have similar achievements, Yasin leads a life of withdrawal and muteness.

Yasin occasionally vomits. He has long sleeps, not only at night but also during the day. He is deeply affected by this separation. However, he looks for some resolutions, as well. He tries to fall in love, yet he cannot. As a solution, he joins the guerilla. However, Yasin's memories of unrest, loss violence and disruption do not cease to haunt him. Yasin always recalls such memories of unrest, loss, violence and disruption. His personal past is not exempt from such questions, either. He notes that he is tortured while in prison. Before Yasin joins the armed forces, he is constantly called to the police station in the village and is violently warned against becoming a terrorist. He cannot become one, but he cannot get rid of his ideal to become one, either. Yasin's life is full of such fixations. The depictions of Zex with sudden and unidentified murders, the constant psychological and physical oppression of army members and thus uncanniness of local people remind one of the Kurdish provinces in

Turkey during 1990s and in 2000s⁴. In such an atmosphere, Yasin's father has constant attempts to discourage Yasin from any involvement in political or military movement. However, Yasin has a friend called Musa, who becomes an embodiment of ideal Kurd for Yasin. Yasin both hates and adores Musa for his ideological competence. Musa constantly reads about political unrest in the region in his shanty house in the non-Muslim district of Zex where mostly Assyrian people live. There is an ugly sort of hatred against this group of people among the Muslim residents of Zex.

Yasin goes to study painting at the university. He has some problems in getting adapted to life outside his hometown. Yasin falls in love with Nurşen. Nurşen cheats on Yasin having an affair with Sinan, his home-mate. Yasin sees them having sex in the university campus while trying to find his lighter to light his cigarette, and he gets desolated.

There are three sisters called Peyman, Viyan and Hêliz and their oppressive brothers Mîran and Mîral. These young siblings live with their mother in poverty. They have lost their father in a firefight, too. Hearing the sounds of gunshots is a routine of their life in Xoy. Even on a day when they celebrate the coming of spring, the elderly of Xoy cry recalling the wars, massacres, exploitations and death that have taken place in Xoy (84). Seeing the photograph of the South Iraqi Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani in one of the houses in Xoy, it is understood that Xoy is an

⁴ Due to the counter-terrorism policies of the Republic of Turkey during 1990s, Kurdish provinces were under state of emergency for more than a decade. During these years, all basic civil and political rights including freedom of travel, freedom of speech and the right to organize were suspended in these regions, and there was a curfew after sundown. Also, illegal and secret organizations were involved in illegal detentions and killings. During those years, many Kurdish villages were set on fire with their residents being left homeless. Kurdish politicians and intellectuals were not allowed to participate in the political arena. Imprisoned Kurds or other opponents were exposed to most terrible forms of violence.

imaginary place in Iraqi Kurdistan. Peyman insistently says that she is an ordinary woman and leaves it to the imagination of the reader to think of the concept of ordinariness in a region caught in continual war (90). What she means by this ordinariness is the banality of violence in everyday life.

And we read about Simko, who is in love with Bala, a Persian woman. Simko is from Kardox. Now, they are students in Bad. Bad can be thought as a city in Iran. Before long, it is learned that Bala who is thought to be deeply in love with Simko is actually a prostitute. After she is raped by her cousin, she is forced to work as a prostitute by him. Bala loves Simko, but she has to earn money in this way. Bala decides not to see Simko for a while as she plans to go abroad. However, Simko, unaware of her plans, thinks that Bala has left her. He is desolated by this sudden separation.

Then we read about the two friends, Helbest and Mamo. Crippled Helbest is a poet and an intellectual teaching Kardoxi grammar and giving lectures in social sciences to people in the place called Dê, a place in Syria, known as a part of the South Kurdistan. However, Helbest does all these against the oppressive surveillance committee in Syria. He has a challenging friendship with Mamo. It is based on distrust. Mamo leaves Helbest. Helbest loses his best friend unexpectedly. Mamo is politically a very engaged man. He has to take a flight to Europe. Helbest sometimes visits a family, who has a daughter called Newroz. Through an interpretation of his dream, it can be understood that the crippled man is in love with the young girl Newroz. In his dream, he almost rapes her with his crippled leg which turns into a black snake covering her fragile body. Newroz turns into a white dove and flies away (133).

Newroz falls in love with a Greek doctor called Asclepius. In their love, there is no place for a union, either. Newroz does not sleep with him to preserve her virginity and they get separated. It cannot be a coincidence that the writer has every separation unfollowed by a union.

There is also a character called Silêman. This man is involved in some business of smuggling. He is a terrible misogynist harassing his wife and young sister. It is learnt that it is Silêman who organizes the bomb attack in Xoy. The one that is an organic part of the homeland, Silêman, is again the one who destroys the homeland and makes it unpeaceful, unreliable and thus uncanny.

About the first novel summarized so far, it can be said that the plot is full of tragedy, separation, death, distrust, suffering and sadness. The derivations and causes of these negativities and despair will be elaborated on in the further parts of this chapter.

In the second novel titled *Kifayetsiz Hikayeler Müsabakası*, there are fewer characters and the plot has a less complex structure. The anti-hero is Sertac Karan. In Turkish, the name Sertac is normally pronounced and written as Sertaç. However, the writer especially underlines that the anti-hero is called Sertac, but not Sertaç. This change in the spelling of his name looks like a phonetic distortion. However, the word is originally spelled as Sertac. It can be guessed that the writer uses the original transcription of the word as a verbal irony. The word “sertac” is an adjective meaning “held in high-esteem.” However, the anti-hero is not someone the writer seems to hold in high esteem. He is a character of failures. The book is full of numerous epithets of disqualification such as “ill-fated, vain, anti-social, etc.”. These epithets added to his name are markers of his failures. It is interesting that the writer has a positive name but negative epithets for his character. Perhaps, the former refers to the

ideal Sertac, but the latter refers to all forms of negative shapes his character takes as a result of his experiences. Or in contrast, it can be thought that the writer has positive feelings towards his unsuccessful character and really holds him in esteem with special respect paid to Sertac's being a conscientious man. Because Sertac, as a man of failures, is a "conclusion generated in the laboratories of colonization" (*Kifayetsiz Hikayeler Müsabakası* 75). Seeing his character as a victim of war, the writer perhaps sympathizes with Sertac and names him as such with respectful feelings.

Sertac Karan is a failed writer who is constantly preparing some stories for writing contests. His failure as a writer is the reason why the book is titled as *Contest of Inconclusive Stories*. In his own story, stories of crises engendered by the political crises in the Kurdish region are narrated. These stories never reach a conclusion. They are articulated within a fragmented and non-linear structure of narration.

Sertac is a failed teacher at a Religious High School. He can be said to have failed because he is not like the other teachers. He can form regular relations neither with his students nor his friends. At work, he feels as if he is a member of a community that he does not belong to. He suffers total alienation. His father forces him to work here. The writer defines this situation as the concept of power by Michel Foucault. "As Foucault says, power is everywhere." (158). His parents are the first people to intrude in and assault his life and his individuality. He never feels comfortable in his family house.

Something good happens in Sertac's life. In the beginning of the novel, Sertac Karan dates with Yasemin. However, he falls in love with Yasemin's sister, Merasim. Yasemin and Merasim are daughters of an apolitical, apparently nationalist Turkish family. Yasemin has more leftist tendencies and she is in constant conflict with her family. Sertac and Merasim get married, but the marriage is a failure because Sertac

cannot sustain relationship with woman. Merasim becomes one of the lost objects that he is fixated on. Merasim abandons him because she cannot break through his estranged solitude. She constantly humiliates him. His only luxury is to have some time on his own while writing. To Merasim, he should spend all his time with her. He loses Merasim and he cannot become a writer, either. Also, he is an unsuccessful teacher. Sertac also loses a beloved uncle who gets shot by the soldiers. Loss prevails in his hometown Zerdav. Another thing that is not possessed by Sertac is his identity. He never feels he owns an identity as a Kurdish young man. In school, everyday they have to repeat the words 'how happy is he who says I am a Turk'. However, he knows for sure that he is not a Turk. "That meant they were not like them, or they were like them but not completely, there was something they lacked, but slowly they would attain those that they lacked" (50). Sometimes, in their lesson at school, they are expected to watch the dead corpses of the guerillas lying down in their school garden. Theirs is a violent schooling. Another point worth mentioning is that the narrator repeatedly says that the story was not over for Sertac. It can be claimed that this attention drawn to the inconclusiveness of the story which is also reflected on the title of the book alludes to the inconclusiveness of the Kurdish problem on many lands.

This sense of incompleteness, lack and loss is directly related with the feeling of melancholia that nurtures Sertac's failure, depression and inability to become an good writer, husband, son, or friend. Sertac's weakness which seems to arise from his obsession with the turmoil in his country, his relations with the people around him, his bad childhood, his failed relation with his wife is both the cause and the result of how he is regarded as a submissive and obedient man by others. As a man he is not mature and strong enough, either. Submission and obedience are against the nature of masculinity especially in his geography.

Sertac cannot fall into sleep as his sleeps are occupied by nightmares. He loathes himself and cannot bear to see himself in the mirror. This feeling of loath and hatred against the self is an integral part of melancholia. The melancholic loser projects the hatred against the lost object onto himself because he identifies himself with the lost object. Sertac is completely identified with all the things and people that he has lost. He feels their lack as the melancholic subject.

After getting separated from his beloved, Sertac's mental health gets worse and he loses his self-confidence even more. He gets clinical support from a doctor called Sarin Zavaryan. However, he desperately falls in love with his therapist. However, this becomes another failure in his life. His love for her is not reciprocal. The speeches between him and his therapist reveals a lot about how and why Sertac suffers from a mental malady.

Then, Sertac takes a large step towards becoming a writer and he goes to Germany. He goes there for something like a training and to join some conferences. He meets some writers there, but cannot connect with them, either. He cannot write and focus on his improvement as a writer although he is hosted as a guest and has no other responsibilities there.

At the end of the novel, we find Sertac back in the town where he works as a teacher. Back in his own, which he notices has suffered a strange metamorphosis, people walk backwards. Several things have changed for the worse. Everything, all the hopes for a revolution, has turned upside down. This time, another narrator, who seems to be Sertac's student, informs the reader about Sertac's moving. He makes plans to move to an unknown location. However, one of his students, called Ali Osman, kills him. The student is forced by some other people to kill his teacher. Actually, Ali Osman is the only student who loves Sertac as a teacher. However, the people who make Ali

Osman kill Sertac probably plan him to be the murderer because they want to punish Ali Osman as a person who loves Sertac. To these people, probably, their enemy's friend is their enemy.

There is an affinity between Özmen's socio-political background and the themes in his novels and so it is necessary to talk about the role of the collective unconscious in the formation of his literary art. According to Freud, "even for mental life, everything past is preserved" and has its influences on the subconscious of the individual (*Civilization and its Discontent* 6). These past experiences which are always preserved in good condition-though they may not be clearly remembered all the time- may be one of the source of our sufferings. As the main target of the culture has been to lay restrictions on never satisfiable pleasure, sexuality and human relations, humans have always had to deal with the struggle against culture. When you think about the extra burdens created for those subaltern groups such as the problem of identity, humiliation, being exposed to violence, dispossession, displacement and all the other agonies inflicted by the state apparatuses, police, soldiers and all its other apparatuses, it seems definitely inevitable to agree with Freud when he says that "it seems certain that our present-day civilization does not inspire in us a feeling of well-being" (21).

According to Freud, the individual performs his life as an agent of id, ego and superego. However, to him, the unconscious which is the place of the suppressed and forgotten also has an unexpectedly active role in shaping our life. Now that it is the place of the suppressed and forgotten, it can be said to be constructed not only by the individual but also the society, namely the civilization and culture. Carl Gustav Jung names the unconscious as collective unconscious because different from Freud, he thinks that "[some parts of] the unconscious is not individual, but universal" (*The*

Integration of The Personality 52). The contents and reflections of this collective unconscious can be observed in archetypes because in the conscious realm, the subconscious partly formed by the collective comes into being. Jung's remark that "[...] the archetypes appear in a form that usually reveals in an unmistakable way the element of judgment and valuation introduced by conscious elaboration" (54) supports my claim that the dark recesses of the Kurdish unconscious are an integral part of the Kurdish novel. To Jung must be added the psychoanalytic theories of mourning and melancholia to provide the tools of analyses for Özmen's novels.

It is incessantly haunting to be a Kurd because not being able to speak one's own native language is an absence in terms of identity. As this absence is not a resolved and the natural process of mourning over this absence and loss is postponed to an unspecified moment, it has created a melancholic condition experienced as a pathological unending grief for Kurds, no need to say those who knowingly consider it important to define themselves as Kurd. So I wish to talk about the belated solution of this problem and its relation to the distinctive features of the state of melancholia. In his essay "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud attempts to draw a distinction between mourning and melancholia, with the first being a successful process completing its mission while the latter being a failed one:

"A correlation of melancholia and mourning seems justified by the general picture of the two conditions. Moreover, wherever it is possible to discern the external influences in life which have brought each of them about, this exciting cause proves to be the same in both. Mourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as fatherland, liberty, an ideal, and so

on. As an effect of the same influences, melancholia instead of a state of grief develops in some people into a morbid pathological disposition.” (164)

It is highly possible that the source of the painful writing for Özmen is being born into a world in which he is and people he is mostly familiar with are denied being who they are. That is, there is an uncompensated loss in question, which in turn creates a feeling of melancholia, which is a moral act. Mourning cannot be performed for this loss because every loss is chained to another loss; every loss is the messenger of another loss. Countless losses whirl within the vicious circle of history.

The further implications of Freud’s analysis can totally be seen in what is going on as part of the Kurdish problem. While the bodies of “lost” soldiers killed during an attack between soldiers and guerrillas are delivered to their families, buried and mourned after, the same process does not take place for the families of killed and ‘lost’ guerrillas. The guerrilla dies and his/her dead body often vanishes into nothing. There is not an address to go and mourn over his/her corpse. A similar exemplification can be made through an essay called “A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia.” To the extent that ideal whiteness for Asian Americans (and other groups of colour) remain unattainable, process of assimilation are suspended, conflicted and unresolved” (Eng and Han 6). The racial melancholia in this case can be observed in the national melancholia of Kurds.

Now that to be a Kurd and to know it present a constantly suspended state of mourning which eventually turns into a melancholic mode of life, the reaction of the Kurd who chooses to be aware of his/her identity cannot remain a mute one. As Anne Anlin Cheng, who is an Associate Professor of English and American Literature at the University of California, finds out in her interdisciplinary study called *the Melancholy of Race*, identification with one’s problematized national, racial or sexual identity is a

melancholic act. To Cheng, “[there is a] transformation from grief to grievance, from suffering injury to speaking out against the injury [in the case of this melancholic identification with race or nation]” (3). The Kurdish novels discussed in this study can be seen as a social realm where the grief of Kurdish identification turns into a grievance, namely a protest against this agony. For the similar situation in American literature, Cheng notes that “while American culture romanticizes and naturalizes “the cult of vanishing Indians”, for Indians or other black people, it has been a mission to talk about how damaging racism has been” (14). Literature becomes where the unspeakable is spoken. Özmen has taken over the initiative to talk about the troubled, problematic, failed and depressed characters of his nation. He has chosen to be most sincere and open and unravel the pathology of an ongoing war. As the author of such a nation, he has taken a leading role for the speakability of this melancholic mode. As a writer of what is labelled as minor literature, Kurdish writers take over a political stance while uttering each word on the trauma of a whole nation.

When the definition regarding minor literature by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the co-writers of *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* is considered, it can be seen that a wide scope of Kurdish literature best suits to this specification. Their definition of the minor literature as that “[in which] everything is political” and that “[in which] everything takes on a collective value” especially matches with the current situation of Kurdish literature (Deleuze and Guattari 17). That is why most of the Kurdish writers make frequent use of the idea that “the words [are] master[s] and they directly give birth to the image” (21). Every articulation is an attempt to turn this melancholia into an image. That is why most of the Kurdish writers like Özmen, Ehmedê Xanî, Mîr Celadet Bedirxan, Mehmed uzun or Helîm Yusiv become tellers and narrators of a real story. In his essay on the storyteller, Walter Benjamin notes

“experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn” (84). Kurdish literature is mostly at play with a similar role. Each writer writes down with a motive to pass on experience across generations. These writers take the place of the storyteller who keeps faith in the past (Benjamin 86) and tells their fictional stories which bear the traces of the past disasters and which are reminiscent of past and present worlds. Like Balzac of *Human Comedy*, they are the self appointed scribes of social historical passages. Deleuze and Guattari make this plain through the following words:

There isn't a subject; there are only collective assemblages of enunciation, and literature expresses these acts insofar as they're not imposed from without and insofar as they exist only as dialogical powers to come or revolutionary forces to be constructed. (17)

In Özmen's, Cewerî's and Bulut's writing, there are the reflections of such a moral act, it seems. The bitterness of social and political realities dwells on the centre of the literary content and all the stories overlap on the same theme of pain.

Then, it is not surprising to read that Yasin associates the emotional disappointment of being betrayed by his beloved Nurşen with his political disappointments as a young Kurdish man: “Lighter. Spring. Illusion. Reality. No! Sinan and Nurşen, Nurşen and Sinan... Anger, death, departure, mountain, lighter, the black snake getting out of Sinan's ass was about to be thrown on Yasin, hissss!” (*Spinoza'nın Günlüğü* 153).

Although it is the writer who narrates the inner voice of Yasin, one can see that a very routine feeling of disappointment in a love affair can be related or identified with political frustrations. Or maybe the intensity of personal frustrations is nurtured by that of social frustrations. And to take a distance from such disillusionment, Yasin thinks of going to the mountains and becoming a fighter. To get over their

disappointments in the civil life, some Kurds have gone to mountains and been fighting against those who have imposed fatal curses on their destiny. With pathological compulsiveness, Yasin thinks of mountains as a route of escape from his emotional devastation.

All the love stories in the novel called *Spinoza'nın Günlüğü* are stories loaded with agony and suffering. Characters betray each other, have to leave each other, or can not love each other due to some obstacles. However, what makes these love stories even more tragic is the obsessive fixation of each especially male character on the lost object of love. Helbest's love for Newroz, for instance, is one of the impossible love stories in the novel. Among the symptoms of this love full of suffering is Helbest's sleeplessness. It is such a severely saddening impossibility that Helbest associates his love with the love of Werther for Lotte. Werther kills himself because he knows that it is impossible and will never be possible to attain Lotte's love. On the wall, he does not hang himself but hangs those that give him pain:

“I hanged all my fears on the wall. I put Newroz's eyes, as well. I hanged Mamo's departure on the wall. I hanged all my fears. I saw my sister in my dream, turned my dream into a bullet and put it on the wall, too. My stepfather used to hit me, I was just a kid, I was afraid and I was crying; I turned my tears into revenge and put them on the wall. The people of Kardox were fighting and the wolves of the trees were howling; I turned the wolves into a gum and stuck it on the wall and I repeatedly whumbed my head against the wall” (134-135).

In this way, Helbest cannot get departed from all the sorrows of his life. Hanging his sorrows on the wall, pain turns into a wave that perpetually lingers in his life and thus haunts his life. Indeed, he refuses to take a flight from his suffering by fixing it on the

wall like the burial of Poe's black cat on the wall. The only thing Helbest consciously thinks he is achieving is writing. However, he describes the act of writing as such: "We do not exist and what we write only splits our non-existence." (136). Even his writing, the thing he believes he can manage, succeed and achieve, is focused on his failures, his lack and his inability to exist in life.

It is possible to see such reflections on loss and suffering following the extermination of a group of people in many moments of the novel called *Spinoza'nın Günlüğü*. The way extermination at a communal scale bears an apocalyptic power on individual lives can also be understood through Peyman's words, when a group of people in her small hometown are inhumanely killed during a bomb attack on a day when they are celebrating the coming of spring, traditionally called as "newroz" in Kurdish culture:

"Yes, this was the destiny of ordinary people; they were destroyed as a whole, and shattered all together. I am breathless and suffocated in this room. One day, we/I can be blown up like this, the pieces of our bodies can be collected and buried in a grave, no this is not a remote chance. Where can we go? What if, as Kavafis says, this city follows us, what will we do? Which homeland will embrace us, us, ordinary people with all our wounds and deafening sounds of explosions? After that attack and numerous deaths, what do budgies think and how do people have sex, are naked bodies ever aroused? I really wonder if they can do it or not." (94-95)

Zex, Yasin's homeland, becomes a place of unrest and chaos as it is portrayed by the narrator:

"Sleep was slowly descending on Zex. A sleep not exactly like real sleep, far from normal, on a knife-edge, restless, incomplete, encircled by nightmares,

full of fear, with its heart in its mouth, “unusual” as they (people of Zex) would say...” (71)

It seems that the gravity of the loss is felt in every realm of life. Not only on the psychic being of the characters but also in settings, in time, characters feel the agony of the unrest caused by loss of peace, loss of the right to live in freedom, loss the homeland or loss of the beloved. This state of loss and the fear of losing turn all the characters in *Spinoza'nın Günlüğü* an epitome of loss, failure and suffering. In *Kifayetsiz Hikâyeler Müsabakası*, the same theme has a similar role: the role of turning Sertac's life into a total deterioration, which ends up in his death. Sertac experiences all the symptoms of melancholia. He is weak, mute and passive. He is lazy. He is not stiff and masculine and does not have any sort of authority over his life, his career, people in his life, e.g. his wife Merasim. He cannot finalize his stories. He cannot go further than writing only a few words on the same page even after spending several days in his study room. A paragraph from the novel is an evidence of the lethargy and sloth that have occupied his life:

“He sat on the black leather couch and took his pencil with the excitement of a rarely appearing inspiration. He could write only one word in the middle of the paper and understood that he would never be able to conclude his story. He could understand that his life, his meaningless life was a sum of inconclusive stories that he actually never experienced and that he was one of those inconclusive stories. He was talking to himself: “ No! No! I will not deal with the reasons. I will not suffocate myself in things that devastated my life. I will not put blame on anyone or anything. No, all this does not arise from the fact that I am oppressed and humiliated or from the calamities and fatalities that make me speak like this; I will not put the blame on the

conditions that existed before I existed. This is my reality. The noise of the war planes has not made me senile. My fragmented mind must have been confused and perplexed by some images from my childhood and youth.”

(Kifayetsiz Hikayeler Müsabakası 74)

In these words, Sertac enumerates all the reasons that drove him mad, depressed, melancholic and that turned all his authorship, masculinity, marriage, friendship, childhood, adolescence and adulthood into a failure. He confesses to all the barriers that stopped his story to come to an end. In the novel, the first signifier of his muteness, passivation and withdrawal and deactivation is the difference in the way his name is phonetically formed. A noun, which is to be pronounced more firmly as “Sertaç” is coded as “Sertac.” Even his name is deformed and strained. And the writer continuously remarks that his story is not over yet. The cruel emphasis over the incompleteness of Sertac sorrowful story is strengthened with the notes put by the writer at the end of the novel. To draw attention to the vagueness and inconclusiveness of Sertac’s story, the writer finalizes the book with notes defined as “incomplete.” This can be regarded as an emphasis laid on the unfulfillment of Kurdish problem and individual lives interrupted and discontinued by this horror story.

To Freud, success or failure in replacements for the lost object and identification with a new object instead or the loss itself has an important role in determining the form taken by the ego and it makes an essential contribution towards building up what is called character (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 28). Sertac forms an identification with loss and the idea or possibility of loss rather than finding a replacement for it. Freud calls this experience as “the transformation of object-libido into narcissistic libido” (30). And this cathexis into the lost object which was not

replaced by a new one only serves to heighten melancholia. It incessantly disturbs the loser and incites a sense of guilt in him. This is a frequent experience in neurotics whose feelings of inferiority are well known. Freud says the outrageous and cruel attitude of the ego ideal (becoming a good lover and writer) against the ego of the loser fixated and identified with the lost object is observed similarly in obsessional neurosis and melancholia (51). The ego who has not found a substitute for his cathexis and still mourns over his loss feels guilty and submits to the punishment. Sertac would not fail as a writer, husband or son or whatever if he did not feel a sense of guilt. He would form a means of resistance if he did not feel guilty. He doesn't resist against the fatal realities of his people. He feels guilty and yields to all the punishments that these fatal realities impose on him. Freud describes melancholia as such kind of self-deterioration:

“An object-choice, an attachment of the libido to a particular person, had at one time existed; then, owing to a real slight or disappointment coming from this loved person, the object-relationship was shattered. The result was not the normal one of a withdrawal of the libido from this object and a displacement of it on to a new one, but something different...[T]he free libido... was withdrawn into the ego...to establish an identification of the ego with the abandoned object. Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego... The ego wishes to incorporate this object into itself, and the method by which it would do so, in this oral or cannibalistic stage, is by devouring it. (“Mourning and Melancholia” 248-250)

The state of melancholia, being a pathological one, pulls the subject back into the harmful desires of the ego. The melancholic subject—like Sertac—feeds on the lost object and get himself resemble to the loss. Like the loved one or the desired one

disappeared, he has himself in a state of self-improvement. After all, “his melancholia does not simply denote a condition of grief but is, rather, a legislation of grief” (Cheng 8). With his unfinishable and unmanageable resentment and agony legislated, he has drawn himself into a state of continuous deterioration, an ultimate dissipation.

What keeps his fears alive is the all the rumor in their neighborhood. In places in his hometown, the feeling of the uncanny, that feeling of danger and threat you feel for the place you are most familiar with intensifies the idea of getting disrupted and smashed. His hometown which is both heimlich as the place that gave him and his community life and unheimlich⁵ as the place which made them suffer, imposed certain frames of subjectivity on them, denied their being as they were, humiliated them and went so far as to destruct them unless they had certain qualities that they were expected to have. This claim can be strongly supported when one considers Sertac’s haunting relationship with his father, his troubled affair with the historical realities of his community. Though it has not happened to him yet, he was afraid of the least possibility that he would be detained like the other people:

“He theoretically knew the tyranny inflicted by those sons of a bitch. He read about it. He didn’t want to be detained by them because he knew what they would do to those who refused to speak. He didn’t want to be naked in the presence of those monsters. He didn’t want a club inserted into his ass and to be forced to lick it. He didn’t want to be forced for confession by having to witness torture exerted on his parents. He didn’t want to feel the electrical

⁵ The term unheimlich means uncanny in English. Sigmund Freud defined this word as “that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us once very familiar” (1).

shock in his body, balls, underarms, fingertips, nails and penis. (*Kifayetsiz Hikayeler Müsabakası* 69)

And all such fear and anxiety were the reasons why he withdrew from society and never left home. He was captivated by fear, looking into the empty walls all day in vain. Paralyzed, he couldn't utter a word to his wife Merasim, and could write no more than a few words on blank pages.

Let us now try another perspective to look at melancholia this time through the lenses of Žižek. To Žižek, there is something theoretically wrong with this (re)assertion of melancholy as the unending suffering and neurotic fixation for the lost object. To him, “the object-cause of desire is originally, in a constitutive way, lacking while melancholy interprets this lack as a loss, as if the object lacking were once possessed and then lost” (“Mourning and Melancholia” 143). That is to say, there is something wrong with the objective understanding of melancholy, the tendency that melancholy is in pursuit of the one that is lost, usually the ethnic roots. And there is a quite enticing motive behind this tendency. Žižek notes that what pulls one into this state of melancholia is the fact that one can possess the lost object unconditionally in so far as it is lost by saying “[W]hat we never possessed can also never be lost, so the melancholic in his unconditional fixation on the lost object in a way possesses it in its very loss” (144). From this point of view, the effect of this lack confused with a loss arises as melancholic state. However, the cause of desire for this lack instead of lost object is its idealization and full possession. It wouldn't be a linguistically restrictive definition if we assemble all these problems and troubles under the same category of identity problem and say that all these problems are results of an identity question. The reason why I name it as such is to facilitate thinking of identity as an object of loss. From this aspect, the Kurd who is melancholic because of loss of his/her lost

identity will momentarily recover through the creative act as exemplified by many Kurdish songs, poems, novels or short stories.

To understand the discrepancy between what is formed in the artistic realm and what takes place in real settings, reading Eva Tettenborn, a professor of literatures of oppressed cultures, was very illuminative to work out the relation between pain and resistance. Eva Tettenborn looks at African-American literature in her article called “Melancholia as Resistance” and draws conclusions challenging the idea that melancholia is a pathological disability that pulls one into death and suicide.

According to Tettenborn, black melancholia has acted as a way of ensuring memory against the white dominant culture. Like the African-American writer, it seems it has been the moral duty of the Kurdish writer as well to keep these record of numerous and unidentified losses throughout the history of Kurdish movement.

Writing inspired by melancholia emancipates the writer and his/her readers from the oppression of talking about a history forgetful of all its losses. Though this is not a literal emancipation, it at least calls those that were lost to the mind. As Eva Tettenborn underlines in her following words how the articulation of melancholy creates a demand for subjecthood:

“With its focus on the single slave, African American literary melancholia has sought to explore personal resistance to slavery while simultaneously elevating the slave from his or her perceived status as a member of a homogenous group of objectified beings. The adoption of the melancholic position is the slave's transgression against his or her own enforced non-agency, and the slave's melancholia emerges as an assertion of black subjecthood. In this sense, melancholia in contemporary African American literature becomes constitutive of the self rather than exclusively disabling”

(112).

The Kurdish literature testifies to the never ending energy of the conventions of agitation through the melancholic transfer and conveyance of the past. Melancholia has preserved the record of loss and violence in the past and created a need and desire of resistance in the future.

In the article “The Anthropology of Pain” in her book called *Critical Events*, Veena Das seeks answers for the question whether pain destroys the capacity to communicate or it creates a moral community out of those who have suffered. To Das, sharing the pain and making the body suffer has a function of preserving memory: “Society puts its mark on the individual and the mark becomes an obstacle to forgetting —the body becomes the memory” (179). A law is written on body and soul. Kurdish art has taken such an initiative of perpetuating the act of remembrance. Pain becomes the medium through which memory is formed and enlivened. Songs of sadness, mourning, literary narrations of lives failing in a way similar to what goes on in reality become totems that keep the Kurdish community together. That becomes an emblem of their identity, unity and clan. Memory is kept alive not only through the totemic images on the walls. It is not only kept in books. It is not only transferred by words through the mouth. It is not expressed only in songs, requiems or elegies. It is printed on their bodies, on their flesh and on their soul. Suffering pain acts as a price of belonging to the community. That is why even those who do not actually suffer from pain are made to suffer. To look at the marked body and its relation to memory, one can evaluate Nietzsche’s reflections on the relation between individual and society. Nietzsche saw the relationship between society and individual as analogous to that of the creditor and debtor. What was extracted by society from the individual

in this creditor- debtor relationship was his body, which was territorialized through the infliction of pain (*On the Genealogy of Morals* 63).

Veena Das draws three conclusions from Nietzsche's comments:

“First, the equivalence between injury and pain, so that the infliction of pain on a person who has just caused injury by falling in any of his obligations to us is seen as just. Second, memory is created through the infliction of pain and most remarkably, the direction of this memory is not the past but the future. Third, to fail one's creditor is to submit one's body to every kind of indignity and torture.”(*Critical Events* 183)

Welcoming pain creates a moral community, in which those who are creditors are related to each other through the bonds of pain. Pain is not only inflicted by the debtor, but it is overtaken by the creditor even more strongly when the creditor feels he has failed in his responsibilities towards the debtor. As Das says, “it is not enough that new nations have a name or territory. This name has to be inscribed on another territory, the body.” (185) Suffering spreads and leaves its traces on the body and soul leaving bonds of wounds on members of a crowd who are closely attached to each other though they have never seen each other. It is also such bonds that create a sort of cohesion in the society in question with emotions elicited, institutionalized and communicated by all forms of narrations. They are also past perpetuating rituals. They all have a strong relation of interdependence on organic solidarity. And Özmen's literature has taken its active role on the same side with each story of each individual being a story of sorrow and pain being exactly similar to the story of an average Kurd.

CONCLUSION

Writing on disaster together with all the distress of a whole nation or community has the following mission, I believe: serving to the mutual understanding of cultural groups among whom a sense of opposition and enmity has unfortunately been created because of the interests of the sovereign. Reading the dispersion of a community in their inner worlds would perhaps tone down the rigidity, the ruthless polarity between two people.

Living under violence, war and oppression has created wounded subjectivities. Althusser, Lacan, Foucault, Freud, Jung, Zizek and many other intellectuals convincingly argue that subjectivity is a concept or experience constantly at stake, an observation which can be easily verified by looking at the way life is managed by countless control mechanisms of the sovereign. Being the special target of the sovereign, the subject is doomed to lose all chances of being a free subject/doer/actor, which are actually the real denominators of the literal meaning of the word “subject”. This does not mean that the subject will automatically yield in and become subject to or subservient to the power. There is a large amount of literature on resistance of the subject under oppression. In his article called “Yeats and Decolonization,” Edward Said, too, summarizes the defects of imperialism and the way it is articulated in writing, particularly analysing Yeats’s poetry. Said remarks how an entire big chapter in cultural history across five continents grows out of the tyrannizing traits of imperialism and how almost entire groups of the oppressed have revolted against this tyranny (*Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* 74). With similar intentions, this thesis has focused on the painful sides of the whole experience of Kurdish individuals’ subjecthood to certain extents considering their position vis-à-vis the nationalist power.

The analyses in this thesis have been part of the attempt to understand what happens to the subject while the community s/he is a member of goes through difficult times. Sexual dysfunction caused by torment in prison, alienation and introvertedness caused by such dysfunctions, the frustration caused by the inability to emancipate from troubled times and places, continuous degradation, stagnation and regression as post syndromes in melancholic psyches are just some of the manifestations of how the experience of individuality is undermined in a community with socio-political problems. These are insights retrieved from fictional texts. However, a short moment of comparing what is fictional and what is real for Kurds can make one feel assured about how the two merge in literature. The difference can be the richness of the content in literature and the way literature hosts detail in its big world. Therefore, looking at literature of a culture, one can gain an infinite number of visions about the culture and the way consciousness of its members are shaped. Instead of making rough and hasty generalizations, visiting at least the fictional world of a culture might lessen the distances between cultures. It may make the reader understand how the act of suffering has similar consequences for the different psyches. A clear understanding of the similarities between separate groups of people in the communal world of literature may enhance the chances of living in a peaceful world.

Looking at literature and also a the real picture of oppressed societies, all that can be seen is a neurotic longing for lost utopias. Still, the common feature of all oppressed groups is that their collective identity that is negative in one sense is also positive in another sense. What is positive is the generation of a culture in which there is also resistance and revolt for a desired future. This resistance is the main element of political emancipation. After all, nobody can live perpetually under conditions where

their identity and selfhood are continually deferred. To free themselves from such bondage of inferiority, all the tokens of pain and suffering turn into the precursors of moving further. This is the bright side of the oppression on condition that there is an affirmative consciousness for the lack of a free selfhood. It is clear that at least some of the modern Kurdish literature has been assigned a role to articulate the subversive negativity of identity problem. It is negative but it does not negate, it moves towards progress by keeping the memory of what is lost and therefore desired. Isn't it our needs and desires that move us beyond our own personal borders and open up broader dimensions for us? If death, torture, suffering are the first moments of this cultural colonization, triumphs and liberation have marked its second moment. Literature has provided us with accounts of what happens between these two moments.

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