

**AT THE INTERSECTION OF CENTER AND PERIPHERY:
KURDISH LANGUAGE IN THE TURKISH MONOLINGUAL SPHERE**

A Master's Thesis

by

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The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

of

İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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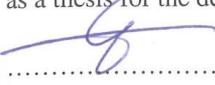
THE DEPARTMENT OF TURKISH LITERATURE

İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BILKENT UNIVERSITY

ANKARA

July 2019

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality,
as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Turkish Literature.


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ABSTRACT

AT THE INTERSECTION OF CENTER AND PERIPHERY: KURDISH LANGUAGE IN THE TURKISH MONOLINGUAL SPHERE

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This thesis focuses on, monolingualist paradigm, World Literature system and translation as its main tool. While Turkish and Kurdish, Turkish Literature and Kurdish literature provide a fruitful contest area to these concepts, both opens a path to interrogate the borders of monolingual paradigm and the center-periphery dynamics of World Literature. In Kurdish case, it both continues its existence within Turkish and by articulating the World Literature orbit, it aims to construct its own literary space upon that. The novels of Ayhan Geçgin and Mehtap Ceyran, who write in Turkish although their mother tongue is Kurdish, provide to follow the traces of Kurdish which embodied in Turkish. On the other hand, Kurdish with two-sided translation aims to create its own literary space. The first axis of this literary production occurs as a projection of monolingual paradigm. Kurdish, which does not have a “nation state” framework, while constructing its monolingual via translation, extends its literary space by establishing relationship with Turkish in the translation area. In that context, the enlargement of Kurdish’s politic and literary capital by those interactions is also the sign of the heaviness of monolingual paradigm in the current World Literature system which is imagined as being multilingual. On the other hand, while Bakhtiyar Ali’s novel *I stared at the Night of the City* with translation into English attains a wider literary market, the efforts of Mehmed Uzun to be able to articulate to Turkish literary market, signs the multi-center/multi peripheral dynamics of the World Literature system. Interrogation of the tension between center and periphery, the effect of construction of nation state to the hierarchy between languages and monolingual paradigm, translation and literary market, and as living space of all these concepts World Literature system are the main frame of this thesis.

Keywords: Literary Market, Literary Space, Monolingual Paradigm, Translation, World Literature

ÖZET

MERKEZ VE ÇEPERİN KESİŞİMİNDE: TÜRKÇE’NİN TEK DİL

ALANINDA KÜRT DİLİ

Üstündağ, Seren

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Bu tez, tekdil paradigması, Dünya Edebiyatı sistemi ve onun temel aracı olarak görülen çeviri meselesine odaklanır. Türk Edebiyatı ve Kürt Edebiyatı, Kürtçe ve Türkçe, Türkiye’nin çok dilli yapısı nedeniyle, bir yandan bu kavramlar için elverişli bir karşılaştırma alanı sağlarken diğer yandan, tekdil paradigmasının sınırlarını ve dünya edebiyatı dinamiklerinin merkez ve çevre ilişkilerini sorgulama imkânı yaratır. Kürtçe ise bir yandan tek-dil paradigmasının sınırlarına takılarak varlığını Türkçe dilinde, Türkçe romanlarda sürdürürken, öte yandan kendi bağımsız varlığını çeviri ve dünya edebiyatı eksenine eklemeye üzerinden inşa etmeye çalışır. Anadili Türkçe olmadığı halde Türkçe yazan Ayhan Geçgin ve Mehtap Ceyran’ın romanları, bu tek-dil alanı içinde kendine yer eden Kürtçenin izlerini takip etmeyi sağlar. Öte yandan Kürtçe iki yönlü çeviri ile kendi edebi alanını üretmeye çalışır. Bu edebi üretim çabasının ilk aksi olan Türkçe’den Kürtçe’ye yapılan çeviri çalışmaları, tekdil paradigmasının bir yansıması olarak ortaya çıkar. Bir ulus devlet çatısına sahip olmayan Kürtçe, kendi tekdil inşasını çeviri üzerinden yaparken, karşısında bir merkez olarak konumlanan Türkçe ile ilişki kurarak edebi alanını genişletir. Bu bağlamda, Kürtçenin edebi ve politik sermayesinin bu ilişkiler ile genişlemesi, tekdil paradigmasının, çokdilli olduğu düşünülen bugünkü Dünya Edebiyatı sisteminde hala mevcut olan ağırlığının da işaretçisidir. Öte yandan, Bakhtiyar Ali’nin, *I stared at the Night of the City* romanı Kürtçe’den edebi pazarı geniş olan İngilizce diline çevrilirken, Mehmed Uzun’un Türkçe’nin edebi pazarına grime çabası, Dünya Edebiyatı dinamiklerindeki çoklu Merkez ve çevrelere işaret eder. Bu kavramların buluşma zemini olarak çevre ve merkez kavramlarını, diller hiyerarşisine katkıda bulunan ulus-devlet inşasını, çeviri ve edebi pazarı, bunların yaşam alanı olarak dünya edebiyatı sistemini sorgulamak bu tezin temel çerçevesini oluşturur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çeviri, Dünya Edebiyatı, Edebi Alan, Edebi Pazar, Tekdil Paradigması

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Kurdish-Turkish literary bilingualism is a very remarkable version of what literary monolingualism tends to enforce: the assimilation of other languages and the concealment of its unique form of expression in a given text, to the point that the traces of other "monolinguals" become invisible, although the text remains heteroglossic. The vernacular case of Kurdish constitutes an acute example that allows us to understand the inner workings of "World Literature" at its periphery, as well as its articulations with the external, non-literary world such as the literary market. Pascale Casanova's analysis of the structure of world literature, the periphery as "Third World" described by Fredric Jameson and the center of all its internal mechanisms are the concepts that remain blind to the dynamics of the periphery and to the ways they shape the center while remaining invisible. Shedding light on this allows for a better understanding of the dynamics of world literature and comparative literature.

Monolingualist paradigm goes with nation state and its borders. As David Gramling indicates, "Deployed in this ideologically coercive way, boot-strapping discourses of language competence and self-assessment help to "thicken" the citizenship apparatus of the postmultilingual, pedagogical state". (Gramling, 2016, p.25) In order to have a nation, a culture should construct a standard mother tongue. In Turkish case, which emerges from a multicultural, multilingual society, what is done is to create a "poor" Turkish that is not a "mixed" language like Ottoman but one that totally belongs to the Turkish nation to higher the position of Turkish among the global language hierarchy (Ertürk, 2018, 130). With the promulgation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the destiny of the nation and language were combined together in the political

discourse and praising Turkish as well as making it the “first and only” language of Turkish nation state, became the first concern. Since, the basic evidence of calling a community as a nation attached to language with the 20th century, the evidence of Turkishness became the Turkish language. Therefore, it is possible to point that the monolingualist paradigm draws its borders and the other languages in the borders turn into threats which force to narrow the designated language.

On the other hand, the World Literature system, today, have a base which seems to be the contest area of monolinguals. World Literature, as a system, has multiple centers and peripheries. Yet, the hierarchy, as Casanova points in *The World Literature of Letters* (1999) is based on the literal space and time as in the case of Paris being the “republic” of World Literature in 19th century. Although this conceptualization seems to be west-oriented due to the fact that the center is the West itself, as shown in Pascal Casanova’s *The World Literature of Letters*, this is how the system works: in order to be a part of World Literature, a literary product should be translated into another language that has a wider “literal space” and older in the time. (Casanova, 2010, p.87)

This is where, translation becomes the basis of the literature market and determines the destiny of literary works. Yet, both the center and the periphery of World Literature are not a two-dimensional simple system. On the contrary, it has a lot of layers both within the center and periphery. In the Turkish context, for example, Orhan Pamuk who is a Nobel Prize winner, is accepted as a World-Lit author. He has been criticized due to his language and content as composed for not local readers but to the west. Also, he has been criticized because his novels have the syntax of English in Turkish, in order to be translated into English conveniently. The position of Pamuk both inside and outside of national borders, is one aspect of what World-

Lit system demands to be a part of it. As David Damrosch emphasizes in his works *What is World Literature?* (2003) the vernacular gets some damage in the translation process, loses cultural codes, sacrifices its originality not because of translation itself, but to be able to speak to the rest of the world as well as to the local readers. Yet, according to Emily Apter in *Translation Zone* (2006), it does not mean that translation is an unbreakable wall, instead, translation itself can be the tool that conveys the vernacularity throughout it. What they show is that, in the debates around world literature, to extend the borders of current central critics on world literature and see the invisible dynamics of world literature market, it is necessary to look at the periphery.

The motivation of this thesis is to ask questions about this tension between center and periphery of World Literature with the consideration of the peripheral centers, monolingual contest area of Turkish-Kurdish language tension. The particular interest to me is the notion of monolingualism, the (in)visibility of the vernacular in debates around the concept of "World Literature," as well as the ways in which the relationship between nation and narration is expressed through linguistic means in literary texts.

Despite the fact that "World Literature" at first sight seen as a system of exchange based on the celebration of multilingualism, is it possible to detect a hidden monolingual paradigm at play in global literary exchanges, one that works effectively with silence vernaculars and local particularisms, as David Gramling's recent study *The Invention of Monolingualism* (2016) claims? If so, by what means do these vernaculars manage to make themselves heard in this era of apparent post-monolingualism? What is a "mother tongue", what is a "national literature"? How can they play that much role in the whole system of world literature? And what will

be the destiny of a stateless-nation's literature, such as Kurdish literature, in this highly structured hierarchical literature market?

As evidenced by the case of modern Turkey, some vernaculars which manage to enter the "World Literature" market through translation do in fact reflect monolingual borders. For instance, as a result of this monolingual paradigm, Orhan Pamuk became, as a "translatable" writer, the only recognizable figure of Turkish literature for global audience. While this demonstrates the difficulties that Turkish literature faces in this context, the situation of Kurdish literature is even more precarious. Since public use of the Kurdish language was forbidden for decades within the Turkish Republic, most Kurdish writers living in Turkey wrote in Turkish. As a stateless population, it is only recently that a Kurdish novel like Bakhtiyar Ali's *I Stared at the Night of the City* (2016) (*Ghazalnus w Baghakani Khayal* (2008) entered World literature via its translation into English. This unique example shows how the borders of nation states in fact prevent the free circulation of vernacular literatures, which is why the paper is interested in showing a thorough analysis of the Kurdish case.

In this second dimension of Kurdish literature, what these bilingual writers create seems to correspond to what Deleuze and Guattari have called a minor literature. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, 16-27) However, as evidenced by the case of Ayhan Geçgin, one of the most important Kurdish writers writing in Turkish, the language bears little relation to that of Kafka, but is in fact closer to the "split" in the phase of language described by Homi Bhabha in *Nation and Narration* (1990). As David Gramling points out, it is hard to find traces of the mother tongue in Kafka's works, whereas one can "smell" both languages in the seemingly monolingual texts produced by Geçgin. In Mehtap Ceyran's novel *Yas Mevsimi*, on the other hand, the

embodiment of two languages passes beyond smelling, it is shown by the language of monolingual paradigm, Turkish; but with cultural-spatial area of Kurdish.

As Yasemin Yıldız has shown in the case of the Turkish-German writer Emine Sevgi Özdamar in *Beyond the Mother Tongue* (2012), some writers cope with their mother tongue in a foreign language and come to find that the adoptive foreign language constitutes an area which provides ways to free oneself from the burden of the mother tongue, which is often associated with political oppression. However, in contrast with Özdamar's works, in Geçgin's novels the foreign language (Turkish in this case) is the only medium available to write, so as Ceyran's novel. Therefore, that area which provides space for expression in the case of Özdamar turns into a complex linguistic territory, which both make the language of the novel, in specifically Geçgin's novels *Son Adım* and *Uzun Yürüyüş*, alluring and puts it on the other side of the "translation zone", to use Emily Apter's term. In *Mevsim Yas* (2017); on the other hand, the coping mechanism is not the complexity of the language but the heavy political social traumas which are conveyed grotesquely. The exile, oppression on the language and politics itself, in other words, draws the lines of the literature in the more complicated monolingual spheres. Kurdish writers, Behrouz Boochani and Selahattin Demirtaş cases, for instance, are perceived as a "resistance" towards the monolingual agenda by having the chance of circulation around the world faster than a book, which produced under the comfort zone of a monolingual sphere. *No Friend But the Mountains* (2018) of Boochani and Demirtaş's *Seher* (2017) both are written in a prison. Boochani, wrote in Persian and Demirtaş in Turkish.

In the "Foreword" of Boochani's book, the famous Australian writer Richard Flanagan, locates Boochani's novel as following: "*No Friend but the Mountains* is a

book that can rightly take its place on the shelf of world prison literature, alongside such diverse works as Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*, Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, Ray Parkin's *Into The Smother*, Wole Soyinka's *The Man Died*, and Martin Luther King Jr's *Letter from Birmingham Jail*."(Flanagan, R. (2018) "Foreword" in *No Friend But the Mountains*). Flanagan, expresses his regret about how Australia has become the owner of this kind of bad conditioned prison and praises the Boochani's "belief in words" and their "liberating power" via written text messages. The end of the "Foreword" shows his future imagination about Boochani: "I hope one day to welcome Behrouz Boochani to Australia as what I believe he has shown himself to be in these pages. A writer. A great Australian writer." A Kurdish author, who writes in Persian in a prison at Australian border, turns into a "hope" to be an "Australian writer" in future. In other words, the sphere of monolingual paradigm is being undermined yet by reconstructing it with a national border limit. The monolingualist paradigm itself, for instance, becomes one of the reasons behind the language of *Mevsim Yas*. Therefore, as Gramling points out in his contribution to world literature debates, multilingualism is not as valid as it purports to be and the post-monolingual era in fact reflects exchanges among nation-states, only at the expense of stateless communities and their literatures.

In that context, in the first chapter of this thesis, the space of Kurdish language embodied to Turkish is examined throughout the Geçgin's *Uzun Yürüyüş*, *Son Adım* and Mehtap Ceyran's *Mevsim Yas*, through asking what is these novels' languages which seems to be obvious, as Turkish.

Starting with the tension between Turkish and Kurdish in the realm of Turkish literature, in the second chapter, the effect of monolingualism is examined by looking closely at the translation journey of Kurdish novels into Turkish.

Considering the “literal space”, the effort of Kurdish also creates a monolingual sphere, in the context of Turkish realm, with the direct effect of literature market, which shows both a sub-dynamic of World Literature system and the consequences of monolingual paradigm.

In the last chapter, after analyzing the relationship of English Pen awarded novel of Bakhtiyar Ali, *I stared at the Night of the City*, with the World Literature system, throughout Mehmed Uzun’s novels translation journey to Turkish, in order to the determine location of Kurdish, and its relationship with center and periphery, the perception of “center” will also be examined. With showing the different “center” perspective of these writers, the aim is to dig the sub-dynamics of World Literature system.

CHAPTER II: WRITING IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE OTHER: WHAT IS THE (A) MOTHER TONGUE?

“Yet it will never be mine, this language, the only one I am thus destined to speak, as long as speech is possible for me in life and death; you see, never will this language be mine. And, truth to tell, it never was.” (Derrida, 1998, pg.2)

Introduction

Ayhan Geçgin’s novels *Son Adım* (2010) (The Last Step) and *Uzun Yürüyüş* (2017) (Long Walk) begin in İstanbul. However, in the first novel a funeral, and in the second a sudden decision taken by the nameless protagonist carries them from center to the periphery, West to East, and from a language to another one. That is said, İstanbul is already both a center and a periphery, both the West and the East, and also a place with a plethora of languages. In both novels, the characters are leaving “homes” that are not “peaceful” and the words related to these homes, even before revealing their meanings turns into broken pieces. In both novels, by leaving home, characters travel to strange places. In these strange places, there is something that resembles home, yet no peace can be found. Due to the uncanny structure of the language, both of the novels devolve into nonsensical gibberish and never properly communicate its message, which raises a very fundamental question about the languages of these novels: What, in fact, is these novels’ true language?

The relation between the tongue as an organ and tongue which functions to speak in fact does not carry more resemblances than the random relationship between word and meaning. The existence of the organ, for example, may be insufficient to

generate speech. On the other hand, the meaning is consistently interrupted while circulation, which never proceeds a route whose beginnings and ends are clear, never reaches a conclusion. Nonetheless, the tongue which is not at all unidimensional and flows at random, is taken as the basic distinction point of the borders of a nation state. Thus, David Gramling points out that beginning with the rise of nationalism and nation-states in the 17th century, monolingualism, became the main paradigm of states. (Gramling, 2016i p.1) The processes of imagining a nation and producing a national culture, according to the monolingualist agenda's program. So, the language is imagined as the fundamental tool for drawing the border of the nation, as a standard, single, homogenous entity, each nation state becomes a "monolingual" at the same time.

Both Ayhan Geçgin's aforementioned novels are written in Turkish, the official language of Turkey. Yet in Geçgin's novels, for that reason, it carries all the hesitations and tensions of monolingualism. The words characters utter never become a language; they either turn into silence or meaningless mumbling. In addition to that, the languages of the characters which consistently construct and deconstruct themselves by building on each other, carries traces of the impact of not being able to construct language as a home determining the relation between worlds and opens an axis of governmentality: The borders that power draws, is clearly in language in an invisible way.

Therefore, what is this pre-language place encountered in these novels? What kind of function does the language define how characters perceive the world? For instance, how the ambiguous knowing-unknowing position of Ali Ihsan/Alisan is related to the consistently changing languages (Kurdish/Zazaki) affects the language of the novel? How Kurdish/Zazaki affect the language of these Turkish novels? Furthermore,

carrying this tension in language, which is the significant marker of the nation state, in what way do these minority languages effect the language of the novel and its characters? Moreover, how does the language carry this tension and is considered by nationalist discourse to be an embodiment of national essence, and how does it reflect the characters' and the novels' languages? With all these linguistic tensions, though the character of the novel does not mute in the physical sense, what is the effect of distrust that makes them muted?

The main characters of these novels, stucked with a language in a state of degeneration, the complicated relationship between the language of the characters and the language of narration cannot be expressed in a monolingual sphere where becomes an area of encounter. The dilemmas encountered within language, such as the inability of having a meaning without distractions, are arisen from the tension of invented and believed monolingualism. As long as product of this encounter intertwine with one another and become ambiguous, the characters are increasingly trapped in the pre-language stage.

In the case of Mehtap Ceyran's novel *Yas Mevsimi* (2017) (The Season of Requiem) on the other hand, in the surface level, in the novel, all these lingual hesitations reveal themselves throughout concrete events. Unidentified murders, domestic abuse, the suicides of young girls, the political atmosphere and its consequences are described very clearly in the novel, in Turkish. On the contrary to Geçgin's novel, all acts verbalize themselves, yet, in the textual dimension, both *Son Adım* and *Yas Mevsimi*, experience that oscillation between languages and in some point an eruption happens, and the second language leaks out through the cracks.

This chapter focuses on Ayhan Geçgin's *Uzun Yürüyüş* and *Son Adım* novels, also combines these novels with Ceyran's novel *Yas Mevsimi* in terms of monolingual

contest area, particularly in the context of that tension. At the same time, it will trace the reflections of the tension between monolingual borders and the other language embodied into this border.

2.1. As an Existence/Nonexistence Area: Monolingual Paradigm

According to Yasemin Yıldız, the monolingual paradigm describes the individuals and social formations (nations) as the structures, which could have a “real” mother tongue and this ownership completes its meaning cycle by directly connecting to a certain ethnicity, culture and nation. (Yıldız, 2012 p.2) Yıldız adds that throughout the institutions, schooling that paradigm produces monolinguals; yet this solid process of monolingualism starts to melt and be replaced with a multilingual phase, which Yıldız names this era as “Post-monolingualism.” In one way, it refers the tension between monolingualism and multilingualism and the area in which this tension opens. Within the literature market, migration threatens monolingualism. At a minimum, the language of the emigres opens an area in the monolingual realm for itself. Thus, the monolingual sphere encounters the leaks of other languages.

Gramling, on the other hand, in *The Invention of Monolingualism* (2016) while making the archeology of the word monolingual, locates a situation that has existed from the early Middle Ages (Gramling, 2016, p.7-8). A speaker of a certain language is monolingual in that language. Gramling dwells upon the changing meaning of the concept until the present day and examines the conjecture that monolingualism has abdicated its throne in favor of multilingualism. Nowadays, multilingualism/bilingualism etc. is perceived as the sign of cultural capital against the homogeneity and trans-national paradigm of the language, it was seen as a problem around the end of 19th century. For example, an article titled “The Intellectual Status of the Aborigines in Victoria” in *The Spectator*, which concerns

the interpretations of an anonymous writer on the observations of Robert Brough Smyth on Koori people, there is a totally different approach towards monolingualism. According to that, only monolingual people can achieve an intellectual process. The writer further argues that the monolingual natives have the ability to make abstractions though multilingual Indians cannot because multilingualism in a sense is a sign of chaos and it jeopardizes the openness of the verbalization in its disruption. (Quoted in Gramling, p. 47-48)

The “positive correlation” that the anonymous writer found in between the abilities of abstraction and monolingualism by colonialists, has been changed into a very unpredictable position in the process of globalization. While multilingualism, virtually changes in to a *sine qua non* in the sense that monolingualism begins to connotate with ignorance or most likely with colorlessness. While multilingualism is used alongside multiculturalism, it began to mean both the opposite of ignorance and in the political sense as dovishness. On the other hand, literature, whether in world literature or in translation, has continued to produce throughout the nation’s official language a representation of the nation-state itself.

In other words, almost no literary production and consumption were possible without entering into boundaries of monolingualism which continued to exist simultaneously when multilingualism/multiculturalism was extremely fashionable. That case, which is contradictory in itself, shows that the borders and the dominance of nation states could not be practically eliminated, and therefore, the notion of transnationalism derived from the nation and could not become a deconstruction of the notion of nation. At the same time, it has created a producing area within the vernacular. For instance, writing with the official language of Turkey, Ayhan Geçgin produces literature within the borders of the nation-state, but Kurdish and Zazaki leaks out of

this producing process. Although it is expected that these languages should be invisible in these works, they still manage to create a space for multilingualism within Turkish. For instance, the unnamed protagonist of *Uzun Yürüyüş* goes to the mountains of eastern Turkey, where he confronts with Kurdish. However, Alisan from *Son Adım* perceives Zazaki as nonsensical, and turns to a language which is alive, when he ends up in Bindağ where in eastern Turkey and leaks to the text as itself: “Xatur bı tu.” (Good bye) (Geçgin, 2011, p.183)

Although these leaks create a possibility for existence, it is not a comfort zone. The language, the borders of language and the position of the characters as precarious employments, carry the current situation toward a different point, which is the degradation of words. The sounds that characters have heard before they start their journey is perceived as the analog of a language, not an exact one, yet it turns into a real language at the end of their journey. The only thing missing is that they lose their ability of speaking by confronting these languages. In the case of *Uzun Yürüyüş*'s character, his preference to stay alone in the mountain instead of going with the guerillas he could actually communicate despite his inability to understand their language, is one of the significance of degradation of words in his case. At *Son Adım*, the long description of his torture by agents of the state, takes place of words and Alisan is executed in silence.

In Ceyran's novel, *Yas Mevsimi*, the characters are raised with violence either coming from some organizations such as Hezbollah and state, or family members which cannot be separated from the atmosphere of the social-economic conditions that this small eastern city's society suffers from. Zehra is a teacher, who lives with anti-depression pills. She has friends who has severe problems: Taha is kidnapped by Hezbollah. Fesla has been abused by her father and step mother throughout her life.

Also, Hezbollah kills Taha's uncle when he is a kid. Felsa and her elder sister are just children, in 1990s they have witnessed state-violence in their neighbor too many times. Unlike Geçgin's novels, in *Yas Mevsimi*, every single detail of violence is conducted in the novel very clearly. Language is the tool of conveying all these sorrows to the readers as open as possible. Yet, in just the same way of Geçgin's characters, when Taha as a narrator tells himself in his journal, it's possible to trace the same hesitation in language even in *Yas Mevsimi*, which seems to reveal itself more open than Geçgin's novel in the lingual level.

These characters have another angle in their lives: They are precariat. Their unresponsiveness to the outside world, turns into a self-destruction which is actually the result of social, political atmosphere. Yet for society, being a precariat is just a syndrome of "disconnectedness" or just destiny. In other words, there is nothing about the contradiction of society at all: Remaining in the periphery can only be a sign that one is not qualified enough to be an active participant of his community. The reaction of the disconnected trying to survive or exist in the world which does not have any value, with the self-awareness of the characters become important. With Orhan Koçak's word as following: "Either the world is bigger and more complicated than the hero, and he could not take it, or the hero is too much for the world." (Koçak, 2017, p.27) This position of the hero, creates a distance between him and the world: This distance causes an incoherency between what the hero has in mind and in reality, and because of that, the existence of the hero become uncanny. For instance, a radical nihilist hero, with his/her hopelessness will end up in self-destruction, wanting nothing, and will not use the very medium of desiring anything, which is language. Because whenever the hero tries to talk, he cannot find a world to place his values, and his expression degenerates into nonsensicalities.

In both Geçgin's novels, the characters' experiences turn into such nonsensicalities and from there into a mutation and eventually dissolution. Because not having an outside world does not sustain their values, they desire to dissolve themselves and for this reason they digress from their current sense of belonging. Thus, both characters leave their jobs, families and Istanbul behind, and go on a journey. The character in *Uzun Yürüyüş* decides and moves at his will, while Alisan from *Son Adım*, starts to move because of his feelings of "weakness" with which he is unable to cope, yet these movements turn into self-destruction at the end of the narration¹. The state kills Alisan, and the nameless protagonist of *Uzun Yürüyüş* stops communicating with the rest of the world and awaits his death in the mountains of Eastern Turkey.

In *Yas Mevsimi*, on the other hand, Taha leaves Batman when he is a child. Yet he also comes back to Batman, where his life is in jeopardy because of Hezbollah and just like Alisan and the nameless character of *Son Adım*, he experiences an agony besides the survival anxiety that he cannot explain.

The protagonists seek, but are unable to find, and remain in a state of instability. This is conveyed with the mediation of one language of which the borders are strictly determined. In other words, the precarity that socio-economic conditions create and the dilemma which the monolingual borders nation-states produce, arise with the mediation of language in Geçgin's novels. Ceyran's character on the other hand, with their passivity, and inability to take action, until it's too late, use different kinds of indirect communication which are not functional.

2.2 The wordlessness at *Son Adım*: Introduction, Plot, Torture

¹ Orhan Koçak says, "It is not for me to say Geçgin is inherit from Zola. But we cannot find this kind of description about work, labor even in Orhan Kemal." (Koçak, 2017, p.) Although Koçak's these comments are on *Kenarda (Marginal)*, Geçgin's another novel, yet the analysis is valid for *Uzun Yürüyüş* and *Son Adım* as well.

The novel begins with the sounds of the footstep of Alisan's deceased father in his home. The narrator creates an authoritative, uncanny atmosphere throughout pedantic narration and directions in the second person. Being able to read the character's mind, this narrative voice indicates the existence of a split in the language from the beginning. In Koçak's word, (Koçak, 2017, pg23) the zero point of the "circle" which will be completed in *Uzun Yürüyüş* is found here, the beginning of the loss of differentiation between human and animal, or in other words, the loss of language: "Every night, you are waking up between three and four like this. Your sleep is not well. The sleep does not give you rest. You are getting up from bed more tired than you go to bed. This is now an animal sleep, you think." (Geçgin, 2011, p.9) These phrases, which are the first signs of journeys that extend from language to mutism, human to animal, city to nature, despair to extinction, are immediately followed by leaks. Thus, with the noise from outside, the voice of grandmother comes: "Ayy...I'm returnin'. O'Khidir." These first words of the grandmother are unable to produce a complete sentence. This is not standard Turkish, it is a spoilt language, a "patois". In other words, it is a degenerated Turkish, a dialect which could not manage to be proper Turkish. Thus, when the narrator finishes quoting and turns to its own voice, the difference between two styles of language become sharper. This sharpness merges with inactivity of the character. Just like in language, the future is only "a flickering deepness, a rippling darkness". (Geçgin, 2011, p. 19) In other words, the voice, the body and mind exist in a similar deepness with language and in fact disabled them all together.

As a part of this disability, what kind of language does the grandmother use? With what doubts does Ali İhsan have about his inability to move and his use of a degenerating language? Ali İhsan forces himself, by "maybe softening a little bit

because of the light”, to have a dialog with his grandmother. Yet, what he hears is just “discordant”, “spoiled, split, broken” words. Eventually Ali İhsan asks himself: “Is this a language, you think, is it communication?” (Geçgin, 2011, p16) .

The capability of language, which is not able to occur in the narration, reveals the disconnection between signifying and that which is signified. For instance, Ali İhsan has lost “the relation between himself and his name”, and what his name exactly indicates. It remains an enigma for him. Yet he says that he enunciates his name as Alisan, which he has heard from childhood instead of Ali İhsan which is official name. In other words, just as he has two voices in his mind, and two languages, which one is heard as “broken” sounds, he has two names. This dichotomy determines how Alisan perceives the outside world, in addition to that the sounds coming from outside can only be a part of that darkness:

“Repetitive flowing, attacking, ascending and descending, with stretching like a silent groan in the creak of the space with same acts waving hand to minibus, to station, from the rusty doors of the train which barely open, to crowds of bodies, to the window ledge where the livid sea comes closer and moves away, after the dusty greens lessening and condensing along two sides of the line to the last stop, to Bakırköy, together with the moving crowd, to outside, as wide as to throughout the serene cypress crows flying on the top ascending from the wall of the graveyard, are just thoughtful steps.” (Geçgin, 2011, p. 21)

This long passage, which describes the action of going to work, indicates the tune of the challenging existence of overwhelming plurality in the narration. It is an image of chaos, in which the character’s own actions disappear, indicating the dissipating traces of the connection to the world.

Thus, the real meaning of this overwhelming sensation can be seen from following quotation: “Of course you also do not have any good feelings about your job. But you cannot also say that you hate it, nor love it, the only thing that you feel is having enough of it.” (Geçgin, 2011, p.23) In this passage describing the act of going to work by doubting about one’s humanity, and with feeling nothing, Alisan is dehumanized and objectified in the passage. Even while taking a break by leaving the storehouse in which he works, he only thinks to himself: “We are domesticated animals.” (Geçgin, 2011, s. 23)

The manifestation of this insensibility which occurs in the work place, turns from sounds into acts with the dialogue that he establishes with his grandmother at home, yet it continues to disturb in the same way: “When Grandmother talks, you pretend to listen, but what she says comes to your ears as noise, as if language is not talking but instead a mere chewing noise.” (Geçgin, 2011, p.27) Language here implies both the medium of speaking and the organ of speech itself. The language which is the vehicle of expression and the language that represents a certain monolingualism separates from each other in a great rift, losing all organic bond between them. The patois with which the grandmother speaks, Alisan’s “Istanbul Turkish”, the whole actions of daily life which turns into a function of communication deepen the split. That deepness, on the other hand, turns in to a disquietude:

“Who wants anything from you? From one perspective, nobody is touching, leaning towards or demanding anything from you. Even your grandmother doesn’t require anything from you. But on the other hand, the whole world has joined forces to bother you. They nag you, demand things of you; something you do not even know, moreover they want it right away, to immediately strip you of it and take it.” (Geçgin, 2011, p.60)

Hence the feeling of Alisan being stripped of something strengthen with the questions directed at himself. Why he had cut himself away from “our people”, why had he not preserved his “lineage”, leaving himself in a state of “apoplectic anger” (Geçgin, 2011, p.69). His present alienation towards the common values and its meaninglessness combine with the language in the same sequence. Following this apoplectic anger, he starts thinking why the curses that have been told were not in Turkish: “You cannot make those curses in Turkish.” (Geçgin, 2011, s.70) this language which does not have a name but at the same time “his language” is perceived by him as he goes from one place to another: “When you go to your room, you overhear the conversations within the house. They have switched back to their original language. They speak very loud and noisy. Loud, rude and thick voices coming from deep within the throat. This voice scratches your ears, irritates you. You close your ears with your hands.” (Geçgin, 2011, p.70) As Fatih Altuğ has mentioned in his article “*Son Adım ve Uzun Yürüyüş* Romanlarında Dile Giriş (The Introduction to the Language in *Son Adım ve Uzun Yürüyüş* Novels)” (2015), this is not about “rooting for the sovereign language while developing an arrogant stance against your “ancestral” tongue”. (Altuğ, 2015, p.27)

On the contrary, it is being a perceiving participant of the lingual base within this rather unusual sphere of tension created between these two languages. With Yıldız’s words, “The “mother tongue” is in either case not a private, authentic site of belonging, but rather it is contested affectively, as well as institutionally, between state-sanctioned language and multiple vernaculars.” (Yıldız, p. 154) Alisan, on the other hand, who cannot move and is retreating his every step, every micro level movement, feels a repulsion strong enough to compel to close his ears. At this point, when none of the languages have a satisfying explanation ground, Alisan, completely

within himself, attempts to retreat to a pre-lingual existence to remove himself from this tension. As a matter of fact, Alisan's re-introduction to any source of sound starts with his question of who Kader is, to his grandmother. Alisan creates a link between the sound and the face but the first thing that comes to his mind is that something is weary about the woman. Until that moment all sounds are noises which no connection can be made. The first moment he sees life in a sound, it is a greeting that comes when he meets with Kader. At the same time there is a tendency of backtracking to diminish that liveliness in that moment:

“You are looking at the woman, yet you no longer understand what used to impress you about her at all now, you just think this is a house wife, an ordinary house wife. Her face sweaty, glistening like butter. Despite the heat, she has a headscarf tightly wrapped around her head, she has a long, sweater like thing on her nearly down to her knees.” (Geçgin, 2011, p.89)

The state of liveliness which turns into a grotesque definition, is a re-disturbance of what is made, a demolition of a construction within the language. No new attempt, step, or progression is left without disturbance. After contemplating his own selfishness for thinking of himself while his grandmother is struggling with sickness, Alisan implies the depths of his current situation. He thinks that perhaps there are reasons as to why he has retired to his shell and adds: “But you are saying that if -this might be the main flaw- these have been reflected to the outside as much as they have been directed inside. Now somewhere within your thoughts directed at yourself, you sense something missing, flawed, blind in the attention of the past directed to yourself.” (Geçgin, 2011, p.103) The voice of Kader, who is the neighbor woman that had come to visit his grandmother in her illness, is the first voice that awakens a

“soothing” (Geçgin, 2011, p.73) feeling in Alisan and the first observed trigger of this intuition.

However, this same intuition, though becoming lively with Kader’s presence, puts all of the vital bonds, language before all, as the main conductor of the connection built with life to a “crippled”, “blinded” axis. This “vagabondage/flaneur”² state in which he attempted to put himself is backed by his lack of security. Meanwhile, Kader, who Alisan has seen as a mere “house wife” despite the fact that she was a working woman alongside a lingual base on which he could not have stabilized himself and the obligation he has to his grandmother, combines with the possibility of creation of a new life in a horizon pretending to be awakened. The funeral of the grandmother is to be held in her hometown to repair “the one which is broken within” (Geçgin, 2011, p.106). For the sounds made by Kader’s mouth to possess any meaning, perhaps the things required to be buried with the Grandmother should be buried first. By saying “Something within you is crumbling. From the bottom of your heart you are aware that you could have been a good lover, a good boyfriend, a good partner.” (Geçgin, 2011, p.106) Alisan takes the responsibility of “what is broken” (Geçgin, 2011, p.106).

However, at the saying “I could have been”, here is found a reflection of missed opportunities due to the current languages which could not find a place from themselves in Alisan’s world and their lack of values from his world within the language. Likewise, words such as “cracked”, “rotten”, and “purple-like” to describe the grandmother’s corpse have leaked into the language, signaling the socio-cultural

² Orhan Koçak has stated: “The first critics could only discuss the issue of, “Flaneur Man” in a disapproving demeanor.” (Koçak, 2017. P15). More over the leftists who were currently dominant of the political arena of that era believes that the character living rather a proper life does not have a message to present. In both of his novels Geçgin presents characters that work in risky jobs and have challenging lives. Even though that fact, they seem as “flaneur” people. In other words, the vagabondage behavior of these characters would be considered as very daring behaviors.

baggage of the community which penetrated from the cracks of the language's wall: No place in worldly-cultures were found for these values, and within the language. The degradation in language occurred in Alisan's words, as Yıldız points out, does not just stem from the internal migration that Alisan's family experienced and affected him as a member of next generation, but "the moments prior to that migration are structurally much more prominent" (Yıldız, p.156) As a matter fact, even though the language provides more content than it represents, it has created chaos due to its manifestation of a simple appearance in contrast with its complex nature:

"Alisan has already become alienated to the language itself, in the lingual area he has no conformity. He has lost his connection with his own name, another person with such name has already lived and exhausted all opportunities of life, he has started following "when has life ended?" question, sure of himself that there is no other opportunity for life, and is aware that he lacks the courage to take the last step to end such a life. Seeing himself as trash, he possesses no ability to give meaning or express any ancestral or adopted language." (Altuğ, 2015. p.27)

As Altuğ establishes, these two instances where the language becomes alienated to the individual and his state of self-loathing, present the clash point of his world and his language. Moreover, there is both a conflict with the state of a language being imprisoned in another and a feeling of having no security; a tendency to self-destruct in a world where one can't find a fitting for himself. Because what monolingual paradigm frames is "individuals and social formations are imagined to possess one "true" language only, their "mother tongue," and through this possession to be organically linked to an exclusive, clearly demarcated ethnicity, culture, and nation."

(Yıldız, p.2) Eventually, these conflicts such as not having a stable existence, would come to life with an attempt to destroy one's own body in *Uzun Yürüyüş*.

This feeling creates an unsettlement and remains as unidentified and only gets as close as something called "this thing" (Geçgin, 2011, p.60) to describe what it is. This thing which could not be properly diagnosed, is presented with the eerie words of the language, within the language. Alongside with the people who have to work in a mediocre occupation only to be fired during a state of ignorance due to lack of security, and quickly following his grandmother's process of sickness and death, is then accelerated by falling for Kader and traveling from west to east and from one language to another he is forced from individualism to collectivism where he eventually finds his "possessions" as his mother tongue: "Are you expecting this eroding body to tell you, now that it is slipping from your fingers, which you couldn't capture or captivate?" (Geçgin, 2011, p.116)

The thing that Alisan seeks but could not grab in his toxic involvement with Kader becomes the concrete form of what he does not have and that becomes a critical urge within his drift. Thus, Alisan who experiences a sequence of regaining consciousness with "women's glances" realizes that his speaking is like "delirium": "You want to speak but you do not know how to speak. Whenever you talk, you feel the same thing: You are not able to say what you want, and what you say actually you do not feel them decently. Maybe, you think, I never learned that language." (Geçgin, 2011, p.135) This awareness turns into desire of accompanying his grandmother's funeral and leaving the place that he is in. Thus, while the world that still has a place for everybody, Alisan could not find a place for himself, and he is not able to define the reason of that: "But what makes you feel that you do not have place here? The more

important question is that: What is the thing that prevents you from finding a place?” (Geçgin, 2011, p. 132) Alisan who invalidates his whole expression by saying “maybe I never learned that language” is pulled from the world where he is not able to find a place to himself to a “last step”: “Maybe something else has already started in this exhaustion, in a burnt out end, in the thing that you are enduring a long time, maybe a decision that you do not know yet grows mature in you slowly. How can you be sure that it is not started already? Even you do not know yet, why not it has already started to open?” (Geçgin, 2011, s. 142) Although the root of the first sentences along with its beginnings and ends are vague, and while they distort the language while remaining unspoiled, there is a sign of lingual hope. Thus, in the following sequence, he takes the road that “started to open already” which goes to Bindağ, passing through Tunceli and Erzincan. Here, Zazaki is spoken, a language which is not Alisan’s ground of expression, and he hears it only in the following way: “The talking is becoming more, humming is fluctuating. You know this humming very well. It’s the buzzing of a language. The staggering, fainting buzzing of the language that you have almost forgotten.” (Geçgin, 2011, p.162)

Yet, with travel, while the buzzing increases and turns into the language actually spoken, Alisan returns to a preverbal stage and he loses his will. In Bindağ, in contrast to where he lived before, there is a calm, stable flow. A collectivism which he does not understand replaces individuality here. When the road, which he has traversed with a constant stomach ache comes to its terminus, what Alisan thinks and he experiences at Bindağ, indicates that the missing, unidentified “one thing’s” traces is hidden in this return:

“Your stomach ache is increasing. It would not last long, you thought, it would be over in a day. I can bear it for a few days. Self-deceptively you are

saying that: There should at least be a use for a corpse, it should be a real end.

The things that remained to me from my life until now was an empty dry shell. This shell should fall apart, as a shell of a wound it should fall of and go, and whatever inside should come to light.” (Geçgin, 2011, p.77)

That process which carries two layers in it, indicating that Alisan is beginning to create an awareness that is to replace collectivism with individualism. A collectivism that has the missing “thing” is his mother tongue is hidden in. Although he seems to “bear” Bindağ, there is nothing there that can make that sphere unbearable for him. In contrast, coming to Bindağ also gives a confrontation with his mother tongue. Instead of the language that does not allow him to speak Turkish, hearing the language which nonsensical mumbling for him was beforehand gives him an opportunity to find his closure, to take the last step.

Thus, for the first time the mumbling turns into a real language and Zazaki becomes visible in the text. Alisan, after reaching that breaking point, in contrast to his life in Istanbul, for the first time perceive the sounds coming from outside in a different way: “In fact, till now, beside the conversation of the man coming from Germany, there was not anything that you can define as noise.” (Geçgin, 2011, p. 185) According to this man coming from Germany, there are some studies on Zazaki, but it is about to die. So, it is necessary to study more on Zazaki to save it. Alisan takes these words as “vanity” and right after that he defines his connection to this “dying language”:

“The issue about dying language does not sound interesting to you. Also, you did not know that language is death. And having the buzzing of it in your ears, it is hard to believe it is death. You do not understand why he is saying that it is necessary to struggle to sustain it. For a long time, you have heard

this language only from your grandmother, and that was the language which was disturbing to hear.” (Geçgin, 2011, p. 197)

While Alisan thinking about the possibility of the death of Zazaki, he immediately adds that his current language, Turkish, is not alive either:

“Then, the language, which is called as Turkish, that you speak, is it yours? Now you doubt it. This language comes from your mouth as a death language. A death language? This is its meaning for you: A language which turns in to a death language as soon as you speak, a world that words are not able to revive anything; a dry world, a dry language.” (Geçgin, 2011, p. 197)

Until he comes to Bindağ, Alisan perceives both languages as death languages. Until now, Alisan hears the sounds of these languages as noise, as mumbling. After his time at Bindağ, the sounds around him starts to make sense for him. Fatih Altuğ explains that as following: “Only with staying at Bindağ, the language interpenetrates to him and synchronically the desire of a new kind of subjectivities and desire to tell is revealed. As far as he witnesses the collective experience of Zazaki, he realizes the integral thing in the language, but at the same time goes beyond it.” (Altuğ, 2015, p.27)

With his collective experience, both his experience with language and individuality when he was in İstanbul begin to change dramatically. It turns into a spatial experience which comes with a large family, large dinners and loneliness becomes unnecessary instead of need. The place he thinks he may bear for a few days, provides a transition for the tongue and the body from a chaos to a vitality:

“Maybe I have never heard a single conversation whole my life, you are thinking, maybe what I heard was just discordant mumbling, growling and so forth. But now, I realize that there is another possibility: They were

languages, but I did not want to understand. I did not want to hear such a language.” (Geçgin, 2011, p.210)

Alisan explores the collective existence of the other language within the one language that he has spoken so far. Thus, Altuğ describe this turning as a “a hope for collective communication.” (Altuğ, 2015, p. 27) The “collective communication” here, is the reflect of the encounter with the mother tongue. The place which gives the opportunity to reconnect to the language, and to experience the collectiveness never experienced before, turns to be a flight until that is suspended via torture. The atmosphere of narration changes with the description of grotesque torture scenes. The language turns into an oppression again. The possibilities vanish again. Mutism becomes the next step which comes with *Uzun Yürüyüş*.

2.3 A Destruction Trial at *Uzun Yürüyüş*: Exhaustion of the Language and the Body

Alisan has incomplete relationship with language and world: Even if a weak one, there is a possibility and a shadowy urge to follow that possibility. *Uzun Yürüyüş*, on the other hand, is a narration of seeking an end in the condition of all these possibilities are drawn. A hunger strike, physical taming and a slow loss of the language are the main traces of the narration. Yet, the reasons behind those are not stating within the text.

The nameless character of the novel is working as a store attendant “who sees the eyes of fish without eyelid all day long” (Geçgin, 2015, pg.14) Like Alisan, he also works as a precariat and loses this job. He decides to go, because he is not sure if he is alive: “Before, he continued to think, maybe I was dead, I have died, maybe still I am, I am dead. I haven’t done with dying, I am continuing to die.” (Geçgin, 2015, pg.15) The body/world, in which the nameless character takes distant enough to

doubt his vitality, drags him to destroy himself. The nameless character takes the road with the aim of to “unstitch himself as rope” (Geçgin, 2015, pg.15) and to find a mountainside. Yet, this unstitching operation, is a trial to destruction trial: “I will become quite right now, close my eyes, not think anything for a while, not move at all.” (Geçgin, 2015, pg. 15)

This desire for destruction is the most significant characteristic of his journey. Thus, it is possible to trace the cracks in his language and mind throughout the contradiction of being in a rush for going, desiring to “burn the identity card” (Geçgin, 2015, pg.16) and that much immotility. That state of the nameless character in the novel, is not a ruthless thing that pop up from nowhere. Like Alisan who starts to perceive noises as distinct voices by being closer to Bindağ, the root place, the nameless character, remembers that there is “a voice before voice” (Geçgin, 2015, pg. 19) when he goes back to past. Yet, even if there was something that he may rely on, it is taken away or forgotten as if it has never existed.

Indeed, it is the existence of the body that has mutilate the tongue and the world, and because it needs to be fed, it’s the “prison” (Geçgin, 2015, pg.17) of the person which keeps him in the world. The nameless character tries to tame his body outside of the society and its rules. Moreover, he thinks that, being free of the body is the only way to be free: “For now, two repasts, but with time, he intended to reduce to just one.” (Geçgin, 2015, pg. 21). The evoke of this disciplined voice, leave the impression that this nameless character has built on the impossibility of the all scope that Alisan has lost with torture. There is not the chance to find a world, the body is the obligatory space of the existence on the world, and it is only possible to produce a closer with escaping from the body and all other prisons that body creates, including language. The language that he speaks is not possessed by him, in the

contrary, as Derrida describes he is a one of the “certain people” who “must yield to the homo-hegemony of dominant language” and he “must lose [his] idiom in order to survive or live better”. (Derrida, p.30) Yet in the nameless character, “living better” does not seem as an option.

Although the nameless character, distinctly, without a backward glance, takes the road, he stays the city that he was born and grown but feel too much stranger that “sometimes he wanted to ask a random person, “where is this place, which city is this” (Geçgin, 2015, pg.27) Yet, now he is in a different layer of the city. This is not a progress but falling to a cycle that is not belong to him. The paper collectors are the first people that he run across in this cycle. After his journey begins, Mahmut, who has this “patois” that also Alisan’s grandmother has, and his sanctuary becomes the first socialization trial of nameless character. In other words, the degraded version of language he speaks, Turkish, gives the first familiarity sense to him.

As a matter of fact, this layer of the city, which was invisible in his former life, turns to a salvation place for him. While he is walking on the street of the city, he also hears a language he does not know. As opposed to Alisan, the nameless character shows a sign of familiarity with thinking “It is probably Kurdish”.

Altuğ, defines that as a renunciation process: “The process of one’s renunciation from his home, social status, dignity, hygiene standards, urbaneness, humanity and his arrival to a mountain, first passing İstanbul and the whole country, reveals in the book synchronically.” (Altuğ, 2015, p.27) This renunciation, in which the basics of life included, also captures as Derrida indicates “forbidding” language to oneself. (Derrida, p. 33) Not something that he is subjected to, but also an acceptance which triggers him to a total destruction.

It is also a sign of his decisiveness about his annihilation. Hence, he consents to be Erkan, another person, to avoid going back to his former life. Yet, Mahmut and Sadık's political involvements, again makes him feel to be trapped because of biological needs: "All these holes, pores in his body were continuing to exchange even though he did not want to. If he could find a way to close, he would probably get rid of this exchange operation." (Geçgin, 2015, pg. 48) The nameless character is aware that this is in fact death, but he does not know how to cope the uneasiness that coming with the leaks from outside to his inside. Yet, this annihilation desire is not for the real death but for emancipation from his current life that makes him mute:

"One way or another, he thought, I will leave everything behind soon, the crowd that around me, their words, their murmurs, their coalescences, I will leave behind. I will find myself a wild and remote place. For a while, I will just listen to the voice of full, dense emptiness on the air, the sound of the wind which vibrate the emptiness, I will give ear, to the small sounds of the shattering, crashing earth, then I hope, I will forget forgetting. (Geçgin, 2015, pg. 48)

In a way, the state that is only possible to reach by death, turns into a contradiction in his tongue. As a matter of fact, his next socialization which consists of a mute child and an old man living on the streets, shows that this is a sign of a tension between him and his tongue/language more than a coincidence. The way the mute child communicate unsettles his relationship with the language:

"He thought about the tongue inside child's mouth. Then, he tried to imagine his tongue, inside his mouth, he wiggled his tongue. Maybe, his mouth should have been sealed long time ago. But his mouth was opening, and the words was revealing as sound bubbles filled with meanings, which is not certain

how and with which miracle. Was there a relationship between him and the things that was revealing? Probably not. Maybe, he has never learned the thing named to talk.” (Geçgin, 2015, pg. 51-52)

The act of talking, which the muted child even able to do, is seen impossible for the nameless character. Because, he is alienated from not only the language, which is means of expression, but the organ inside his mouth. The image of “too many mouths covered the whole body” (Geçgin, 2015, pg.52) which he envisions while falling asleep, shows that, the tongue, the language turns into a kind of nightmare for him. Also, his idea about what makes the act of talking (not his tongue but his brain), signifies the disparity between his body and his tongue. For nameless character, it is not possible anymore to attribute a meaning to an act done with tongue, and to talk with a tool. His encounter with Gezi resistance happens in the circle of this non-ability. The inability to use the tongue and the language, and not believing “so quickly that you are a people, cease listening without protest to those who say ‘listen’” (Derrida, p.34) is the key case that the nameless character experiences. As a matter of fact, the encounter of Alisan which is concluded with his death in *Son Adım*, reveals as being beat to death at the Gezi park resistance in *Uzun Yürüyüş*.

While he was trying to destruct himself, his own will is again taken away from the nameless character. He is even disturbed by the doctor who speaks “soft” and “clear”. (Geçgin, 2015, pg. 58) He introduces himself as Mahmut in the hospital. The doctor thinks he is one of the resisters, but what he remembers it was as if “a fall, that makes him think he wings very slowly, pleasant, slow motion flight” (Geçgin, 2015, pg.60) Because he does not want to deal with any kind of earthly stuff, while the doctors, attorneys are trying to communicate about what happened to him, his

reaction becomes to be more quite. All the institutions, the social life has already been destructed as Yıldız explains here:

“For monolingualism is much more than a simple quantitative term designating the presence of just one language. Instead, it constitutes a key structuring principle that organizes the entire range of modern social life, from the construction of individuals and their proper subjectivities to the formation of disciplines and institutions, as well as of imagined collectives such as cultures and nations” (Yıldız, p. 2)

Therefore, once he leaves the hospital, continues his journey with the decision of not using his tongue and the language at all. (Geçgin, 2015, pg. 90) Also, he realizes the world that settled inside him, cannot be removed without leaving the city. After that, the next stop becomes the mountains of the Eastern Anatolia.

Like Alisan, nameless character comes from the city to mountains, from the murmurs of a lot of language to one specific language, which is also not understandable. The language which is spoken here is Kurdish. When the women that he runs into speaks, what he feels is “a slight of torment”: “Will be a time, he thought, when I can hear human voice without suffering?” Throughout his journey to reach the mountains, the voices he heard as a buzzing, murmurs have now turned into painful sounds. He feels that he moves away from these sounds only when he sees the top of the mountains. At that time, he starts to live like an animal, a got. (Geçgin, 2015, pg.111) His perception of time also turns into “a single day” and this time only interrupts by the existence of other bodies around the mountains. His encounter with the injured body, which he cannot distinguish if it is a child or a woman, opens his mouth and body again. When he hears the first words of the injured person, who he understands that it

is a woman, he cannot understand what is the sounds that the women make, and ask himself: “Is it Kurdish? Is it another language? Is it even a word word?” (Geçgin, 2015, pg.133) Yet, when the woman begins to tell “story” and talks “excitedly”, unwillingly, he becomes a part of this communication.

After a while, not understanding of each other’s languages, makes body to turn into the tongue. Thus, the effort of nameless character to communicate that injured women, is the first sign of his humanity after his life in the mountains: “He was not understanding the words, but this voice was telling something anyway.” (Geçgin, 2015, pg. 134) Although until now, he has heard the whole sounds as a noise, he hears this women voice as a “talking voice” which ironically corresponds the time that he is free of all kind of his humanity.

In a way, after this experience, the nameless character realizes what he has aimed to reach at the end of this long walking: “Have I hoped that a sound inside me, which I thought it has already gone, would raise? A sound, which can only happen here, in this emptiness, and hearing it would not have anything with my ear?” (Geçgin, 2015, pg. 138)

The cycle that nameless character experiences, reveals a basic thing about his relationship between his tongue and his language. Like Alisan, the nameless character has a disparity, in the languages that they have in their lives. The inability of communication raises a question about the language of the texts. The mother-tongue, which is embodied in the language of the novel/the language of the character, creates lack of communication which causes a disconnectedness.

2.4 The Heaviness of the Language: Non-lingual Collapse in

Mevsim Yas

This split in the mind in terms of language and the tension reveals itself in both the language of the novel and also the act of protagonist in *Uzun Yürüyüş* and *Son Adım*. Also, the place, where they have lived, and their culture are different. Yet, in *Mevsim Yas*, the whole plot takes place in Batman where the majority is Kurdish.

Novel consists of three layers that show different aspects of cultural and political atmosphere of Batman: the first one is a frame narrative, and the third person narrator focuses on Zehra. The second layer, there is an ongoing narrative throughout the letters coming to Zehra from Fesla. The third one is the journal of Taha. Yet, Zehra mostly functions as an observer, or a tool to convey the other characters' stories.

Fesla, Taha and Said's stories basically draw the political atmosphere of Batman, in 1990s and 2000s throughout the first-person narrations which can be connotated to a testimony. In other words, unlike *Son Adım* and *Uzun Yürüyüş*, in this text, the narration aims to convey the "reality" about what happened in Batman from 1990s to today, by the means of language which is not belong to the place of the novel. The text reveals itself very openly, communication never faces an obstacle, yet the whole story is related to a language, Kurdish.

The novel begins with Zehra's daily routine. She comes from school where she works as a teacher and first runs across the doorman of the apartment who gives a latter to her. After reading students' papers, she notices an email that says, "I will slice your throat!". When she looks the sender, she sees the name of Hezbollah.³

Firstly, she thinks the email is coming from her students as a bad joke and does not pay attention. Then, she starts to read the anonymous letter.

³ Hezbollah is a Shiah Islamist group which has shaped in Iran which has its own followers in Turkey. Yet, Turkey Hizbullah consists of mostly Sunni Kurds and has its own structure in Turkey, that has been known the violence at specially east of Turkey including Batman in 1990s. See also, Kurt, M. (2015) *Türkiye'de Hizbullah*. İstanbul: İletişim.

With the letter, another narrator occurs in the novel, who is revealed later as Fesla. The letter starts with her memories from her childhood, which takes place in 1990s, in Batman. Fesla, describes “those days”, a time period of a “long mourning.” (Ceyran, p.11): “Think of a train with wagons full of death people and think me as the body of that train.” (Ceyran, p.11) She continues to explain why she is writing this letter to Zehra which is “the sense of deficiency that I never able to complete.” As Geçgin’s novels’ characters, Alisan and nameless character have, the narrator Fesla, has the same sense of emptiness that she cannot deal with.

That is why, although they live in the same city and they are friends, Fesla prefers to write her stories to an anonymous letter instead of talking. In other words, she needs another tool, the writing, to find a place that she can express the flaw that she copes with. As a matter of fact, her first memory is from the day that Medet released from Diyarbakır Prison after nine years. What she remembers from that day is the “uncanny crowd” and the stories has been told that day: “It has been told horrible stories about Diyarbakır Prison, that never trailed away from my memories, no matter how much time passed by.” (Ceyran, 2017, pg.12) Then Fesla gives a grotesque description of another woman, who is also released from Diyarbakır Prison. After her mother’s sudden death, Fesla and her sister Hicran face with the abuse of her father and stepmother. She starts to live under a couch like a “mouse” when her father beats her sister. (Ceyran, p. 17) For Fesla, the only escape from the reality is that couch and the notes that Medet puts on the hole of the wall between their houses. The only communication of Fesla with other people other than her sister is these notes. And Medet is the only figure that gives her a hope. Yet, even with him, she refuses to talk. Again, the writing as a tool substituting to the speaking. Like

what she did when she was a child, as a grown up even writing this latter seems to be a challenge for her:

“Do you know, I am surprised that I can speak with you like this? I have come to this age; I did not speak with anybody. Only words have come out from my mouth. I am stuck here, where I am. Do you know, what I noticed recently; that I have never shouted. I am a stranger to my own voice.”

(Ceyran, p. 41)

Then Fesla continues what causes this alienation, the “Hezbollah’s grave house” like her, makes neighborhood silent for a while. The uneasy silence, like hers, comes from another violence takes place in the same environment.

Yet, although there is an emphasize on silence/mutation and loss of the ability of speaking, the novel reveals the background of that uneasiness. As a matter of fact, the young female’s suicides, that has been a severe problem for Batman⁴ is also a part of the atmosphere that Fesla grows in. She witnesses these suicides as a child, who will grow up and be a potential victim of that epidemic in her city. Her observations about these suicides also reflect Fesla’s own situation: “They have offended the girls of our neighborhood. They were killing themselves one by one. They wanted whole world to know that they were resented.” (Ceyran, p.49) Her efforts to write her memories as a grown up to Zehra, are her trial to be seen and understood.

Contrary to Geçgin’s characters, Fesla has a desire to be seen and to be understood. For instance, Fesla’s experience about the school, reveals a visible problem of mother tongue in the novel contrary to Geçgin’s novels: “I answered teacher’s

⁴ It is possible to access futher information from some other sources such as followings: Halis, M. (2001) *Batman’da Kadınlar Ölüyor*. İstanbul: Metis. Sever, A. and Erkan, R. (2004) “The dark faces of poverty patriarchal opression, and social change: Female suicides in Batman, Turkey” in *Women and international Development Journal*, 282: 1-24.

question with one word. I was not aware that I was speaking in Kurdish. In my bilingual life, I did not know put which one where. I was confused where should I speak which language.” (Ceyran, p. 66) Fesla knows the source of “the chaos on her mind”, by writing “not my memoirs but my memory”. (Ceyran, p. 41) She attempts to give a background the mutation/uneasiness that characters including her, have experienced. In other words, it is possible to find the “thing” that Geçgin’s characters are not able to define, is put on the table by Fesla and Taha with a directness.

Although it seems that Taha has a commonality with Alisan and the nameless character, in terms of their attachment to the life, still there is a disparity between them. Especially, revealing the background of the current detachment to the world has the reasons that one can easily understand: State violence and Hizbollah’s assassinations.

For instance, like Geçgin’s characters, Taha also experiences a detachment from outside world and do not expect anything from communication via language: “I feel like I am stuck in a bell jar. I am watching the world from there. I cannot move the place that I am squashed into. Life is maintaining itself apart from me dragging me after it. I cannot step in anything.” (Ceyran, 2017, pg. 162) How Taha describes himself is not different from Geçgin’s character in terms of perception of themselves. Yet, Taha grounds his disconnection to life openly by revealing how current violence affects him: “This immutableness that extends the time, I feel frequently that I am losing my sense of reality. The mass graves are being excavated, bagful of bones is being extracted from. I am not surprised anymore. I am disgusted myself because of that.” (Ceyran, p. 79) The effort to reveal all kind of violence can be counted as the

effect of “political violence” that both Fesla and Taha have experienced.⁵ (Yıldız, p. 156)

The political atmosphere, the language problem that carries both Fesla’s and Taha’s relationships with the world to an uncanny situation are expressed throughout their narrations. The split in the mind, in terms of mother tongue and the official language, the political trauma that affected them, are not hidden.

For instance, Taha gives the reason why he writes this journal: “I am in an anxious desire of writing. I feel like I am late. I should have begun writing a journal long before. I should have recorded all my testimonies. I doubt that most people will understand what kind of evil I am talking about.” (Ceyran, pg. 28) After one of the “evils”, that causes his feeling of “having nowhere to go” (Ceyran, p79), is for instance, murder of his uncle. Her mother stops talking after that murder. Therefore, the “desire of writing” stems from all that mutism around him. Like Fesla, who grows in violence, language and tongue lose their functions.

The novel finishes with the suicide of Fesla, who thinks Taha is killed by Hizbullah, she becomes a victim of the “suicide” epidemic widespread in Batman that she grows in. After her suicide, Taha shows up and Zehra does not have “any word to say” to Taha. Taha takes Fesla’s belongings without saying “any word”. The city continues to experience the violence at the end, in other words, telling the stories of these violence changes nothing. Again the medium of narration, the language, does not achieve its goal: Writing does not change anything.

⁵ It is important to note that, Mehtap Ceyran herself was imprisoned for nine years when she was fifteen years old. Therefore, besides the lingual cracks which carries Kurdish in novel throughout the events that are in fact experienced in Kurdish, it is possible to make a connection between *Mevsim Yas* and Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s *Mutterzunge* (1990) in terms of political trauma and violence, as Yasemin Yıldız underlines. (Yıldız, Y. 2011 “Surviving the Mother Tongue: Literal translation and trauma in Emine Sevgi Özdamar” in *Beyond the Mother Tongue*. New York: Fordham University Press.)

For three of the novels analyzed in this chapter, the tension between mother tongue and the official language, creates cracks in the protagonists' minds which leave traces on the narration in the lingual level. The languages of the novels, in other words, achieves to show the leaks of the other language, Kurdish, to the texts, by implication of failure of protagonists in conveying the complete layers of their minds. On the other hand, *Mevsim Yas* constructs a narration in order to reveal the reasons behind those cracks.

The clash of the mother tongue and the official language manifests itself via the grotesque descriptions of violence, political traumas and the loss of ability to speak because not having hope to be understood in the "official" language, which is also a part of the trauma and the language of the narration. The detailed transfer of violence in the narration, is the lingual disruption to be able to cope with the clash of Turkish and Kurdish, the mutism and the political trauma.

**CHAPTER III: IN THE TRANSLATION ZONE OF TURKEY, FROM
TURKISH TO KURDISH: WHO IS THE READER OF THESE
TRANSLATIONS?**

Introduction

The idea of a trans-border literature is not only about the visible checkpoints. In fact, even in the same countries which seem to be a homogenous unit, it is possible to find the traces of borders without any concrete checkpoint desks. As a stateless nation's language, Kurdish in Turkish borders, as one of these examples, encounters "translation at checkpoints" as Emily Apter's points out (Apter, 2013, p. 106-107). These checkpoints, according to Apter, serve for maintaining the sovereignty of the states. In that context, which sovereignty is being maintained throughout translating Turkish literary works to Kurdish?

Considering the language oppression on the Kurdish in the context of translation and Kurds as a stateless nation, this sovereignty argument seems to not simply applicable to Kurdish translation checkpoint (Vali, 1998, p.84). On the contrary, because of not having a "monolingual" border throughout a nation state, Kurdish has to find its way to keep itself alive. In other words, in the context of cultural capital, being in the disadvantageous position, has raised the efforts spent on the Kurdish language.

In the Turkish case, as Jameson defines being "third world literature" has created a genre of novel which is possible to connect to it a national allegory (Jameson, 1986, 65-88). In the Kurdish case, there has been another layer: First, the language should prove that it exists (especially in the Turkey context) and then create a tradition of novel (which is the modern genre serves to construction of a national identity) and be accepted to Kurdish readers who have lived under the different language's culture, then hopefully be a part of "World literature" system (Uzun, 1996, p.23).

Without having a border, a sovereignty and a fair cultural capital because of the oppressions on language, what is the position of Kurdish in the literary market? Translations of the literary works from one language to another, in general sense maximize the reader rate. Yet, the translation from Turkish to Kurdish, in what way raises the reader rate? Although the Kurdish people live in Turkey are considered as bilingual, writers who has Kurdish origins, such as Yaşar Kemal, Cemal Süreya, Murathan Mungan, Ayhan Geçgin, Mehtap Ceyran etc, have produced their literary works in Turkish and they are accepted as a part of Turkish literature. Some of books of those writers have translated in to Kurdish. Also, some other well-known writers such as Orhan Pamuk, Hasan Ali Topbaş, Oğuz Atay, Ahmet Altan's novels are also translated into Kurdish. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the role of those translation from Turkish to Kurdish, in terms of Kurdish language and literature in order to see the sub-dynamics of "world literature" system. Also examining the place of those translations in the Turkish intellectual/cultural discourse to understand the multilayered structure of world literature system in general.

In this chapter, firstly the language policy of Turkish government towards Kurdish and the status of Kurdish in Turkey will be explained. After looking the translation journey of Kurdish in general, the chapter focuses on the translations from Turkish to Kurdish. Also, since Murathan Mungan's poems are one of the first translations from Turkish to Kurdish and the novel takes place in Mardin, the last section will have a close reading to *Paranın Cinleri* (1997) (Gins of Money). After that I will give a panorama of Turkish novels translated into Kurdish in general by which I aim to show the intra-translation dynamics between Kurdish and Turkish.

3.1 Kurdish Language in Context of Turkey: Bilingualism or Diglossia?

Hamit Bozarslan, describes the ongoing Kurdish question in Turkey, between 1984-1999 as following:

“The overwhelming majority of human rights violations in Turkey from 1984 to 1999 was directly linked to Kurdish issue and especially to the war between Turkish state forces and the guerilla Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which began in 1984 and officially ended in 1999. According to most common estimates, more than 37,000 people died in the war. More than 2,000 people, mostly intellectuals, were killed by “unidentified” persons; some 1,779 villages and hamlets, and 6,153 settlements were partly or completely destroyed, along with several towns (Sirnak, Kulp, and Lice, for instance); and almost three million people were forced to leave their homes. Tens of thousands of people were arrested during those 15 years. Nearly 10,000 of them are still in prison, and while most are PKK fighters, some are Kurdish members of parliament, writers and journalists.” (Bozarslan, 2001, p.4)

One of the most famous Turkish language poet/writer Murathan Mungan’s some poems were translated into Kurdish in 1996, with the name of *Li Rojhilata Dile Min* (1996) (The East of My Heart) when the Kurdish question was one of the biggest issues of Turkish politic agenda. The intellectual life of Kurds, as Bozarslan indicates, were not in a comfortable zone in that time period. Yet, still like this translation attempt, there has been always an effort on the lingual level.

As Servet Erdem summarizes his dissertation named “Political fictions and Fictional Politics: A Comparative Study of the Political Unconsciousness in the Turkish and Kurdish Novel” (Erdem, 2018, p.41), the Kurdish language became a question around the end of 19th century. The nationalist ideas affected the Kurdish

intellectuals as well and as Hassanpoor indicates, the literacy rate was very low (%2.2) among Kurds even in 1927 (Hassanpoor, 1992, p.442).

Although the mass publication started late Ottoman period, this illiteracy among Kurds and lack of prose tradition, became a primary concern for the Kurdish intellectuals (Erdem, 41). After the promulgation of Turkish Republic, the language policies of the Turkey, stopped these attempts on Kurdish language, and the production of any kind of written material, even speaking of Kurdish was banned for decades and these restrictions could not softened until early 1990s. Therefore, the construction of national identity, at least in the legal level was not possible until that time. This possibility opened a door for Kurdish and the language become one of the most important priority for Kurds to claim their rights towards the government. Yet in the meantime, Kurdish people remained to be a part of Turkish cultural sphere. Turkish writers who have Kurdish origins have continued to be the writer or reader of Turkish literary products.

Therefore, although Kurdish is the second most used spoken language in Turkey, the visibility of Kurdish has been controversial for decades (Öpengin, 2012, 151-180). Yet, Kurdish, invisibly remained in the realm of Turkish literature. Beyond the political engagement of it, the invisibility of Kurdish, on the other hand, have made that translation attempt as an important start to make Kurdish language visible in the context of literature besides the efforts of writing Kurdish novels, as evident by Uzun's literary productions which have started in 1980s at Sweden.

With the promulgation of Turkish Republic, the Turkish language has become a prior issue for the government in order to complete the national identity (Yılmaz, 2013, p.142). The language policies of the government have aimed to create a homogenous Turkishness besides others, with the Turkish language. The mixed

structure of Ottoman Turkish with Arabic and Persian has been perceived as a threat and the “purification” in language became an important topic among intellectuals in the foundation process of the Turkish nation state. Other languages spoken in Anatolia, including Kurdish, were perceived as threats for the creating homogeneous nation state.

On the other hand, it is crucial to keep in mind that those restrictions in Kurdish language, effects the balance of where it stands in both in Turkish zone as well as the World Literature system. As Ömer Taşpınar demonstrates in *Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey* (2005) after the promulgation of Turkish Republic, the construction of nation state/national identity, has caused the homogenization of the language as well. Zeydanlıoğlu summarizes these language policies of Turkish government which directly affects Kurdish’s status in his article named “Turkey’s Kurdish Language Policy” (2012). According to Zeydanlıoğlu, the lingual restrictions like “Citizen, Speak Turkish!” (Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!), or “Sun-language Theory” (Güneş Dil Teorisi), which was suggested in a common conference of Turkish History Institution and Turkish Language Institution, neglected the other languages of Anatolia including Kurdish and claimed Turkish to be the essence of the whole languages (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p.99-125). As a matter of fact, one can observe that while constructing Turkish Republic out of Ottoman Empire, with other cultural elements, language has been carried from a multilingual sphere to a monolingualist sphere.

Since, Kurdish has faced restrictions, banishments in the countries such as Turkey, the language becomes more and more important to keep Kurdish identity alive. Amir Hassanpoor’s influential studies such as *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan, 1918-1985* (1992), and his article “The internalization of language conflict: The case

of Kurdish” (1993), reveals the position of Kurds/Kurdish in the context of nationalism and the effort of the Kurdish intellectuals protect the language. According to Hassanpoor, the banishments raised the efforts on the language which turned into the only soil mixture to keep Kurds as a nation (Hassanpoor, p.146).

Therefore, Kurdish language and its relation to the countries that Kurds live in, Kurdish Literature is more than a single national literature consist of one /standard language. Since as Clémence Scalbert-Yücel, points in her articles such as “Emergence and Equivocal Autonomization of a Kurdish Literary Institution in Turkey”, that the “Kurdish Literature Universe” is not only involve Kurdish, but it also has a controversial relationship with Turkish Literature (in the context of Turkey).

In the article named “Languages and the Definition of Literature: The Blurred Borders of Kurdish Literature in Contemporary Turkey” (2011), Scalbert adds another angle and emphasizes that in the context of linguistic, settling the border of this literature is not that easy. As Hashem Ahmedzadeh also points in his article named “The Kurdish Novel and National Identity-Formation Across Borders” in *Novel and Nation in the Muslim World* (2015), because of the oppression on Kurdish (some scholars such as Hassanpoor 1992, Skutnabb-Kangas 2012, Fernandes 2012, O’Driscoll 2014, indicate that as “linguicide” which means annihilation of a language) some literary (such as Yaşar Kemal’s books) works produced in Turkish have created a debate whether it is possible to consider them as a part of Kurdish Literature or not. Therefore, the monolingualist agenda (Gramling, 2016, p. 39), and its consequences have affected both the production level and translation dynamics between Turkish and Kurdish literature.

This politic atmosphere in Turkey about Kurdish policies, inevitably effected the Kurdish literary products. Kurds have been bilingual, but the Kurdish did not become a language that Kurds can have education with or produce literary works with it. As Ergin Öpengin explains, Kurdish-Turkish bilingualism is not exactly a bilingualism which means a full functioned two mother tongues:

“Diglossia, in turn, refers to a relatively stable stage in which the languages of the contact situation are functionally separated across a set of social domains and communicative situations. In this configuration, the variety that is used for more prestigious functions such as education, media and market is high variety, while the variety used in more intimate domains and functions such as intra-familial communication, friendship and neighborhood is the low variety. When the functional separation of the language is no more respected the low language inevitably follows the path to shift and bilingualism tends to be temporary and transitional.” (Öpengin, 2012, p.153)

So, although many famous Turkish writers have Kurdish origins, they did not write in Kurdish because either they did not know Kurdish at all as Murathan Mungan case or did not know enough to write in Kurdish. Some Kurdish intellectuals, including Mehmed Uzun, Firat Ceweri, Hesenê Metê, Rojen Barnas etc. have learned to write in Kurdish when they were in prisons or exile. Therefore, although oral literature has a powerful tradition, Kurdish modern prose like genre of novel, has not found a sphere to grow. As a matter of fact, because of the ongoing oppression on Kurdish language, Mehmed Uzun and other Kurdish writers emphasize that Kurdish does not have a novel tradition yet (Uzun, 1992, p.178). Since the language is directly connected to the construction of collective identity of nation as Anderson points in *Imagined Communities* (1983) and considering the novel as a significant genre to

create national identity, the efforts has been spent on Kurdish and specifically Kurdish novel along with press.

Also, in the context of Kurdish nationalism, the gap between “pedagogy” and “performance” as Bhabha points out, is even harder to grasp (Bhabha, 1990, p.291-323). Staying on the margins, and not able to create a standard pedagogy because of lack of governmental institutions, brings Kurdish nationalism and the language efforts in a uncannier position in the first place. Therefore, the efforts to create that pedagogy can be traced throughout the translations in Kurdish as well.

For example, the translator of Mungan’s poems, Ruken Bağdu, describes the atmosphere of the 1990s, the time period that of Mungan’s poems was published as following:

“It has been sixteen years that this book has published. Considering that specific time period, Kurdish publishing houses, both translation and original books, newspapers, journals in Kurdish-Kurmanji dialect were very new, especially for the Kurds in Turkey. These publications were coming out in hard conditions at Istanbul where was far from the main readers and mostly, they were collected before reaching the readers, or because those publications were Kurdish, or having words like “Kurds... or... Kurdistan” on the book cover, due to the discriminative attitudes of distribution companies, those companies were rejecting the distribution of those publications.” (Ruken Bağdu, *Medium.com*, <https://medium.com/okuryazartv/rûken-bağdu-mungan-şiiirini-kendi-dilinde-bir-daha-okumak-kürtler-için-aynaya-dönüp-bakmak-gibi-566a6b5983af> Accessing date: 15.05.2019)

Under this atmosphere, it seems that publishing Kurdish books was not functional or safe. Yet, translating a Turkish book into Kurdish-Kurmanji dialects (which is the

most spread one in Turkey besides with Zazaki), was both not necessary, since Kurdish readers were bilingual, and it was dangerous, because of the human rights violence which mentioned as below. Yet, Buğdan explains the function of this specific translation as following:

“The Kurdish readers who has already known Murathan in Turkish, I think reading Murathan’s poetry in their language again which they were encountering their existence position, myths, cultural motives in, was like looking at the mirror. Yes, it was him/her who was there.”((Ruken Bağdu, *Medium.com*, Accessing date: 15.05.2019)

According to the translator, the readers of this Kurdish translation are exactly the same readers who have already read Mungan from Turkish. Therefore, this specific translation is not coherent the first definition of translation that comes in mind. As Octavio Paz indicates, translation is not a simple transfer here (Paz, 1992, p.152). Since, the “foreign” language has already known by target readers of this specific translation, the aim of this translation is beyond the understandability. In other words, this translation does not serve as a bridge of understanding of the words/sentences/the text, but it has its own aim as to make the target language visible.

As a matter of fact, what Ruken Bağdu, the translator of Mungan’s poems says, can be counted as a collective pedagogy which is expected to be performed by the members of the nation. The word “mirror” which Bağdu uses describing the reflections of the Kurds to the Kurdish translation of the poems, in that context, is a reflection/ a scene that one may observe the results of the pedagogy and performance. The attempt itself, in other words, is an imagination of a stable, temporary Kurdishness: “The ‘other’ is never outside or beyond us; it emerges

forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously ‘between ourselves’”(Bhabha, p. 4). The “intimacy” that Bhabha underlines here, can be seen in Bağdu’s interview about the translation. In other word, the intimacy mentioned here comes together with the intimacy that Bhabha emphasize and the translator, Bağdu, expects. Therefore, it is possible to say, the “lower” position of Kurdish in the bilingual area, carries the even micro acting as a wider meaning. The translation becomes the area where the national identity can be constructed in the realm of pedagogy and performance. The desire to find a reader to those translations actually means to create one.

Considering this special position of Kurdish, translation of Turkish literary products to Kurdish has two main functions: First, it opens an active area of utilization for Kurdish. Second, it opens a market place for the Kurdish literature productions. Besides those, it also promotes the diversity discourse in the Turkish intellectual sphere especially by the “Kurdish opening” process and translation from Turkish to Kurdish has become a way to be an evidence of the democratization of the country. (Somer, M., & Liaras, E. G, 2010, p.154) As a matter of fact, the first official Kurdish-Turkish translation actions of the government, therefore, have happened in 2010. The Ministry of Culture Publishing have translated Ehmedê Xanî (1651-1707)’s famous love story, *Mem û Zin* in to Turkish⁶.

Therefore, in the context of Turkey, Kurdish and Turkish do not have a trans-border literature line. As a matter of fact, “translation at the checkpoint” turns into a sovereignty-seeking for Kurdish language and literature, instead of sovereignty of a founded nation state. Therefore, it is necessary to give a brief summary of Kurdish

⁶ Ahmed-i Hani. (2010) *Mem û Zin*. Hz. Namık Açığöz. Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları.

translation zone and examining the specific position of the translation from Turkish to Kurdish.

3.2 Kurdish Translation Journey: Rereading the literature in “mother tongue”

Emily Apter, in the introduction of *Translation Zone*, describes translation as following:

“as an act of disruption, translation becomes a means of repositioning the subject in the world and in history; a means of rendering self-knowledge foreign to itself; a way of denaturalizing citizens, taking them out of the comfort zone of national space, daily ritual, and pre-given domestic arrangements.... Translation is a significant medium of subject re-formation and political change.” (Apter, 2005, p.6)

The language policy of Turkey, which Nergis Ertürk describes as an “extreme self-surgery” (Öztürk,2011, p. xi), affected the “self-knowledge” of Kurdish language. As its consequence, until 1990s the existence of Kurds/Kurdish was denied (Yeğen, 2003, p.128) and even after the abolishment of 2932 numbered law which banished the Kurdish, publication in Kurdish has remained banned (Kubilay, 2004, p.55-85). After that day, gradually the official language policy has changed especially with the EU harmonization process. Yet, in the meantime, Kurdish intellectuals have continued to publish Kurdish magazines and books in despite of ongoing oppression over the language. Therefore, translation as a “medium of subject re-formation”, has become a new tool to cope with the ongoing limitation to Kurdish Literature. In other words, taking Kurdish from its political context and putting in “translation zone”, opens a new door for producing cultural capital.

Kawa Nemir, one of the most famous English-Kurdish translators, with reference to Ergin Öpengin's article named "Bizava wergerê di Kurmanciyê de (Translation Movement in Kurmanji Kurdish), summarize the journey of Kurdish translation. In his article named "Kürtçe ve Çeviri"(Kurdish and Translation) published in the website named *Kurdilit*, Nemir describes translation as following: "Translation is an experience that people are constantly exposed to under any circumstances, such as war or peace, immigration, settlement, trade and so on" (Kawa Nemir, *Kurdilit.com*. http://www.kurdilit.net/?page_id=703&lang=tr, Accessing date: 20.05.2019) This "exposition" according to Nemir, starts with the a Bible translation which is not an efficient one. According to Nemir, Mela Mahmûdê Bazîdî (1797-1863), made the first "methodical and comprehensive" translation of Şerefxane Bedlîsî (1543-1603?)'s book named *Tevarîxî Qedîmî Kurdistan* (Primeval History of Kurdistan) in 1858-59 to serve the Russian embassy Alexander Jaba at Erzurum. Also, around this time, an orientalist Peter Lerch (1828-1884)'s book named *Forschungen über die Kurden und die Iranischen Nordchalder*. had a few short stories translated from Finish and Turkish to Kurdish. Interestingly, Nemir notes that, thanks to Armenians and westerner missionaries, Bible was translated into Kurdish for seven times between 1856-1923 and one of them was in Armenian alphabet.

According to Nemir, because Kurds have not had a nation state and have lived under the different state's rules, like Kurdish Literature and its publication, the translation has been also interrupted. In different time periods and areas, some translation has been done but it has never had a continuous journey.

For example, the writer of the "first Kurdish novel" named *Şivanê Kurmanca* (1935) Erebe Şemo (1897-1978), translated Aleksandr Araratyan's theatre play from Russian to Kurdish with the name of *Koçekê Derewîn* (Dancer Boy the Liar). In the

meantime, according to Nemir, around Syria, an intellectual school has been established with the leadership of Celadet Alî Bedirxan (1893-1951). The journals *Hawar* (1932-1943), *Ronahî* (1942-1945), *Roja Nû* (1943-1946) and *Seher* (1943-1945) have opened an area for the translation in Kurdish. Nemir emphasizes that, although the translations were very limited, for example Kamuran Alî Bedirxan (1895-1978) translated Bible into Kurdish with a priest named Thomas Bois, and he translated some religious stories from Hebrew to Kurdish along with Omar Khayyam's rubaies, some verse of Koran and 700 hadiths.

Also, Öpengin adds another figure in translation area of Kurdish, such as Qedri Can (1911-1972) who started to translate the famous book of Grigory Petrov (1866-1925) *Finland, the Country of White Lilies* into Kurdish and published some part of it in *Roja Nû* but did not complete it. (Öpengin, 2011, p.5). According to Öpengin, along with translation wave occurred in Syria around 1930-1940s, another breaking point has happened after 1980s, the Kurdish intellectuals who migrated to Sweden, started a new translation wave. They started to publish Kurdish magazines, books along with translations. As Nemir also emphasizes, being able to have publishing houses and education in Kurdish at schools at Sweden, the amount of literature products has raised. Nemir also adds that the support of government of Sweden to the translations have encouraged the Kurdish translators and writers in diaspora in order to produce translations. At 1990s those efforts which have been held by the writers/intellectuals in diaspora have spread to the Turkey. Some cultural institutions which were opened in Istanbul and Diyarbakir have started to publish magazines such as *Hawar* that also contributed to the translations. According to Nemir, the magazine named *Jiyana Rewşen* have become the address of the translation, the writers such as Nemir

himself, Cemîl Denlî, A.Rahman Çelik, Mazlûm Doxan and Osman Mehmed, published poems and story translations in that magazine.

Nemir also emphasizes the importance of Lîs publishing house for its effort on the translation. Shakespeare, Franz Kafka, Faulkner, Marquez, Yaşar Kemal, Selim Berekat, Leyla Erbil, Orhan Pamuk, Murahtan Mungan are some of the writers whose books were translated into Kurdish (Kurmanji dialect) by Lîs publishing house. Yet, these efforts are not comparable to for example translations in Turkish. Therefore, Nemir, after giving a brief summary of translation journey of Kurdish, criticizes the situation of Kurdish translation as following:

“As in many other fields, translators and publishers, who are the direct interlocutors of the subject in Kurdish translation, have not yet discussed a road map to discuss the historical and current problems of Kurdish translation and pave the way for a comprehensive translation activity, perhaps a translation movement. This makes Kurdish translation activities limited to either personal efforts or the insistence of one or two publishers to publish translations despite difficult circumstances.

If Kurdish translators and Kurdish publishers (who have gone a long way in translation) compile themselves with a spirit of translation actions, the Kurdish literature, Kurdish culture and art (although has the potential for developing and breaking new grounds still do not have a coherent and efficient relationship with world because translation issues have not been leaned over enough) will certainly leap forward in the next ten years.”.(Kawa Nemir, *Kurdilit.com*, Accesing date: 20.05.2019)

In this long quotation of Nemir, as one of those “interlocutors” of the Kurdish translations, implies three basic points: First, the translators and publishing house’s

current efforts are not enough because they could not develop a road map for the translation issues that make the translation efforts dependent on individual efforts and some publishing houses efforts that continue the translation practices under hard conditions. Third, although a Kurdish translation capital has been structured in time, it does not enough to be a “coherent” and “effective” part of the world and translation is the only way to obtain that aim. That gives a quick overview how translation is perceived by one of the most famous Kurdish translators, Kawa Nemir. In other words, translation is not only translation. It goes beyond its meaning. As a matter of fact, as Nemir indicates, translation is not only about literature, it is also considered as a way of collecting/constructing a cultural capital in general as Apter ironically says: “The translation zone is a war zone.” (Apter, 2006, p. xi) The first battlefield of Kurdish in the translation is Turkish⁷.

Translation in general, serves the Kurdish language by opening an area of usage. At the same time, it shows the “capacity” of Kurdish language which has the stigma of being a lower language in Turkey. As a matter of fact, Kurdish translators and publish houses give a special attention to the translation of most important novels to Kurdish. Although Kurdish readers most probably have read these novels from the original language, Turkish, the effort of translation has been maintained. As a matter of fact, the owner of the Lis publishing house and writer Lal Laleş, say that although there is a raising demand for Kurdish books after it becomes selective course and the department opened at the universities, still the sales figures are not high (Lal Laleş, *Aljazeera.com*, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/kurtce-kitaba-talep-az>,

⁷ For example, according to an article from K24 at 4th October 2018, a local writer named Mehmet Sait Temel gives his books for free in Batman. He explains himself as following: “I am delivering my books free in order to serve Kurdish language and culture.” This writer’s effort can be seen as a metaphor for the translations from Turkish to Kurdish in the context of Turkey. Its not the reader who demends the good but the supplier immagined on behalf of them and decides that they need it. <https://www.kurdistan24.net/tr/news/31ab3559-5af4-41b9-b3ea-fde3cd2f6cba> (Access date: 30th May, 2019)

Accessing Date: 30.05.2019). Coherent to that comment of Laleş, the effort of a local writer from Batman named Mehmet Sait Temel appeared as a report in *K24* at 4th October 2018. According to report, Temel gives his Kurdish books for free to people in Batman. He explains himself as following: “I am delivering my books free in order to serve Kurdish language and culture.” This writer’s effort can be seen as a metaphor for the translations from Turkish to Kurdish in the context of Turkey. It is not the reader who demands the meta, but the supplier imagines on behalf of them and decides that they need it.

As a matter of fact, Lal Laleş repeats the “problems” that Kawa Nemir indicates as following: “As a sector, Kurdish publication has some problems. There are not any Kurdish publication unions. There are advertisement, promotion and distribution problems. There are very few bookstores selling Kurdish books. In Turkey, only Diyarbakır, Batman, Van, Kızıltepe, Mardin, Cizre and Istanbul have bookstores that sales Kurdish books. How can you create language, literature through seven bookstores? We lack methods that can make Kurdish books visible.” (Lal Laleş, *Aljazerra.com*, Accessing Date: 30.05.2019) Laleş, continues the interview with counting his requests from government for the Kurdish publishing activities. What he demands is actually to extend the publishing market for Kurdish: Mobile libraries provide support to translation from Turkish to Kurdish, Ministry of Culture should open a separate section for Kurdish language, the state theatres should stage Kurdish play, around fifty selling points should be opened (for Kurdish books) and lastly, the Kurdish publishers should make collaboration with local governments. As one of the most influential publishing house owners, Laleş’s demand is seeking a wider market place. The statue of Kurdish in other words, is dependent on its marketing value along with the cultural context. As a matter of fact, the construction of national

identity, as Anderson indicates, is very related to the printed media (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). The extension and effect of this cultural capital also determines the validity of the collective identity.

Therefore, for each new translation especially Turkish books that are already famous among Kurdish readers, turns into a phenomenon that occurs in the news. For example, Abidin Parıltı⁸, in his article named “Kürtçe Yayın Dünyasının Dünü Bugünü” (The yesterday and tomorrow of Kurdish publishing world) at *Radikal*, mentions about translation of Turkish books to Kurdish (Abidin Parıltı, Kürtçe Yayın Dünyasının Dünü Bugünü, *Radikal*, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/kitap/kurtce-yayin-dunyasinin-dunu-bugunu-1049304/> Accessing date: 30.05.2019). Parıltı notes that Yaşar Kemal, Mıgırdiç Margosyan, Murathan Mungan, Oya Baydar, Orhan Pamuk, Şebnem İşigüzel, Gaye Boralıoğlu, Cezmi Ersöz, Şükrü Erbaş, Ahmet Telli, Metin Kaygalak, Solmaz Kamuran are some of the wide range of Turkish writers that have been translated into Kurdish. After noting that, he repeats Laleş’s and Nemir’s complaints about the situation of Kurdish publishing world and adds that lack of Kurdish literacy makes readers to read Kurdish book in Turkish. So, according to Parıltı’s comments, it seems that Kurdish readers tend to read original Kurdish books when it is translated into Kurdish.⁹ Yet, Parıltı emphasizes that it is really important that Murat Özyaşar and Yavuz Ekinci’s novels are translated into Kurdish because “this is one of the steps that can carry Kurdish to reach the larger masses.” (Abidin Parıltı, *Radikal*, Accessing date: 30.05.2019). What Parıltı recommends to publishers is to protect “Kurdish literature identity” and gravitate to the “prestige” of it. He also

⁸ Parıltı, also is the cowriter of the book named *Kürt Romanı: Okuma Kılavuzu* (2010) with Özlem Galip. Galip, Ö. ve Parıltı. A (2010) *Kürt Romanı: Okuma Kılavuzu*. İstanbul: Sel.

⁹ For example one of the best seller Kurdihs writers in Turkey is Mehmed Uzun. It is possible to find his books Turkish translations almost all bookstors and the translation is more populer then the originals.

adds that the Kurdish books (translations, original books etc.) sell at most between 1000-2000.

Therefore, it seems that the important figures of Kurdish publishing figures such as Abidin Parilti, Kawa Nemir, Lal Laleş are in an agreement about the current situation of Kurdish Publishing world. According to all these figures, in order to increase this sale figure, Kurdish needs more space and translations are crucial to extend the market of Kurdish language and literature. In that context, translation from Turkish to Kurdish, is both become a proof of the “efficiency” of Kurdish which has been neglected in Turkey according to those figures and contributes the language because it forces the language to be in function.

Considering the ongoing oppression in Kurdish language especially in the Turkey, the efforts of translation from Kurdish to Turkish serves as a battle to be able to prove the power of Kurdish. Dilaver Zereq the Kurdish translator of Hasan Ali Toptaş’s novel *Gölgesizler* (1995), also has translated Oğuz Atay’s *Tutunamayanlar* (1972) but not published yet. In the news reports occurred in 2016, Zereq emphasizes that *Tutunamayanlar* is still one of the most studied novels in Turkish literature and because of that he aimed to explore what it would contribute to Kurdish language and literature (Dilaver Zereq, *Malabadi Gazetesi*, http://malabadigazetesi.com/haber-25917-tutunamayanlar_artik_kurtce.html

Accessing date: 30.05. 2019). After saying that Zereq immediately adds the following words: “I have known that Kurdish language will be more than enough for *Tutunamayanlar*. Because of that reason it draws my attention and I decided to translate it.” (ibid.). Yet, at the same time, Zereq in another interview like other leading figures of Kurdish publishing world, describes the position of Kurdish in a more acute position:

“The contribution of translation, even in this era and beyond the all exceptions, will be positive for a language which is deprived of schools and systematic education, and it was. Translation, but from all languages, in this stage will be a school for Kurdish which it has never had, and the schools bell it has never rung. A language which cannot produce itself depending on itself and cannot manage its development in its own frame, can be only realized itself by other languages. The work that me and other translators are doing is the support of this production, and an intervention to the process that makes maintaining of existence possible. This intervention is the contribution itself.” (Dilaver Zereq, *Gazete Duvar*, <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/kitap/2017/10/07/dilaver-zeraq-yasamimizi-edebiyata-adama-luksumuz-olmadi/> Accessing date: 30.05.2019)

Translation is a way to compensate not having a nation state and its apparatus. Describing translation as a school, is another “pedagogy” sign of the construction of national identity. In other words, especially in terms of Turkish, being able to have Kurdish translation of Turkish books, equalize these languages and empowers the culture along with national identity.

Although there is not a catalog of it, one can observe that a selection of the well-known Turkish novels/poem/short stories have been translated into Kurdish from late 1990s to today. Aziz Nesin’s *Fil Hamdi* (1967) translated into Kurdish in 1999 by Doz publishing house, Suzan Samancı’s stories translated into Kurdish in 2001 with the name of *Bajarê Mirinê* (The city of death). In 2002, Orhan Pamuk’s famous novel *Benim Adım Kırmızı* (1998) also translated into Kurdish and Orhan Pamuk himself participated to the Diyarbakir Book Fair and signed the translation of the book. According to news report, Pamuk says that his books were translated into 17

languages, but he specifically wanted to write an epilogue to Kurdish translation (Evrensel, <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/131033/nav-min-sor-e-tanitildi> Accessing date: 30.05. 2019). Also, in 2002, Yaşar Kemal's *Ince Memed* (Mehmed My Hawk) was translated into Kurdish but not in Turkey.¹⁰ In 2007, Lis publishing house translated five selected female writers (Oya Baydar, Sema Kaygusuz, Jaklin Çelik, Leyla Erbil and Müge İplikçi) short stories into Kurdish. Dilaver Zereq and Lal Laleş are the translators of these selections. Next year, in 2008 Murathan Mungan's autobiographic novel *Paranın Cinleri* was translated by Doz publishing house.

Doğan Kitap, which has been a mainstream publishing house translated Yavuz Ekinci's novels into Kurdish one year after the original books. Ekinci's first novel *Tene Yazılan Ayetler* (2010) translated by Lal Laleş for Doğan Kitap in 2011; Ekinci's second novel, *Cennetin Kayıp Toprakları* (2012) in 2013. The translation journey of Ekinci can be counted as the fastest Turkish-Kurdish translation and being published by one of the mainstreams publishing house, shows that around this time period, there was a trend towards translations from Turkish to Kurdish. Yet, despite that trend, the number of translations from Turkish to Kurdish did not increase dramatically until today. Vedat Türkkali's novel *Bir Gün Tek Başına* (1974) in 2017, Murat Özyaşar's *Ayna Çarpması* (2008) in 2011 and *Sarı Kahkaha* (2016) translated into Kurdish in 2019.

For the Turkish perspective, those translation are the proof of the democratization of Turkey and the respect to diversity in the Turkish cultural sphere. Beside Orhan Pamuk's specific emphasize on writing an epilogue on Kurdish translation of his novel, Elif Shafak in her article named "Kürtçe Roman Okumak" (Reading Novel in Kurdish) at *Haber Türk* indicates how she will be happy if her books can be

¹⁰ Kemal, Y.(2002) *Meme Zirav*. Tr. Zeynel Abidin. Berlin: Havibun.

translated into Kurdish as well (Elif Shafak, “Kürtçe Roman Okumak”, *Haberturk.com*, <https://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/elif-safak/630759-kurtce-roman-okumak> Access date: 30.05.2019). Also, she adds the breaking news about translation into Kurdish:

“Doğan Kitap will break a new ground. It is an important development in literature and publishing history of Turkey. The publishing house, my publishing house is preparing to publish Kurdish books. For the starts, Yavuz Ekinc’s *Tene Yazılan Ayetler* (Ayeten Li Can Nîsandî) and Murat Özyaşar’s *Ayna Çarpması* (Bîr) will be translated from Turkish to Kurdish. These books will meet the readers in Diyarbakır Book Fair.”(*Elif Shafak, Haberturk.com, “Kürtçe Roman Okumak”*)

Shafak continues the article by giving some more proofs about her sympathy towards Kurdish/Kurds such as emphasizing that her new novel’s some parts will take place in a Kurdish village. Underlying that *Doğan Kitap* is also her publishing house which takes the initiative of “breaking new ground”, Shafak shows the perspective of Turkish best seller writers towards Kurdish translation. As a matter of fact, in the last part of the article, she highlights that these efforts are contributing to the “democratization” of Turkey. Especially around 2011 with the “Kurdish opening” process, this kind of discourses occurred in the government institutions. For example, in the official web site of Minister of Culture and Tourism, the translation of *Mem û Zin* introduced as following:

“Turkish Ministry of Culture, art and literature, which takes care of quality rather than quantity, encourages the private sector and conducts publishing activities with an approach that paves the way for the private sector, the Ministry attaches great importance to the publication of works belonging to

different cultures and languages as a requirement of its belief and commitment to universal and pluralist democracy.”(y.y. <http://www.kygm.gov.tr/TR-310/mem-u-zin.html>, Accessing date: 30.05.2019).

Therefore, it is possible to say beside some important figures in the Kurdish literature and translation world, with 2010s the Turkish intellectuals and government, also seems to support the development of Kurdish language. Although this translation received some criticism, it still can be counted as the general disposition of Kurdish language in Turkey at that time period. (Selim Temo, “Açıköz’ün Mem û Zin’i”, *Radikal*, http://www.radikal.com.tr/radikal2/acikgozun_mem_zini-1035940/ Accessing date: 30.052019). The translation journey from these aspects can be finalized by the comments of Lal Laleş’s hopes about the place of Kurdish literature in the World Literature system. In his interview in *Notos* Laleş, he describes the role of translation and the position of Kurdish as following:

“It is a bad idea for a writer to be imprisoned in his/her geography and language. Instead of Kurdish poem and novel, it is necessary to write a universal Kurdish poem and novel. We have to open the door of world literature by thinking on style and other problems of literature. The common language of the world, translation removes the borders between languages and societies. The translators who will remove the borders and carry the different languages’ potentials to Kurdish, have a part to play in that. While the world literature polyphony echoing in Kurdish, Kurdish will find its own voice among the interwoven souls and languages. We, as the Lis publishing, will work for to strength the connection between Kurdish and world literature by bringing 100 fundamental novels in to Kurdish.” (Yıldız, 2019, p.112)

As Laleş describes, the Kurdish translation's space in the literary market determines both its position in the Turkish cultural sphere and its relationship with the World Literature system. In order to gain the aim of both creating potential reading to give the pedagogy that the nation need and accumulation of a cultural capital translation and specifically translation from Turkish to Kurdish has a crucial importance for Kurdish Literature zone. Being the periphery of a peripheral space, Kurdish knocks the door of World Literature first through battling in the closest "check point", with Turkish. Translation from Turkish to Kurdish can be counted as the starting point of the entering World Literature system.

The tension between Turkish and Kurdish, in other words, has been embodied in some Turkish novels which especially touch Kurdish geographical and cultural zone. For instance, among others, as one of the first translated books from Turkish to Kurdish, Murathan Mungan's *Paranın Cinleri* also speaks to Kurdish culture/language issues. The language of the novel before translation is Turkish, but as Mungan's poems translator emphasized, as a writer Mungan has been always counted as a part of Kurdish cultural zone because he is half Kurdish and his literary productions have Kurdish cultural impressions as it can be traced in *Paranın Cinleri*.¹¹

3.3 *Paranın Cinleri*: An Example of combined exitance of Kurdish-Turkish in a Turkish Narration

Paranın inleri, is as both the name of first section and the book, starts with an anecdote. One of friends of Mungan's goes to Mardin for a business trip and he makes that specific comment which gives a clue about how Mungan's writing world perceived by Kurdish readers: "I could only understand your writings especially your

¹¹ Yaşar Kemal's novels always counted as part of Kurdish culture as well but they are not translated into Kurdish. Only *Ince Memed 1* was translated into Kurdish and published but in Germany, not in Turkey. (Kemal, Yaşar, K. (2002) Meme Zırav. Tr. Zeynel Abidin. Berlin: Havibun.

plays, **there.**”(Mungan, 1997, p.7) What Mungan first thinks about this comment is being reduced to a “vernacularity”, “a narrow geography”. Yet then, he starts to call his relationship with Mardin: “I have born there. I grew up there. I died there.”(p.8). He compares his relationship with Mardin to the other writers with their hometown like Lorca’s Granada. Yet, this relationship is not a comfortable one: It’s a paradoxical existing between a “strangeness” and “vernacularity”. He repeats that paradoxical situation about writing Mardin: “on the other hand, although from then I always write it, it is also “something” that I could never write it.” In the footnote, he reminds that this Mardin writing is written because of the request of a magazine named *GEO* from Germany.

After noting that, this section continues with his family history which also gives a panorama of Turkey’s social-political situation. He describes his family’s story as a “19th century’s novel.” As a matter of fact, by Seyh Said rebellion in 1925 and *Takrir-i Sukun* law coming after it (low on the maintenance of order), the exiles started. The power exchange in young Turkish nation state, affects Mungan’s family as well. Mungan’s grandfather, who is an Arab from Syria and forced to exile to Mardin in 17th century, again faces exile and prison at that time. His grandfather gives “a fight for a living without knowing any Turkish.” Her grandmother and her six children are exiled to Adana. The whole family who never need to work, start trading but fails. After exile, when they come back to Mardin, “the chaos and tyranny rules” in Mardin. When they go to Istanbul, the cultural differences become more visible. The family members turn to workers from nobility and Mardin and starts to live in a neighborhood of Armenian and Greeks. His grandmother learns Armenian and Greek from those neighbors. After saying that Mungan emphasizes her relationship with Turkish as following: “Both when she came and died, she has

never spoken in Turkish. She did know it, or she refused to learn it.” (p.14). As a matter of fact, when he decides to write his first play, but from the first pages he sees the language barrier between the languages that he grows with and Turkish:

“I gave up writing from the first page, because I had difficulty describing the local taboret with matting. In the vicinity, people were calling that as “Kürsiyye” but how would I say this in Turkish? I encountered the problem of untranslatability between cultures living in the same country.” (p.15)

Mungan after telling this memory, mentions about his relationship both with the languages that were spoken around him and Turkish. Because the accent of his father when he was a high school student was mocked and the banishment of speaking languages other than Turkish, his father who “saw the future of Republic” forbids other people to speak languages other than Turkish with Mungan. Because he did not know Kurdish and his nanny did not know Turkish, he describes their communication as a “powerful, dense and solid relationship like mute people have.” Mungan adds that, his relationship with Turkish can be the compensation of the restrictions in language that his family members faced: “There has to be a reason why I could not learn any language other than Turkish, I remained locked. According to Jung’s *Ecole*, this is kind of a hidden stutter.”(p.16)

In the “Paranın Cinleri” section, Mungan emphasizes his experience with language and gives a panorama of the changing atmosphere while Turkish nation state was founded. In the section named “Mavi Boncuklu Kız” (The girl with blue bead), he mentions the difference between the east and west of Turkey, and how this difference extends to east’s disadvantageous (p.23). Considering the publication date of this book, the situation had gravity. Under the political atmosphere of 1990s, mentioning Kurdish problem was both dangerous and not common. Therefore, hearing those

words from a respected Turkish writer, have an effect on the Kurdish readers who can make empathy with Mungan's situation.¹² As a matter of fact, in that section, Mungan narrates his encounter with "blue eyed" child who had blue bead on her neck. Because Mungan and his friend were dressed as people from city, the girl believes that Mungan and his friend were police. This scene shows the disparity between the Kurds and the rest of the country.

In other sections, the words "exile", "strangeness", and the sense of "not to be firmly in place", consist of the narratives atmosphere. For instance, her grandmother's and aunts' exile process in Istanbul and his relationship with his family is always described with the sense of strangeness. In the last section of the book named "Gizli Ben" (The Hidden Me), he describes himself as following: "I am intersecting a line that I build between the world and the rural, Mardin and Istanbul."(p.88). As a matter of fact, when he describes his father's photography giving a speech in the public square, he also mentions the courthouse and prisons which were side by side in that square; according to him that is the "tyrant" side of the government which it could be seen in the East of the Turkey. His father was also imprisoned in Diyarbakır Prison, which also has an important effect in the Kurdish collective memory (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009, p.75). The closure of the book, in that context, speaks the invisibility of Kurdish and Kurds along with Mungan's effort to be seen: "Really, the reader, have you ever saw me?" (Mungan, 1997, p.95)

The novels translated into Kurdish from Turkish are generally belongs to the well-known writer. Murathan Mungan's this specific book as an autobiographical narration also speaks to the potential Kurdish readers. Although these potential readers like Mungan himself, have already known Turkish, this situation constructs a

¹² This also explain why one of the first translation from Turkish to Kurdish is Mungan's poets and narratives in 1990s. <https://medium.com/okuryazartv/rûken-bağdu-mungan-şiiirini-kendi-dilinde-bir-daha-okumak-kürtler-için-aynaya-dönüp-bakmak-gibi-566a6b5983af>

connection because of the common memories. Therefore, this narration itself, through translation to Kurdish, provides a “common memory” to construct the collective identity and contribute to make Kurdish visible and functional.

CHAPTER IV:BEYOND THE PERIPHERY: A KURDISH NOVEL IN “WORLD LITERATURE”

Introduction

What Walkowitz calls “born translated” with its core, brings the question of what World Literature is (Walkowitz, 2015, p.4). According to Walkowitz, these literature products’ aim or hope is to be translated in order to have a space in the World Literature. Therefore, starting translation during the production of original text for achieving this goal, is a method to find a space in World Literature system.

Yet, this effort for being in circulation is not new. According to Walkowitz, the Middle Age and early modern Europe works were getting in circulation both in Latin and the vernacular languages. Similarly, in 11th century, while Iranian philosophers were writing not in Persian but in Arabic; Korean, Japanese and Chinese intellectuals were writing in Chinese for almost one thousand years and according to Walkowitz, identifying those as an act of translation is a misconceptualization; because it is rather new to assume that the language that a person writes and the language, he or she speaks is the same. (p.11) That is a sign of the change in the perception of translation for today. With the late 18th century, “national language” era starts which continues until today. (p.12) Now, the expectation is that one should write the language he/she speaks because there is a name for not writing the language that one speaks anymore: “translingual writing”. (p.12)

Yet, today there are other applications other than the “standard” procedure as writing one language and putting in circulation via translation to other languages: transferring the act of writing from one language to another despite writing one language publishing books in another language.

For instance, Milan Kundera who wrote in Czech, has published his books first in French and in recent years, he claimed that he is a “French writer” (Cited by Walkowitz from Michelle W, (2006) *Translating Milan Kundera* Clevedon, U.K.: Multilingual Matters. 151.) Some writers have expanded their readership by writing in a second language, such as Nobokov and Elif Shafak’s manuscripts in English that is a “preemptive translation” (Walkowitz, p.12) Walkowitz, finds the Haruki Murakami’s example striking: There is a translation chain in Murakami’s books: from English to Japanese, from Japanese to English; and again from English to Japanese. According to Walkowitz, Murakami starts with English to avoid the traditional syntax of Japanese and “Murakami’s texts may be “suited to translation,”as he has said, but they are also saturated by translation.” (Walkowitz, p. 16) As a different example, Roberto Bolano, just as he acts with a lot of different motivation such as literal, politic, personal and commercial concerns, he does not write under an authority of a certain language, but use dialects of Spanish, from Chili, Mexico and Iberian. (Walkowitz, p. 17-19)

The examples that Walkowitz gives, while showing the different producing mechanism other than standard translation, winks at World Literature dynamics. In that context, inclusion to World Literature, which depends on literature market, publishing house, translation opportunities, poses an important question: How can a vernacular language, which has not benefited sufficiently from the institutional boundaries of the nation-state, achieve its goal of being a part of world literature?

As shown below, regarding a great deal of author’s writing practices, being in on the border of a nation state seems to be a prerequisite. Yet, one can observe that the relationship with translation and circulation diversifies. For instance, Orhan Pamuk has been criticized because of using a “translatable” language in order to be included

to the World Literature. In that context, considering that the literature still imagined in the borders of nation states, a novel written in Kurdish which could not establish a nation state border, with which ways can reach the opportunity of including the World Literature system? How do the lingual traces, content and narration differ in a novel produced in under these circumstances?

Bakhtiyar Ali's English Pan awarded novel *I stared at the Night of the City* (2016), is a striking example to articulate the dynamics of World Literature system. Here, it is useful to take a look at the Damrosch's distinction:

“Literary language is thus language that either gains *or* loses in translation, in contrast to nonliterary language, which typically does neither. The balance of credit and loss remains a distinguishing mark of national versus world literature: literature stays within its national or regional tradition when it usually loses in translation, whereas works become world literature when they gain on balance in translation, stylistic losses offset by an expansion in depth as they increase their range”(Damrosch, 2003,p. 289)

Since the border Damrosch draws is quite ambiguous, starting from this point, can one assume that to cling the World Literature, there is the condition not to have “literary harm” during translation? Or what is the limit and definition of the “literal harm”? Besides that, is it possible to assert different centers other than the “center” of World Literature?

For instance, the translation process of Mehmed Uzun's novels from Kurdish to Turkish happens between the languages which are far from the center of the World Literature system. Kurdish is also added to the vernacularity of Turkish and Turkish suddenly becomes the center of the periphery. So, in that scenario, is it possible to claim the presence of an instable center and peripheries that try to reach this center?

On the other hand, as an Iraqi Kurdish, live in German and visit his town from time to time, is it possible to define Ali's this specific novel as "born translated" novel?

On the way that those questions pose, looking Mehmed Uzun (1953-2007)'s books' relationship with both Turkish and World Literature will be useful to bring together the function of translation and center-periphery relationship. In that context, the translation of Uzun's novels to Turkish and Bakhtiyar Ali's novel to English indicates two different dynamics of World Literature. In that context, Mehmed Uzun's novels written in Kurdish, translated immediately into Turkish with the contribution of the writer himself, and Ali's novel's translation to English, gives two dimensions of world literature standing. First, the relationship between main center (English) and a vernacular language (in this case Kurdish). Second, Turkish as a peripheral language, becomes center in the Turkey's context which Kurdish becomes periphery's periphery and aims to reach the center (Turkish).

For instance, is it possible to define Uzun's writing process of his novels as "born translated" in the frame of Turkish Literature instead of World Literature? Since in his book named *Bir Dil Yaratmak* (2006), Uzun describes those process; it is possible to follow the trace of preemptive interferences of the writer to the literary product while forming it. Thus, for a literary work, translation plays a crucial role to be circulated and to be able to reach a wider readership. The way of reaching a wider amount of audience, even in the periphery of world literature, as evidence by Uzun's novels' case, needs translation.

In this chapter, I will demonstrate the entrance of one of the peripheral literature works produced in Kurdish, Bakhtiyar Ali's novel *I stared at the Night of the City* and also beside center-periphery relation I will show the relationship between

periphery's periphery as a side dynamic of World Literature throughout Mehmed Uzun's novels' translation process from Kurdish to Turkish.

4.1 In the Edge of Center and Periphery: Where is World, what is World Literature?

Pascal Casanova, in *The World Republic of Letters* gives an overview about the dynamics of world literature beginning with 16th century (Casanova, 2010, p. 97) The balances, hierarchies between languages, beginning of that time, has been the main determiner of the concept of World Literature. According to Casanova, the "republic" of World Literature, has constructed upon an inequality, a contestation among literary spaces. According to that, the past has a heaviness, and the inequality in the world, stem from the structural realities which takes a long time either produce or remove it. What Casanova emphasizes seems to be reductive, yet she adds that this power balance has not a stable ground. Being a Czech Jewish, Kafka's contribution to German Literature, according to Casanova, is an example of the deeper dynamics of the World Literature. (Casanova, p.99) This republic, in other word, is based on the superiority relations and conflicts which also prevent a linear hierarchy. Homi Bhabha's following quotation, elaborates the concept of World Literature and the studies has been done on the concept:

"The study of world literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projections of 'otherness'. Where, once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees – these border and frontier conditions – maybe the terrains of world literature."¹³

¹³ Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994. Pg. 17.

Bhabha's emphasis here is on the current situation of the world. The transnationalism has become as crucial as the notion of "nation" in 19 and 20th centuries. In other word, although the nation and its border still determine among other things such as politics, culture literature as well. The movements, migrations, transitions and the technology, undermine the traditional understanding of World Literature concept which has been existed since Goethe, in 19th century.

On the other hand, Casanova while analyzing the World Literature, gives a crucial space on the specific position of Paris as the "capital" of World Republic of Letters: "It was through this very process of emancipation from national politics that Paris became the world capital of literature in the nineteenth century. Because France was the least national of literary nations, it was able to manufacture a universal literature while consecrating works produced in outlying territories-impressing the stamp of *litterarite* upon texts that come from farflung lands, thereby denationalizing and deparicularizing them, declaring them to be acceptable as legal tender in all the countries under its literary jurisdiction" (Casanova, p.102) The location of Paris, therefore, was not a natural situation, but a consequence of the cultural conditions. Yet, at the same time, she emphasize that, referring to Pierre Bourdieu, the "turning points" of literature world, is not synchronic to the fluxion of history, but it has its own kind of perception of center: "Literary space creates a present on the basis of which all positions can be measured, a point in relation to which all other points can be located." (Casanova, 103) In other words, although in that specific time period Paris was the tool to "accelerate literary time" which also corresponds with aesthetic (Casanova, 110-111), the center is predestined to be changed. In other words, the center and periphery, the "acceleration tool" can be a different geography, language in any time. Yet, the cultural capital, especially the "literary time" and being "old" is

the key point to be labeled either “provincial” or “modern” in the literary space (Casanova 105).

What Casanova says both reveals the dynamics of the World Literature and also shows the hierarchy between literatures. In other words, the Eurocentric approach to the concept is not a coincidence or just related to power, instead, “Literature Republic” in Paris earned that throughout being the oldest and the modern one, even before the concept of modernism.

Damrosch on the other hand, challenges Casanova’s standing by identifying World Literature as following:

“My claim is that world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike.” (Damrosch, p. 6)

If World Literature is a “reading style” and “mode of circulation”, it is not possible to imagine a stable center. Yet, it also inevitably creates some centers, as Casanova frames with Paris example. For instance, according to Damrosch, nonwestern traditions may be impossible to understand without combining them colonial generalizations and prejudgments. (Damrosch, p.146) Thus, even “understanding” of a literature with considering certain conditions, gives a hierarchically high position to one who makes the act of “understanding.” The tolerance comes from the side that has a richer “cultural capital” to the one who has less “cultural capital”.

This approach, in any case creates the delicate imbalance between cultures, languages and inevitably literatures. In other words, this relationship between cultures, creates centers and peripheries consistently, and prevents the evaluation of the literatures which are not seen as a part of the center. That actually raise a

question: Can a vernacular language, which is not the center -center is basically Europe according to Casanova-, really be a part of World Literature without exoticization or without lowering the authentic value of the literary product?

In the context of this question, another and wider question raises: What is World Literature? Is it a new concept that is created recently or was it always there? According to Casanova, it was always there, and the capital of this republic was Paris once. Yet, since these centers always changes, and being a part of World Literature was and is depend on being carried to the center.

Emily Apter, on the other hand, in *Against World Literature*, first criticizes World Literature because its dependency on “assumption of translatability”.(Apter, 2013, p.3) She opposes *untranslatability*, *mistranslation* and *non-translation* to this assumption. (Apter, 2013, p.4) Apter’s challenge is to show the politics of translation in the context of the concepts such as exile, displacement, borders in which translation travel. (Apter, 2013, p.44) Also, by looking at Franco Moretti’s *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (2005), Apter criticizes this “tree” with corresponding it to a system in which has “Neo-Darwinian calculation.” (Apter, 48) According to her, translation as the core of World Literature, is more comparable to mutation than a system that has a tendency towards homogenization. As a matter of fact, Apter with asking questions such as “Are new genres made by virtue of translation failure?” “Is the interdependency of narrative markets-crucial to Wallersteinian model of literary world system now simply the economic symptom of literary survivalism?” and “Is a genre’s travel the measure of its aliveness, its drift the gauge of force to break open the bounds of a closed world-system? (Apter, 2013, p.50-51)”, deepens the structure of World Literature by not taking World Literature system as a “the universal form of homogenized, capitalized “Global Lit””. (Apter,

2013, 51) Yet, Apter also points the hierarchy in which World Literature system acts and creates centers and peripheries even if they are changeable: “Clearly, the nations that name the critical lexicon are the nations that dominate the classification of genres in literary history and the critical paradigms that prevail in literary world-systems.”(Apter, 2013, p.58) The namer of the theory becomes the deterministic of, for instance aesthetic, since, as Casanova point outs, corresponds with time. So, being old also gives the opportunity to be the “namer”.

Considering this controversial and highly politicized World Literature system, although Apter says, “The World Literature perspective brings attention to less internationally exposed writers, putting them into dialogue with each other in an expanded comparative frame. The appellation World Literature in institutional academia abolishes the ontologically objectionable “us-them” dichotomy between national and “foreign” language departments”, (Apter, 2013, 176) there is still a hierarchy in this exchange.

Therefore, World Literature system has too many sub-dynamics which are not easy to grasp and give a standardized location. As a matter of fact, in the context of globalization, it is possible to say literary productions act like goods, and they are goods indeed. Yet, not only the price of money, but the social, economic conditions of the books become a part of the value of those literary goods. Translation becomes the key of increasing the value of a book in the World Literature system. Even in intranational cases, such as Mehmed Uzun’s novels’ translation from Kurdish to Turkish, has contributed to those novels cycling opportunity.

Therefore, as Walkowitz conceptualizes “born translated” novels have become another method to cope with the hierarchy between the non-stable centers and

peripheries. In other words, translating while producing has become a shortcut to be included the World Literature market.

4.2 The *Untranslatability* and World Literature

Walter Benjamin, while arguing on the task of a translator, indicates that the relationship between the source and target languages is a gift one and according to Benjamin, it's a result of the uncontrollable, unfixable nature of language (Benjamin, 2000, p15-23). Also, Benjamin, underlines that a real translation should not go beyond the original product, but it should shed lights on it and make it more significant. This is the only way to have the transmission. Although, it seems to be impossible in a way because word by word translation is unreadable- the incompatibility between source and target languages, gives the opportunity to trace the use of language. (Damrosch, p.159)

Therefore, the problematic of translatability and untranslatability arise at the around of the source language. Benjamin's recommendation as to word by word translation instead of translation of sentences with information, indicates the attempt to protect the loses and disappearances after that the contest as a result of the crash to one another. On the other hand, the translation problem does not come from a deficiency of translation itself, but it stems from the nonexistence of the lingual codes of source language at the target language. (Brisset, 2000, p.443) This macro problem on translation raises another question in micro level. In other words: "What is translation exactly?"

Octavio Paz, in his article, carries translation beyond its natural habitat (Paz, 1992, 152-163). With that transportation, he reverses the known relationship between source and target language and indicates that translation begins when people start to learn speaking. According to Paz, when a child asks his/her mother a meaning of a

word, s/he expects his/her mother to *translate* that word to his/her semantic world. Starting from this, Paz says that, translation does not only transfer *foreign* language to the *host* language, but also, translation works in the same language as well, and ultimately the only necessity for translation is language, nothing else. Thus, Paz adds that any text cannot be original because the language itself is a translation at its nature, first it turns to verbal from nonverbal- because in every time there is a pass from one signal to another-and one expression to another.

Considering this structure of language, and its cultural universe and point of view, it is obvious that the act of translation is not only replacement of words in another language, but transition of other things such as codes, historicity, social political baggage in the context of the language. The bases of the problem that Apter calls untranslatability reveals in that very context. Apter says that the effort to transform things that are nontransferable will turn to be an ironing process and that will remove the cultural, lingual differences that is not compatible in the target language. Apter claims that standardization will eliminate many possibilities, richness and create a categorical, cliché products. The only way out from that, according to Apter, is to exactly see the untranslatable one, put the spotlights on the wrinkles and bring the disparities and the things remained out of the focus, to the focus.

Pondering on the function of translation, it is possible to say that World Literature, relies upon the translation. Another word, it is not possible to imagine World Literature without translation. The literary product which circulates around the world is inevitably pass through the translation. That is how a literary product circulates around the world.

In that context, Kurdish Literature can be a remarkable example. Kurds, as a nation that actually does not have a stable government, beside Kurdistan Region of Iraq

which is an autonomous voted for independency in 2017, are living around the world without actual national borders. That unique way of existence effects the literature they produce all around the world. The Kurdish literature produced in the Turkey, for instance, targets the Turkish audience, before reaching the rest of the world. Mehmed Uzun's novels' translation process from Kurdish into Turkish, reveals the aim of the author in terms of what is imagined as "reader" of the books. On the other hand, Bakhtiyar Ali's books, written in Kurdish and translated into English, seem to imagine their readers different from Uzun. After becoming a best seller in Iraqi at 2008, in 2016 it is translated into English. In other words, there were already readers for Ali's books, and to make it wider, to go beyond the language borders, English becomes the tool.

Yet, although, it seems to be decided after the novels are written and they found their readers, also the traces of the ultimate aim can be followed from the language of the texts. For instance, Ali's novel first translated to English *I stared at the Night of the City* and it has this explanation, which in fact a Kurdish reader would not need to know. Multiple narrators tell their stories connected to each other, to an audience that does not need to know the local qualifications. In other words, the local and the global come together in the novel to embrace and to be able to speak for both of them at the same time.

4.3 A New Born Translation: Bakhtiyar Ali's *I stared the Night of the City*

Bakhtiyar Ali, one of the best sellers of Kurdish Literature in Iraq and also Kurdish diaspora, with his book names *I stared at the Night of the City*, has become the first translated Kurdish writer to English and earned the "English Pen Award" with that translation. (Ahmadzadeh, 2011, p.287-299) Considering the dynamics of the World Literature, this book can be counted as one of the literary products which is able to

be a part of the center. Hashem Ahmadzadeh, in *Resistance in Contemporary Middle Eastern Cultures* with his article named “Four Nations and an “Imagined community”” indicates the reason why he has chosen four specific authors as following:

“For choosing the four most prominent Kurdish novelists from the four parts of Kurdistan, I have considered the quality and the quantity of the works of numerous novelists. In other words, I have looked at the literary success of the novels and the number of the novels that each author has published. My review which has included surveys of Kurdish book markets, literary journals and literary debates in Kurdish newspapers and on Kurdish visual media demonstrates that the most known and widely read Kurdish novelists writing in Kurdish are Mehmed Uzun, Helim Yusiv, Ata Nahayee and Bakhtiyar Ali.” (Ahmadzadeh, 2011, p. 65)

This reasoning shows that, besides them, Bakhtiyar Ali, becomes a part of World Literature coming from periphery. Especially the location of Kurdish identity, which is also emphasized in that passage, with its separated structure, shows the deeper layers of the system of World Literature. In other words, in the World Literature system, which acts on the cultural baggage of the vernacular language, Kurdish is not in an advantageous position. Yet, what Walkowitz says is traceable in Ali’s novel as well. The target of the book is not only local readers or diaspora Kurds, but also world’s readers. As Ahmadzadeh also indicates living outside of the homeland, beyond the national borders, the concept of border is tricky in the Kurdish context because of having four different part within four different nation states, affects the novels both in form and content. According to Ahmadzadeh, the reasons behind that

are the self-rule experience of Kurds in Iraqi and the cultural encounters have happened in Kurdish diaspora.

Therefore, it is possible to say the perception of audience has also changed. The limited version of readers, such as Kurdish readers, has turned into a more variable one. Not only the closest culture's audience like as Mehmed Uzun's case¹⁴, the world's readers have become a target. This expansion in the readers' spectrum affects the process of the production of the novel. In other words, it is possible to say the novel is produced as a translation. The cultural cods and the vernacular values in the novel are ready to serve the people who do not familiar with the culture in the novel.

In that context, what kind of contents and lingual features in the novel do make a "born translated" novel? What is the characteristic of this novel which makes it both local and global? What is the function of translation as being both born translated and translated after giving the birth? The explanation of Ahmadzadeh, in terms of Iraq case, is the diaspora impact and the autonomous statue that Kurds have gained there. Yet, envisagement of the author's reader also assigns the language and the content of the novel. The "Third world literatures' destiny" that Jameson describes, has turned into a more complex statue with the fluctuant conditions of literature market, technology and the author's individual target on his product. Therefore, considering the translation process is the first step to look closer the dynamics of the entrance process of the novel to the "World Literature" as a Kurdish writer.

In "Translator's Acknowledgements", Kareem Abdulrahman indicates very specific information about the translation process:

¹⁴ Mehmed Uzun's audience was Turkish readers in Turkey, as well as Kurdish.

“This translation is the outcome of close collaboration with the author, Bakhtiyar Ali, who was always happy to provide detailed answers to my queries. The author would like to thank Ako Wahbi and Fakhir Tayyip warmly for their support for the English translation” (Ali, 2016, “Translator Acknowledgements”)

In the quotation, there are two main points: First, Ali himself, engaged the translation process very closely, and also, he contributed to the process by having some other supports for the translator himself to translate the novel. Both acts reveal the effort that Ali himself put the translation process. Also, Abdulrahman’s article on Bakhtiyar Ali’s achievement as being the first Kurdish writer who has paid a great amount of money to write a novel, appeared at BBC News and that was the time when translation process starts¹⁵. That opens the way to widen the reader range and being a part of World Literature cannon.

On the other hand, for conveying the novel properly, to make translation clear and understandable, after the “acknowledgement” part, another small chapter begins before the novel’s main text: “A Note on Titles and Names.” In that part, apparently there are some cultural codes in the novel that supposed to be not familiar to the readers around the world and the titles and honorifics explain: The titles such as “Agha”, “Beg”, “Mamosta” are described in a way to make it understandable around the world. Also, in explaining the names, probably this is also translator’s note, but it is not indicated specifically, the text emphasizes the aim of using a specific version of naming: “For the sake of simplicity, a single form has been adopted throughout the English version.” These interventions are a part of the journey of the book around the world. In other words, they come with the translation. To be adopted to the

¹⁵ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7535854.stm (Access date: 10.02.2019)

“world” the local should be convenient, compatible to the global. Therefore, it is possible to say there is a required process for a vernacular literary work to be able to have a place in the World Literature system.

On the other hand, before translation, even in the very beginning of the producing process of the books, the translation becomes a necessity to be a part of the production. Since it is not necessary even to have a target language to have a translation (Paz, 1992, p. 152-163) the books which are written with the imagination of being in the circle around the world, being a part of World Literature uses translation with their births. It is possible to follow these traces throughout the Ali’s book.

The novel depicts the struggle of the “barons” who got wealth after the civil war and the “imaginative creatives” who have rare talents in beginning of 2000s. The culture, politic and social life of the city are ruled by those barons. The undefined murders become the “normal” way of death in this city. The barons who have the control all over the city, maintains a covert war with intellectuals, imagination itself and the “imaginative creatures” who the Barons think they can overrule the current order of the city which is under control of the Barons.

The “imaginative creatures” on the other hand, come together with the leadership of Ghazalrus, who is an enigmatic poet who was born with a poem in his chest, and aim to find the two lovers’ bodies, Murat Jamil the “Chinese Youth” and Baran Shakar who are killed by barons. While this investigation continues, the “Baron of Imagination” chases these imaginative creatures to build a mystical district. Ghazalrus, the poet, devotes himself to write the undefined deaths happened from 1991 and starts to write those deaths down with his other imaginative creatures: Hasan, the former hit man, “Imaginary Magellan” who has the whole world in his

mind and can travel around in his mind, “Real Magellan” who traveled all around the world and Tirifa Yabahari who weaves carpets which effects people mysteriously.

The novel basically consists of chapters with different unreliable narrators and the first narrator of the novel reveals the reason why this book is written as following:

“Our intention in publishing and exposing this story is partly to inform the world about this curious tale, in which most of the sad and dangerous events take place after spring of 2004. It is also a detailed journey into the treacherous and bizarre events that thwarted the construction of a mythical district in our city, which could have made this ugly and un-majestic municipality home to one of the wonders of the world” (Ali, 2016, p.4)

This explanation, as a part of the fiction, also speaks to the outside of the fiction. In other words, talking to the audience of the fictional book, is also serving to declare Ali’s book’s existence itself. There is an assumption that world will read this “curious tale.” That actually indicates the writing process of the novel, in other words, the author of the book, was aware of the book’s potential journey around the world while composing it. The following passage has the same traces that shows there is an intervention:

“Because retaining the complex and opaque language in which the entire report is written would be confusing for everyone, we first needed to refine the language of the ill-intentioned report writer and neutralize his tones, which are so equivocal and oblique that we are yet to make out his aim in places, and have still to discern the games he is playing with certain words in others. To produce clear writing and achieve our purpose, we had to translate the sentences into language that was not so complex, deceitful or ridden with secrets, to change the words something with the reek of a report by an evil

soul to one that smells of life, to a story told in a clear voice, its style, outlook and viewpoint visible to every angle.”(Ali, p.4)

It is hard not to connotate that passage as a big metaphor of the book itself. In this passage, the language, words, translation the process of the conveying the message of book can be found side by side. The report, which is not clear enough, is being “translated” into a “language” that makes it more understandable. Considering the report as a representation of a book written in a vernacular language (even not a standard nation state language, the language of the people they are called as “the most populated stateless ethnic group”) the exact process will be like that: Neutralization, transforming words in to a understandable style, eliminate the “secrets” of the vernacular language and turn in to “a clear voice”, a “viewpoint” that let one to be understood in every angle.

Also, the ways that divergent narrators speak to the reader, it is possible to follow the disparity between the narrators and the readers. Narrators try to make the reader aware of what they are reading exactly right now, besides being a postmodernist fiction future, it also indicates the cultural geographical distance between the potential reader of the book around the world. The cultural difference that should be conveyed comes with the narrations in the novel. For instance, narrator describes Trifa Yabahri’s story, being a miracle child who has given birth in an imaginary intimate relation with an imaginary man, as a potentially normal story which can be happen anytime if one can believe enough. Narrator first makes this clarification:

“But I would say that, for a nation such as ours that has lived in fantasy for hundreds of years, its hopes realized only in dreams, it is perfectly easy to believe this kind of story. As far as I am concerned, I have no trouble to accepting Trifa Yabahari’s story.” (Ali, p.40)

The limitations of the understanding of this story, can be counted as a disparity between the narrator's view and the potential reader's view. In other words, narrator makes a distinction between "us" and "them" without saying "them". Although the supernatural in this story is obvious to the narrator, the narrator first gives an excuse, as being a part of a nation who has been living in a fantasy, and then criticizes "humanity" not to have enough desire to see the wondrousness of the story: "I would say that the problem of humanity is that people no longer have genuinely strong wishes that come from the very depths of their inner selves and force the world to pay attention." (p.40) The word "humanity" and "our nation" give clues in the direction of the message that is conveyed. In other words, the culture, the locality is carrying to the global, to the rest of the world via this novel written in vernacular language but born as a translation.

In the chapter named "A letter before death, March 1974", Mullah Gharib-I Hajar leaves a letter after his death to be given Bahman Nasar. It is about imagining intimacy happened between Mullah and Baharbanu which caused Bahman's, Gahazalrus (Lyricist) birth. While Mullah tells the story via his letter, he describes his situation in his language saying following sentence: "As we say in Kurdish, I was drowning in fire and in water." (p.60)

An emphasize on language, which is originally the language of the book, gives another clue about the composing process of the book. Since the characters talk on behalf of themselves in the novel, they are aware of that, the reader/receiver/listener in the fictional universe of the book might be a non-Kurdish or not speaker of Kurdish. That disparity raises another question: Is it possible to express oneself within this uncanny disparity exists in the communication?

Therefore, considering the way narrators of the novel speak to the readers, it is possible to say that there is an anxiety about being misunderstood:

“Excuse me. It’s me, the Imaginary Magellan. I’m the one who told you about Murad Jamil’s body at the beginning. You’re bound to have forgotten the poor man, dead as he is. You’ve been so immersed in the details of this story that you’re ready to overlook the poor guy’s body altogether. That’s not how it’s meant to be. What kind of readers are you?”(p.87)

Narrator’s tone in a way shows a concern about how the story is being received. Remanding details, using adjectives to make situation more sentimental and trying to keep the story traceable, could be the signs of the narrators’(author’s) imagination of potential readers. In other words, it seems that there was always an “imagined reader” in the process of composing the novel who were not that familiar to the vernacular futures of the novel including language itself. That also creates constant explanations on the cultural/politics of Iraqi Kurdistan and Kurds in general. The novel’s background plot, therefore, bases on the political traumas, revaluations, assassinations, the political parties which are basically concerning about their wealth instead of the people. On the other hand, there are some extraordinary people who has different talents that makes them “imaginary creatures” that actually have the capacity to make the city a better place but oppressed by the “barons” who works on a specific good that makes them rich and dangerous. Their ambitions to write a book about the unsolved murders in the city, create a battle between these imaginary people and the barons who are a part of the power of the state itself.

When Majid-i Gol Solav meets the Baron of Imagination, they talk about the Kurdish people in general. As one of the villains of the novel who wants to buy the imagination of Ghazalnus, Majid and the other “imaginative creatures”, seeks for a

legitimization point for himself about his goal, which can be traced in the following quote:

“We Kurds are at the very bottom of the world. If a hole was to appear on this planet and it wanted to lighten its load, we’d be the first to be thrown out. In this age when the world has become one, poor nations like ours are disturbed by the feeling that we are the redundant limb of humanity, and that one day they might throw us off the ship and into the ocean” (p. 433)

According to that, there is always an uncanny position for Kurds, so they have to be precautionous about everything. Buying imagination and constructing the city upon them will be a safe guard towards the rest of the world that perceives Kurds as the “redundant limb of humanity”. On the other hand, the unusual nature of the job, seeks a more universal point of view about the humanity. In other words, by looking at the local, the very specific conditions of Iraqi Kurdistan, the text tries to reach a further destination which is a more global one. Since the audience of the book is imagined wider than the national borders, the text refers to the rest of the world in the context of the function of art.

The magical realism, in that context, can be counted as a narrative style in the novel. Besides being a coping mechanism of the national problems, magical realism also, in a more global sight, aims to assert the value of the art in the world system. In other words, the text, recommends the art to solve the world’s problem in general. The love between Tarifi Yabahari and Ghazalrus for example, is a reflection of traditional *Leyla vii Mecnun* (Leyla and Mecnun) stories, which basically does not include any physical contact between the lovers. Yet, in the novel, there is another character, Murad, who is the mirror character of Ghazalrus, who sleeps all with the women in the city. He experiences love in a physical way. In other words, the

narration creates a mirror metaphor to describe the relationship between the contradictions, local-global, east-west, soul-body etc. For instance, the “imaginative” life of Ghazalus, where he hides himself from the reality, interlaced the real experiences of Murad who is killed by Barons of the city because their wives, nearly all of them fall for Murad and have an affair with him. At the same time, Ghazalus, who is the “imaginative creature” and the producers of the gahazals that describe the non-physical love, describes Murad as his soulmate. Even Murad, in his letter to Ghazalus, says the same thing. Therefore, these two characters are served as different sides of one person.

Seeking worldly theme and imagining a wider audience, Bakhtiyar Ali’s novel, seems to know the market system of World Literature.

Considering this process, joining World Literature circle, needs a lot of efforts. As Walkowitz indicates, the literary products tend to be written in a way that is ready to be translated from the beginning, from their births. As a coping method with the system of World Literature, the market relations, the cultural baggage of the vernacular culture, it seems that authors, as it has been done throughout the literature history, restarts to produce their literary products to be as “born translated” instead of dealing the whole process after delivering the books. This might open a new space in determining the dynamics of World Literature as a concept more fruitfully and also, realizing the hierarchical/unequal positions of the languages in that system.

4.4 The Odyssey of Kurdish Literature in Turkish: Who is the reader of Mehmed Uzun’s novels?

In *Bir Dil Yaratmak* (Creating a Language), Uzun answers various questions of different interviewers on literature, his experiences as an Exile in Sweden and also the readers of his novels. Ali Biçer, the editor of the first edition of *Bir Dil Yaratmak*,

in the introduction of the book named “Kürt Edebiyatının Bir Köşe Taşı: Mehmed Uzun” (A milestone in Kurdish Literature: Mehmed Uzun), emphasizes the importance of Mehmed Uzun, due to his remarkable effort on creating a “contemporary novel” in a literature which has a very limited “novel tradition”. According to Biçer, Uzun’s success stems from him being a modern individual and being a trilingual in Kurdish, Turkish and Swedish. On the other hand, Biçer’s quotes from Per Jonsson and according to Jonsson, the migration conditions create cultural passivity, regression and annihilation, yet for Kurds, the migration has exactly opposite effects like it has on Jews, who gains multiculturalism, multilingualism, crossing the borders and to be able to be universal in exile. Yet, Uzun, in the interviews in this book, basically talks about a totally different case. His literature journey, according to him, bases on creating a Kurdish novel tradition and developing Kurdish as a modern language that can produce literature. Therefore, his aim is first basically to build a “reader” for Kurdish novel then work on the language to create a tradition, a sustainable writing practice to construct a tradition. In other words, Uzun’s attempt seems to be more vernacular than global in terms of literature.

He emphasizes that his readers are mostly from Turkey. Wiebke Sievers, in the article named “Turkish Migrant Writer in Europe: Mehmed Uzun in Sweden and Aras Ören in West Germany”, approaches this vernacularity in different aspect:

“Kurdish literature in Sweden, like other diaspora literatures subsidized by the Swedish state, was never regarded as an integral part of Swedish literature, but rather as a separate national, ethnic and cultural tradition: ‘critics frequently strove to anchor these writers in their “original cultural milieu” by comparing them with other writers of similar national, regional, or ethnic background, or by reading their works in the context of the historical,

political and social conditions in “the country of origin””(Sievers, 2016, p. 440-450)

Sievers adds that this situation changed after 2000s, throughout the new generation writers who write in Swedish. In other words, Kurdish literature productions in Europe for example, have not become a part of World Literature although as in Uzun’s case, the cultural atmosphere was the center of World Literature, the Europe/West. Uzun also complains about the lack of Kurdish-Turkish translation and emphasizes that he prefers to produce in Kurdish to contribute to the Kurdish Literature. In this interview held in 1994, he says that one of his friends translated *Siya Evine* into Turkish. According to Uzun, Kurdish novel has not developed enough, so the first step is just producing one. Since, Turkish is also one of the languages that a big amount Kurds use as second language, it is not unexpected that translation into this language is more crucial than to reach the rest of the world. Describing Kurdish Literature “poor and oppressed” (Fakir ve mazlum), it seems that Uzun’s first aim to create a reader among Kurds who does not read-write in Kurdish but have it as a mother tongue. Also, Turkey, as his home, was the first target to reach as a literature environment. In the interview held by Semra Somersan at *Express* in 1996, Uzun says that none of his novels translated into Swedish because there was not any translator but only one novel translated into Arabic. Uzun does not indicate which novel was that, but he mentions about a translation agreement for English, French and German. Also, he adds the reason why his books were not translated yet:

“There is no translator. The Kurdologist in the universities do not have full knowledge of the issue. Also, the quality of what you create is not known.

Because, it is essential to maintain a certain quality for an international publication. It takes time. But you, before everything should create an authorship. But Kurds live from day to day. Kurds write a book. After ten, fifteen years write another thing. It stays like that. Continuity cannot be created. Tradition does not occur. When the number of novels becomes ten, then, there will be translators and critics. And better novelist will occur” (Uzun, 1997, p.58)

Considering a creation process of a literary genre in a language, as novel, Uzun’s concerns focus on the developing of a Kurdish novel. His aim, in that context differs from an author who basically wants to reach a wider reader spectrum, as Walkovitz indicates, but instead of it, first create the core reader then reach the rest of the world. Uzun’s answer about “magical realism” in the same interview also signifies the same aim. He says he does not have magic realism of Latin Americans in his novels and adds that he would not want to do only “magic realism.” As a way of locating in world literature system, magic realism does not fit in Uzun’s first aim: imagining a community with Anderson’s description.

Articulating to world literature, from the “third world”, magic realism functions as a narrative tool. Yet, standing in the modernity, without an actual nation-state, Uzun’s imagination of community collapses before it is constructed. In as much as imagining a nation seems to be the first target, Uzun’s novel speaks a nation which has been already splitted. Therefore, apart from his aim to create a national novels and the readers of the novel, firstly articulation of Turkish Literature is needed, which is basically a peripheral literature in the world literature system: “I tried to write those pages as a world citizen and a Kurd and thus establish a bridge between

my language and the world.” (Uzun, 2001, p 67-77)The bridge, here, first aimed to construct between the home country, Turkey and the Kurdish/Kurds. So as, although Uzun complains about the lack of literature market for Kurdish Literature, it basically imagines the Turkish Literary market as a target not the World Literature. In an interview held by Nesimi Aday in 1993, at *Evrensel Kültür*, Uzun again answers a question about the possibility of translating into Turkish. Uzun says that, with help of Yaşar Kemal, a friend of him (Muhsin Kızılkaya) was translating *Siya Evine*. After that he emphasizes how important to build a dialog between Turkish and Kurdish literature and it is a duty of Kurdish and Turkish intellectuals to create that. Also, the interviews held with Uzun are generally from Turkey and for both the interviewer and Uzun Turkey seems to be the respondent to Uzun’s works in Kurdish.

After these interview series, Mehmed Uzun’s all novels have been translated into Turkish and become very popular in Turkey. In a way, the Turkish version of novels, welcomed as a born Turkish instead of a translation. Uzun’s contribution to translation process, as Uzun himself emphasizes below, even Yaşar Kemal, one of the most important Turkish authors participated in the translation process. In one way, where Uzun wanted to reach was the Turkish Literature market before World Literature system although he was a member of board of Swedish writers’ association and a member of PEN club. Indeed, in another interview, Uzun explains his works placement in the context of Kurdish Literature:

“Nowadays, the most important obstacle about Kurdish Literature is this; to be able to create a language which is able to convey the experiences, stories and emotions of today’s people. Apparently, it will need a very long time for

Kurds to create such a language and be an inseparable part of world literature.” (Uzun, 1997, p. 65)

Uzun perceives world literature as a center which requires a long journey to reach. First the Kurdish Literature should be created according to Uzun, then world literature, as a far goal to achieve. Therefore, his novels’ involvement as literature products are mostly written to construct a literature tradition first, which de facto will be a periphery in the world literature system and be a part of Turkish literature via translation, to grasp Turkish-Kurdish readers, then “hopefully” in future, be a part of world literature. The nearest target, in other words, was to be a part of Turkish Literature which is already counted as a “third world literature” in the world literature system as Jameson defines. (Jameson, 1986, p.65-88)

As two of the popular Kurdish writers, Bakhtiyar Ali’s and Mehmed Uzun’s places in the world literature system, differ from each other in a broader extent. Although Ali himself is living in Germany not in Iraq, the autonomous statue of Kurdistan region, his involvement to literature market differs from Uzun’s. Ali’s novel imagines readers from all around the world, yet Uzun, throughout his authorship career, first aims to be known Turkey and in the meantime build a “Kurdish novel” tradition in Kurdish Literature. As an active writer until 2007, to his death, he has maintained this basic aim and the content and language of his novels also has served to his aim. Yet, what Walkowitz suggests is not irrelevant in the Uzun’s novels as well. Since the readers were/are basically from Turkey, and Kurdish was not the first reading language of Kurds in Turkey, Uzun also used an understandable language and avoid current Kurdish conflict in Turkey to be able to reach his aim. (Uzun, 1996, p. 79)

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

World Literature system with its sub-dynamics gives a panorama of the positioning of monolingualism among the national literature. The translation on the other hand is the tool of the circulation of literary works among the world. Yet, although in the current literary market conditions, there is a delusion that there is only one certain center in the World Literature system, the relationship between vernacular languages and the official languages, proves the opposite: As evident by Kurdish case within the realm of Turkish, sometimes, periphery becomes the center.

Starting the tension between Turkish and Kurdish, there are three some aspects which worth to analyze in order to understand the World Literature system with its sub dynamics. Therefore, the relationship between Kurdish and Turkish in the Turkish monolingual sphere is a fruitful area to investigate the layers of World Literature system.

In this thesis, among all, the penetration of vernacular language to the monolingual sphere, the translation journey of the vernacular language and its different methods in involving World Literature system are the main paths that traced. Therefore, in the first chapter, Ayhan Geçgin's novels, with their involvement in Kurdish become the focus. The language of the two selected novels of Geçgin, *Uzun Yürüyüş* and *Son Adım*, with having the traces of the tension between Kurdish and Turkish, reveal what monolingualist agenda tends to enforce. Yet, in the fictional layer, the vernacular language leaks the language of the fiction as in *Uzun Yürüyüş* and *Son Adım* and creates another layer on the whole World Literature system. Although the language of those novels is Turkish, it needs a second examination when it comes to position them in the whole literary system. In the case of Mehtap Ceyran's novel,

Mevsim Yas, on the other hand, the vernacular language does not leak, but with plot, place, characters and the story, Kurdish even without mentioning it becomes the “real” language of the novel. In other word, the novel born as translated. That also provides the tension between these two languages but with another literary method.

In the second chapter, the question who is the reader of translations of Turkish novels into Kurdish, in the frame of Turkish monolingual sphere is the starting point. Looking to the position of Kurdish, as a forbidden language for a long time, the tension between these two languages reflects the translation journey of Turkish to Kurdish. The bilingualism, which is actually diglossia, makes that translation journey as a tool to both improve the Kurdish literary capital and promote the “diversity” discourse among Turkish monolingual sphere. In other words, although there is not a visible border, or check-point between Kurdish and Turkish in Turkey, in fact there is a door between them, and translation is the edge of that door between these languages. Also, besides the extended version of World Literature system, this is one of the signs of the instability of center and periphery in that system. In other words, the efforts of translation Turkish literary products Turkish, which is not increase the reader number, reveals that articulating Turkish language sphere is an approaching method to the “center” for Kurdish literary sphere.

As a matter of fact, the last chapter gives a comparison between the strategy of Bakhtiyar Ali and Mehmed Uzun in articulating World Literature system. Ali’s novel is translated to English and wins a well-known award. *I stared at the Night of the City*, to enlarge its reader variety, as Walkowitz, indicates “born translated”. Speaking to the audience that does not know Kurdish, for instance, as a narrative method, provides evidence about the imagination of writer about the reader, while writing the novel. In other words, translating from Kurdish to English is the second

translation process that this novel faced. To be a part of World Literature system and to be able to circulate in a wider area, the method that this novel traces is as Walkowitz says to start translation during writing the novel. On the other hand, Mehmed Uzun, first aims to be the part of Turkish Literature sphere with translation in to Turkish. The center, in that context, is the Turkish.

With examining those cases, gives a perspective about the changes in center and periphery up to the conditions. In other words, the World Literature system is not a stable term and the sub-dynamics of the system deserves to analyze in order to construct a better understanding of it. Also, the monolingual agenda and the position of vernacular languages are needed to study closely to be able to locate the literary products in the whole literary system. Kurdish case is Turkish monolingual sphere is a fruitful sample, yet it still needs to examine with comparison to the other samples from all around the world. With that, comparative literature will have more diverged sample and World Literature system will deserve the name “world” with including the peripheral dynamics to itself.

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