BETWEEN NATIONAL AND MINOR LITERATURE IN TURKEY: MODES OF RESISTANCE IN THE WORKS OF MEHMED UZUN AND MIGIRDİÇ MARGOSYAN

by

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Submitted to the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Cultural Studies

Sabancı University

August 2011

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DATE OF APPROVAL: July 29, 2011

To My Grandfather,

Mehmet Turan

ABSTRACT

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Cultural Studies, MA Thesis, 2011
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Keywords: Mehmed Uzun, Mıgırdiç Margosyan, postcolonialism, nationalism, minor literature, Turkish literature, Kurdish literature, Armenian literature.

This thesis aims at a critical interrogation of different modes of resistance in Kurdish writer Mehmed Uzun and Armenian writer Mıgırdiç Margosyan's literary works. It aims to show the unique dynamics of postcolonial condition in Turkey. Uzun and Margosyan attempt decolonization and perform resistances through literature. This study undertakes two distinct yet interrelated approaches. First, it suggests that Uzun and Margosyan's works show proximities to nationalist literature. For this aim, the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood, essentialist approaches and the problems of active agency that are manifest in the authors' works will be investigated. Second, this study will analyze the significance of Uzun and Margosyan's late writings. The ways in which their works attain hybridity and show proximity to minor literature will be subjected to careful observation. This study argues that these two distinct modes of resistance do not exist independently. They rather coexist. Therefore it is not possible to fit Uzun and Margosyan's works in a particular literary genre. The authors deal with two different kinds of pressures: The hegemonic state discourse, and communal expectations to promote nationalism. The authors' early works show proximity to nationalist literature since they resist the hegemonic state discourse. Their works after 1998 show proximity to minor literature since they attempt to detach themselves from communal expectations. This study argues that post-1998 is crucial in this regard. In this period, Uzun and Margosyan re-establish relations with Turkish language through their literature. Writing in Turkish language provides them with the opportunity to criticize the totalitarian tendencies in their communities. They also manage to decolonize the hegemonic state discourse by directly speaking to the Turkish reading audience.

ÖZET

TÜRKİYE'DE MİLLİ VE MİNÖR EDEBİYAT ARASINDA:
MEHMED UZUN VE MIGIRDİÇ MARGOSYAN'IN ESERLERİNDE
DİRENİŞ MODELLERİ

Alparslan Nas
Kültürel Çalışmalar, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2011
Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Hülya Adak

Anahtar Sözcükler: Mehmed Uzun, Mıgırdiç Margosyan, postkolonyalizm, milliyetçilik, minör edebiyat, Türk edebiyatı, Kürt edebiyatı, Ermeni edebiyatı.

Bu tezde Mehmed Uzun ve Mıgırdiç Margosyan'ın edebi eserlerindeki farklı direniş modelleri eleştirel bir sorgulamayla incelenecektir. Bu çalışma Turkiye'de postkolonyal durumun kendine özgü niteliklerini göstermeyi hedefler. Uzun ve Margosyan dekolonizasyon girişiminde bulunurlar ve edebiyat üzerinden direniş gösterirler. Bu çalışma, iki ayrı ancak bağlantılı yaklaşımdan yola çıkar. İlk olarak Uzun ve Margosyan'ın eserlerinin milliyetçi edebiyata yakınlaştığını öne sürer. Bu amaçla, yazarların eserlerinde yer alan suçluluk/mağdurluk hiyerarşileri, özcü yaklaşımları ve aktif aktörlük problemleri incelenecektir. İkinci olarak, bu çalışma Uzun ve Margosyan'ın geç dönem eserlerinin önemini analiz edecektir. Eserlerin hibridleşmesi ve minör edebiyata yakınlık göstermesi dikkatle gozlemlenecektir. Bu çalışma, mevcut iki tür direniş modelinin birbirinden ayrı var olmadığını öne sürer. Daha ziyade, bu modeller bir arada mevcutturlar. Bu nedenle, Uzun ve Margosyan'ın eserlerini belirli bir edebi tür şeklinde tanımlamak mümkün değildir. Yazarlar iki çeşit baskıyla mücadele etmektedir: Hegemonik devlet söylemi ve milliyetçiliği yücelten cemiyet beklentileri. Yazarların erken dönem eserleri milliyetçi edebiyata yakınlık gösterir çünkü hegemonik devlet söylemine karşı çıkarlar. 1998 senesinden sonra verdikleri eserleri ise minör edebiyata yakınlık gösterir çünkü yazarlar, cemiyetlerini eleştirmeye gayret ederler. Bu çalışma, 1998 sonrası dönemin oldukça önemli olduğunu savunur. Bu dönemde Uzun ve Margosyan edebiyatları üzerinden Türkçe ile yeniden ilişkiler kurar. Türkçe yazmak, onların cemiyetlerindeki totaliter eğilimleri daha rahat bir şekilde eleştirmelerini sağlar. Aynı zamanda Türkçe okuyan kitleye hitap ederek, hegemonik devlet söylemini de dekolonize etmeyi başarırlar.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor Hülya Adak. She has been my primary source of inspiration to study Uzun and Margosyan's works. Our interactions before and during the thesis process provided me with new perspectives in articulating my ideas. I am indebted to her encouragement and support.

I thank Sibel Irzık and Erol Köroğlu for their critical comments and support during this process. Their reflections helped me to narrow down my focus to improve this thesis.

Throughout my MA studies, Marc Nichanian has contributed greatly to my thinking with his wisdom. Aytekin Yılmaz's critical insights and memories on Mehmed Uzun contributed greatly to this thesis. I thank them for their valuable comments.

I am also very thankful to Engin Kılıç. He has known me since I was a freshman at Sabancı University. He was my role model and one of the main inspirations to pursue an academic career in literature. I cannot thank him enough for his guidance and friendship that he has given me for years.

I want to thank to Hülya, Adile, Sertaç and Cihan for their friendship and support during this process.

Lastly, thanks to my family, Hatice, Nurgül and Emirhan for their endless support and encouragement. I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my grandfather with gratitude.

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1. Between Theory and Practice: Initial Observations

The subject matter of this academic inquiry, namely the lives and the literary works of Kurdish writer Mehmed Uzun and Armenian writer Mıgırdiç Margosyan, were also the subject matter of a personal inquiry. My fascination with the authors started when they met at the village, Şaraptul, a rural settlement in Siverek at southeastern Turkey in 2006. Until that time I've read a couple of Margosyan's stories but I haven't read any of Uzun's works. Though I knew that he was an exile Kurdish writer and came across several of his political writings on multiculturalism and Kurdish oppression in Turkey.

Kurdish writer Şeyhmus Diken wrote the meeting of the Uzun and Margosyan at Şaraptul. It was right after Margosyan published his memoir-novel *Tespih Taneleri* when Uzun curiously said Diken the following: "You know what, the village that Sarkis, Margosyan's father was found and looked after after he was lost in 1915 is the village of Zozan's father." Zozan was the name of Uzun's wife. Having discovered such an historical link between Zozan's ancestors and Margosyan, Uzun noticed that Zozan's grandparents cared for Sarkis until the age of 12. Diken was excited and surprised for this coincidence. Indeed it was established after the publication of *Tespih Taneleri*, when Margosyan narrated the story of his family. Uzun was very happy to discover this particular familial link to Margosyan. He respected him a lot and they had a great friendship. Uzun called Margosyan a *hoca*, which is the equivalent of the word "teacher": "Let's call Margos Hoca and invite him over" he told Diken, "let's altogether wander around Euphrates and commemorate Uncle Sarkis." Diken phoned Margosyan who replied, "I'm looking for the day I'll meet with Mehmed" and added, "my brother Ardas will also very happy." Margosyan further adds caringly; "I would like to go but Mehmed is very ill, so I wouldn't want to tire him." Uzun got stomach cancer and it was a couple of months before he passed away. Nonetheless he was eager to meet Margosyan and commemorate the past. It was a space where past atrocities occured against Kurds and

Armenians, while new hopes and possibilities for life emerged afterwards. This meeting was a milestone, it was striking as depicted in the words of Diken: "Are you aware that history is written again and in a new fashion?" Uzun nodded his head, in the joy of discovering and commemorating. He was seeking the possibility to experience an event, which was silenced and forgotten throughout the pages of history (2009, 170-340).

The day after I realized this significant event, I went to visit the bookstores in Istanbul to purchase two novels: Margosyan's *Tespih Taneleri*[1] (hereafter referred to as *TT*) and the Turkish translation of Uzun's novel *Hawara Dicleye*[2] (hereafter referred to as *HD*). Margosyan's novel was available in most of the bookstores; Uzun's was not. I scanned through the online sites of book purchasing and it was out of print. Thereafter I visited a couple of second hand bookshops around Beyoğlu but they had none. "You can only find the book in Diyarbakır" said one of the bookseller, "it doesn't come around here." Thanks to an online-second hand bookseller in Ankara I finally found Uzun's novel. In the meantime, Uzun died of stomach cancer in October 2007. It was devastating for me since I couldn't find the chance to meet him. I could only know him through his literature. His novel was autographed in 2003. I was fascinated for this coincidence. It was as of Uzun was calling to me.

As I explored the authors' literatures, I had the chance to meet Margosyan in person in a workshop where I presented a paper about his memoir-novel *TT,* which was afterwards published in a literary journal *Yeniyazı* (2010). As a warm, sincere intellectual and a "story-teller", Margosyan was surprised to see me presenting a paper on his literature, which I characterized as *minor literature*. In a humorous and ironic fashion, he commented: "To my surprise, I've managed such fabulous things!" Now that I had the novels one of which is autographed by its author. And the other already received the necessary feedback for dwelling too much around theory. I could finally begin.

In this introductory chapter, I wish discuss the progression of this particular research on Uzun and Margosyan's literature. Throughout this process, "theory" arrived at the stage of my imaginations later. I didn't want to try to fit their literature to a particular theory. I initially focused on the novels and the biographies of the authors, and

[1] The name of the novel is translated as, "Beads of the Prayer Beads" by Aras Publishing House.
[2] tr. Dicle'nin Sesi; en. The Sound of the Tigris.

travelled along the ideas they took me. On this journey, it was insightful to analyze the literatures of these two minority writers from the perspective of "postcolonial literature". They were including narrations regarding Turkish nation-state's colonization process. As members of Armenian and Kurdish communities, the authors were also responding to colonization through literature. Tiffin (1995) remarks that the particular "postcolonial" discourses offered "counter-discursive" strategies rather than homologous practices, which tended to subvert the dominant (96). Uzun's and Margosyan's literatures included subversive approaches against the colonization process which discriminated and oppressed Armenian and Kurdish communities. These discourses inherent in colonialism subjected the individuals of these communities as inferior others.

Alternatively, postcolonial situation can be defined as "covering all culture affected by colonization from the past to the present day" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, 2). Within such broad space for interrogation, postcolonial literary studies forefronts firstly the "rereading of canonical texts in light of postcolonial discursive practices" and "the reading of specific postcolonial texts and the effects of their production in and on specific social and historical contexts." (191) In this regard, although the pathways of postcolonial literary criticism differ between distinct theoretical approaches, the common denominator which is introduced by many theoreticians such as Fanon, Bhabha, Said and Spivak is that we currently live in an age where certain acts of "decolonization" take place in the different areas of the world which was once occupied and dominated by the colonial will.

Frantz Fanon (1963) suggests a particular process of decolonization as follows. To analyze the process of decolonization, one should bear in mind the dialectics of the situation. First, there is a colonial rule under which oppressed people live. Second, there needs to be a *national struggle* in order to overthrow the colonial dynamics. Finally, there is the fulfillment of the process of *decolonization*, which sets up the necessary dynamics for the nation to realize and actualize its independence and free itself from the colonial practices of repression. This classical postcolonial approach evident assumes an "imperial-colonial" dialectic as it suggests the following:

> The act of writing texts of any kind in post-colonial areas is subject to the political, imaginative, and social control involved in the relationship between colonizer and colonized. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, 28).

As a response to this dialectical approach, Bhabha offers the "mutualities and negotiations across the colonial divide" rather than solely assuming the binary oppositions between the colonizer and the colonized (Moore-Gilbert, 1997, 116). Despite the differing opinions on the postcolonial situation, what postcolonial criticism shares is the very existence of the particular "counter acts" against the colonizer. In light of such theoretical suggestions, I seek answers to the following questions: Where could one position Uzun and Margosyan's postcolonial literature? Did they work through the clear-cut boundaries between the colonial divide, or emphasized mutualities and negotiations in between? What were their stances within their communities and how did they build relations with the colonizer? What were the ways in which they undertook certain acts of decolonization through literature?

1.2. Postcolonial Condition in Turkey: Background

The case of Turkey offers complex dynamics of postcolonial situation. In order to seek answers for the questions posed above, I find it necessary to present a background for these dynamics. The striking coincidence between Sarkis and Zozan's grandparents encouraged me to think over the complexities of postcolonial condition in which the Turkish state, Kurdish and Armenian communities are the main actors. Uzun (1995) underlines the atrocities committed by Kurdish people against Armenians who were subjected to a forced deportation in 1915. For Uzun, Kurdish community acted very brutally against Armenians who they perceived as "non-muslim heretics" during the First World War. He points out the historical reality, which Kurdish community refused to recognize: Kurds were also the perpetrators of the massacring of Armenians in 1915 next to the Turkish armed forces.

Margosyan's father, Sarkis was an Armenians who was lost during the chaos revealed by the deportation. He was taken care by Zozan's grandparents, who were in an

advantaged position during that era. Uzun reminds those days with regret as he commemorates the victims of 1915. He remarks that Kurds were collaborators with the colonial rule during deportation, which caused such a shock among Armenian community. At this point, Zozan's grandparents were an exception since there were a plenty of Kurdish households adopting the remaining Armenian children and converting them into Muslim or employing them as servants. This particular experience is a common theme, which was narrated by contemporary Armenian writer Hrac Norsen in the memoirs of her grandmother (2009). Eventually, the way Uzun invites Margosyan to visit his father's village Şaraptul is an attempt which clearly depicts his regret as a Kurdish individual for the atrocities that Kurds committed in collaboration with the colonizer.

As evident in Uzun's remarks on Kurds as collaborators and Sarkis' experience narrated by Margosyan in his memoir-novel, the relations between the seemingly clear-cut poles of the two sides of the colonial divide is much more complex. In the historical and the contemporary context that Turkish experience propose, it is impossible to suggest a concrete, uniform, homogeneous experience of the "colonized". The boundaries between the colonizer and the colonized, is unidentifiable. In this particular context it is also difficult to ascertain a process of decolonization, since Armenian and Kurdish communities have not yet reached independence. Armenian national struggle for independence took place beginning with the mid-19th century under the rule of Ottoman Empire, and lasted until 1915. 1915 marked the period of torture, violence and death that Armenian community was subjected to during deportation. After 1915, an independent Armenian state was formed outside the boundaries of the Turkish nation state. Post-1915 period marks the beginnings of a diaspora activism, which was based on the longing for the "motherland". The Treaty of Lausanne laid the foundations of the Turkish nation state in 1923. Accordingly, Armenian community was officially assigned "minority" status next to Jews and Greeks as *non-muslims* communities. Their minority status allowed them to undertake religious activities and educational facilities in minority schools. Yet their curriculum was strictly regulated by the Turkish state. Although it seems that particular rights were granted to Armenians, the extent to which they were employed is disputable.

The national education system of the Turkish nation-state posed Ataturk as *the* leader of a *homogeneous* society and the Turks as the founders of the *holy* state. Armenians were once called the *millet-i sadika* (the loyal nation) under the rule of the Ottoman Empire; yet they became "traitors" when they rebelled the colonial will in the beginning of 20th century. Armenians still do not have a say in the politics of the nation-state and are still subjected to various kinds of discrimination in the public sphere. Within such troublesome survival, Armenians nevertheless managed to form some kinds of "counter-discursive" strategies by the newspapers they published especially with *Marmara* and *Agos*, and more recently, in virtue of the *Aras* publishing house, which primarily catalogs the works of Armenian writers. Although Aras publishing house today can publish works in Armenian language due to the recent improvements in the linguistic rights of the minorities, its prime focus is to introduce the Turkish reading audience with the translations of the works of Armenian literature.[3] Aras publishing house is very important for counter-discourses to arise and for an alternative canon to be formed as opposed to the ongoing discourses reproduced on the basis of such motivations of the Turkish nation state.

Taner Akçam (2004) underscores two important counterparts of the taboos central to the Turkish nation-state's perceptions: The denial of the Armenian Genocide and the representation of Kurds as barbarians. These two taboos on which the whole national education system was established are continuously reproduced within the public sphere. In virtue of them, the colonial will undertakes a "defense mechanism" in order to erase history and memory. Instead, the nation-state consolidated a history and memory, which would fit in the foundational mottos of the Turkish nation state (231). Akçam further describes Armenian genocide as a product of the wave of "Turkification" (149). The same policy was also directed against Kurdish community under the rule of the nation-state beginning. Akçam makes the following remarks to illustrate the ways in which Kurds were systematically otherized by the nation-state through law:

[3] tr. Günümüz Türkiye'sinde İstanbul'da yoğunlaşmış bir azınlık toplumu olan Ermeniler'in kültürel öğelerini gelecek kuşaklara da taşımaya aracılık eden Aras Yayıncılık, Türkiye'de köklü bir geçmişi olan Ermeni yayıncılık geleneğinin yeni binyılda temsilcisi ve sürdürücüsü olmayı hedefliyor. Retrieved from http://www.arasyayincilik.com/index.php?dispatch=pages.view&page_id=5 on July 6, 2011.

> ‘There are no Kurds in Turkey; the Kurds are actually mountain Turks,’ it is said. The 125th and 171st Articles of the Penal Code and others have been employed against those who claim that Kurds actually exist as a separate ethnicity (2004, 231).

Under the nationalist regime, new discourses, which counted as “facts” were established that aimed at denying what happened at past, especially the atrocities perpetrated against Armenians. The new discourses proposed the existence of a “unified” nation with no classes, ethnic minorities and social differences. Besides, since the Kemalists imagined Turkey as “Western” and “Modern” society, the penal code said that no one was “allowed to speak of or promote Islamic culture.” This imagination exposed nation-state’s ambitions for a “secularized” country in which the Turks are Western and Modern while the traditionalists are “underdeveloped”, “non-modern” and “uncivilized”.

Kurds were no exception to the formula raised by this particular dichotomy. They live mostly under the traditional and tribal kinship ties in most of the cities of southeastern region of Turkey (Meho & Maglaughlin, 2001, 4). Kurds were regarded as “inferior” human beings. They were subjected to assimilation, especially in the early eras of the republican regime (Heper, 2007: 8, Bora, 1996: 37). It is striking to notice that Kurds were called *kara millet,* which literally means *black nation* because of their inferiorness and inability to act appropriately as opposed to the *holy* and *productive* Turkish race (Heper, 2007, 28). Throughout the republican history, Kurds were perceived as the “blacks” of the country, whose culture was subjected to varying degrees and strategies of assimilation and oppression. To speak Kurdish language was officially forbidden. Today, Kurdish language is not recognized as one of the official state languages and there are no official education of Kurdish language and culture to the community.

The inferiority of the Kurds as opposed to the superiority of the Turkish race was a central motive in the imaginations of the politicians during the early Republican era of the nation-state. Kirişçi and Winrow (1997) show that Turkish nationalism was systematically organized after the foundation of the nation state (99). According to Tanıl Bora (1996), the nation state aimed at establishing a homogenized identity and the nation (22). For Mesut Yeğen (2007), the regime considered the Kurdish unrest in this period as

reactions against the republican project of modernization (129). In this period, Turkish History Thesis was proposed in order to show that Turks are the founders of civilization (Kirişçi and Winrow 1997: 107, Bora 1996: 35, Yıldız 2001: 297). Besides, the Sun-Language Thesis claimed to prove that Turkish language was the founder of all languages (Bora 34, Kirişçi and Winrow 107, Yıldız 297).

Heper (2007) notes that, prime minister of Turkey, Ismet Inonu declared in a report that he prepared in 1935: "There was no benefit in providing schooling to the Kurds and Turks separately." For Inonu, "the Turks and Kurds should receive their primary education together" so that it would help to "Turkify" the Kurds (162). Kurdish language also did not exist according to the foundational paradigms of the nation state. The following excerpt written in the nationalist journal Ötüken clearly depicts the suppression of the Kurdish language:

> If they [the Kurds] want to carry on speaking a primitive language with vocabularies of only four or five thousand words; if they want to create their own state and publish what they like, let them go and do it somewhere else. We Turks have shed rivers of blood to take possession of these lands; we had to uproot Georgians, Armenians, and Byzantine Greeks... Let them go off wherever they want, to Iran, to Pakistan, to India, or to join Barzani. Let them ask the United Nations to find them a homeland in Africa. The Turkish race is very patient, but when it is really angered it is like a roaring lion and nothing can stop it. Let them ask the Armenians who we are, and let them draw the appropriate conclusions. (Meho & Maglaughlin, 2001, 6)

Turkish nation-state was founded on a taboo, which denies the acknowledgment of Armenian genocide. Indeed this particular taboo was also instrumentalized against Kurdish community. Turkish nationalists were proud that the Armenian genocide took place and they used it as a threat to suppress the possible uprisings of Kurdish community. Throughout the early Republican era of the nation-state, there were several Kurdish riots such as Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925), the Ağrı Revolt (1927-30), which were brutally repressed (Uçarlar, 2009, 112). The brutal repression of these revolts was successful in silencing the Kurdish opposition in Turkey until 70's. Beginning with the 80's, Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) was embodied and the war between Kurdish guerillas and Turkish army started. Although there have been some improvements for the

civil rights of the Kurdish community in the past five years under the policy of "Kurdish opening", particular forms of oppression still resides especially regarding the official use of Kurdish language. Despite the fact that post-2000 period marked the Turkish state's inclination for a more democratic society and state institutions, Mehmed Uzun was trialed in 2001 for his books *Nar Çiçekleri: Çok Kültürlülük Üzerine Denemeler*[4] and *Ronî Mîna Evînê Tarî Mîna Mirinê*[5]. He was accused of promoting chaos against the state and for being in support for PKK terrorism to which Uzun was insistently opposed (2008a, 19-20-21).

Margosyan wasn't subjected to such trials for the books that he published, yet his weekly columns in the newspapers *Agos* and *Evrensel* have been reserved for his criticisms against the colonial state discourse.[6] In 1997, the minister of Internal Affairs, Meral Akşener called PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan "*ermeni dölü"*, that is, a slang expression equivalent to "Armenian sperm". The expression aimed to degrade Öcalan for having Armenian descent. This particular instance once again illustrates the concomitant oppression of the Kurdish and Armenian identities. The degradation of the former is instrumentalized for the suppression of the latter by the colonial discourse.

Margosyan's reaction to this event was immediate. He wrote an open letter to the minister, which was published in Radikal newspaper. Afterwards, Meral Akşener publicly apologized for her words (Margosyan, 2009, 122). Yet for Margosyan, the apology was not enough, since the minister corrected her words into the following expression: "I didn't mean the Armenian citizens who pay their taxes under the Turkish flag and obey the rules." For Margosyan, this particular correction reproduced another form of Turkish nationalism and colonialism. The state discourse is shaped by such distinction; the "obedient" Armenians as the "first class citizens" in the contemporary society who do not rebel against the regulations and the oppressive mechanisms of the nation-state, and the "Armenian sperms", who deserve to be destroyed (214). Accordingly, Armeniannes is interpreted with a racist paradigm, which essentializes Armenian identity as unfaithful rebels like Ocalan, who doesn't deserve to be a first class

[4] en. "Pomegranate Flowers: Essays on Multiculturalism" was published at 1995.
[5] tr. "Aşk Gibi Aydınlık Ölüm Gibi Karanlık", en. ""Love Like Light Dark Like Death" was published at 1998.
[6] Margosyan published *Zurna* (2009) and *Çengelliiğne* (2010), collection of his columns at Agos and Evrensel newspapers.

citizen. Indeed he or any Armenian can't become one, because of this particular essentiality. In this regard, Turkish state did not only aim to *turkify* the Kurds but also the Armenians as well.

1.3. Uzun and Margosyan as Postcolonial Performers

Under such conditions of colonialism experienced by Armenian and Kurdish communities in Turkey, Armenians and Kurds are the *undesirable* others within the state discourse (Ong, 1996, 741). This particular mechanism of colonization is evident in the state discourses aims at history writing and taboo reproduction in accordance with the erasure of the past. This colonial will is also manifest in the literary works as well. Turkish literature contains many examples, which underscore the essential "inferiority" of Armenians and Kurds as opposed to the superiority of the Turks and their culture. As Millas (2009) remarks, non-muslim minorities are regarded as "the enemies of the nation" and "ethically inferior vis-à-vis the superior, brave, strong, honest, magnanimous" Turks in nationalist novels. (81). In one of his essays, Uzun also states that the Kurds were no exception to this dichotomy and they were positioned next to the non-muslim characters for their inferiority (2008a, 260). Millas suggests that in the nationalist novels, the "inferior other" was constructed in a way that it legitimized the existence of the superior Turks and the essential national identity since "the other" was "dangerous, treacherous, appalling" (81). Therefore, the nationalist literature aimed to silence minority cultures and rejected a multi-culturalist stance. The disappearance of multiculturalism signals the nationalist utopia for a "unified society". In this dream society maintained a paradox since the inferior Kurds and Armenians should be *Turkified* yet this couldn't happen, due to their essential inferiority as Kurds and Armenians.

Not all literature is nationalist of course. Following the famous Foucauldian formula "where there is power, there is resistance" (1978, 95), there are a variety of resistant approaches within literature. For the purposes of my research, I centralized my specific interest on two authors in order to illustrate the ways in which the colonialist discourse is challenged. In doing so, my aim is to investigate how Uzun and Margosyan proceed through literature in their causes of resistance. As writers of the colonized

communities, Uzun and Margosyan employ similar as well as distinct approaches to resist through literature. In one of his articles, Margosyan declares the ethics of salvation as follows: "The real source of life is affiliated with *persistence* and *resistance*." Furthermore, he relates, the essence of persistence and resistance is conditional to its humanitarian dimension and its ethical qualities (2009, 148).

Uzun recognized Margosyan's ethics in a similar fashion as well. In the article he wrote for *Radikal* newspaper just four months before his death and right after he met Margosyan at Saraptul to commemorate Margosyan's father, Uzun (2007a) defined Margosyan's memoir-novel *TT* as "the narrative of the ones whose voice come from below." For Uzun, the metaphor of the "beads" which were dispersed all over the place signifies the individuals, Armenians or Kurds, who have been displaced through the oppressive process of national unification. "I respect and enjoy his style" says Uzun, "for he aesthetically produces literature which paves the way for the silenced and the oppressed to get voiced". Margosyan's memoir-novels and short stories are crucial for Uzun since they manifest particular forms of resistance through literature. Such manifestation configures the imaginations of the reader, who is encouraged to reconsider what actually happened in history. Therefore, the occasion when Uzun and Margosyan met at Şaraptul, signals the existence of a particular event in history. Uzun supports Margosyan's literature for presenting an inventory of culture and atrocious events, which was unnoticed throughout the national history.

The close friendship that Uzun and Margosyan developed was not merely a result of a coincidence regarding the familial links. The city of Diyarbakır is the common denominator in the two authors' lives and imaginations through literature as well as for their interactions. Margosyan was born and spent his childhood in *Giaour Neighborhood* in Diyarbakır; the district where he is still passionately engaged and it occupies his imaginations in literature. Margosyan spent his entire life in Istanbul since the mid 1950's. A group of Armenian priests took Margosyan to Istanbul so that he could learn his mother tongue. After graduating from the department of philosophy at Istanbul University by the end of 60's, Margosyan began to write stories in Armenian language, which were published in *Marmara* newspaper. He published his first book in Armenian, "*Mer Ayt Gogmeri*" in 1984, a collection of stories some of which would later appear in

his first book in Turkish "*Giaour Neighborhood*" in 1992. Margosyan published "*Söyle Margos Nerelisen*" in 1995 and "*Biletimiz Istanbul'a Kesildi*" in 1998 in Turkish. In 1999, Margosyan published his second book in Armenian called "*Dikrisi Aperen*". In the same year, his collection of short stories under the label of "*Giaour Neighborhood*" was translated into Kurdish by Avesta Publishing house. In addition to his later books consisting of the collection of his weekly columns in Agos and Evrensel newspapers, "*Zurna*" and "*Çengelliiğne*", Margosyan published the memoir-novel *TT* in 2006 in Turkish, which would be his magnum opus.

Uzun was born in Siverek, a town in Urfa province in 1954, but lived through his childhood and youth in Diyarbakır, very close to Giaour Neighborhood. He was sentenced for his political activism when he was at the age of 17 and experienced two years of imprisonment in Diyarbakır Military Prison until 1973. Uzun learned his mother tongue in Diyarbakır Prison due to the official suppression of Kurdish language. During his adventure of mother tongue, Kurdish intellectuals Musa Anter and Ferit Uzun guided him. He started his writing career in 1984 when he published his first novel "*Tu*" during his exile in Sweden. He escaped from Turkey in 1977 in order to avoid imprisonment directed against him. He was accused of publishing a bilingual (Kurdish and Turkish) literature journal in Ankara just before his days of exile began. Due to the September 12, 1980 coup in Turkey, Uzun lost his citizenship and remained exile until 1992 when his citizenship was granted back.

Until 2000, he wrote novels such as "*Mirina Kaleki Rind*" (1987), "*Siya Evine*" (1989), "*Rojek Ji Rojen Evdale Zeynike*" (1991), "*Bira Qedere*" (1995) and "*Roni Mina Evine Tari Mina Mirine*" (1998), collection of essays such as "*Hez u Bedewiya Penuse*" (1993), "*Nar Cicekleri*" (1996), "*Bir Dil Yaratmak*" (1997) and "*Dengbejlerim*" (1998), and prepared an anthology of Kurdish Literature named "*Antolojiya Edebiyata Kurdi*" in 1995. Although many of his works have been translated to French, German, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian languages throughout the 90's, it was only the late 90's and early 2000's when the Turkish translations of Uzun's works became popularly circulated among the literature circles in Turkey. In his later works from 1998 till his death, Uzun published two volumes of *HD* novels in 2002 and 2003 respectively which were translated and published in Turkish immediately as well. Next to his essays published

under the title "*Zincirlenmis Zamanlar Zincirlenmis Sozcukler*" in 2002, Uzun's last finished literary work during exile is "*Ruhun Gökkuşağı*", an autobiography, which was published in Turkish in 2005. Uzun decided to end exile in 2005. He passed away while he was working on his new novel in Kurdish named "*Heviya Auerbach*"[7] in 2007.

In the meantime, Margosyan already published his memoir-novel and it was only two months before Uzun's death in Diyarbakır when Margosyan (2006) wrote an article for Uzun with the title of "*To resist is to live*". In his column, Margosyan refers to the present that Uzun gave him in 2003, the *Anthology of Kurdish Literature* whose lines inspired Margosyan to make the following observations: "This book was a reply to those official nationalist propagandists who dismissed the Kurdish language and culture, for it shows how rich and diverse Kurdish literature is." Margosyan also refers to Uzun's experience of imprisonment and calls him as a "courageous hero" who wrote "the revolt of Dicle in his days of exile abroad". Margosyan finishes his article by dreaming that one day Uzun will regain his health and continue to live and breathe in the city of Diyarbakir where his spirit belongs.

1.4. The Double Bind of Postcolonial Literature in Turkey

In a symposium on "Turkish Literature and Pluralism" in March 2011,[8] I presented a paper about Mehmed Uzun's late literary career and discussed his resistant approaches against the nation state and his community (Nas, 2011a, 2011b).[9] After the session, a friend of Uzun, Aytekin Yılmaz told me the following regarding Uzun's novel *Roni Mina Evine Tari Mina Mirine*: "At that time, around 1997, Uzun was pressured by the PKK in the way that he was expected to write a novel of the revolutionary guerillas, a heroic one. But Uzun was already disillusioned with PKK and wrote this novel." As a result, Uzun came up with a guerilla novel, but not in the fashion he was expected. In his previous writings, Uzun solely focused on the two distinct poles of the colonial divide where Turks commit atrocities against Kurds. His protagonists were Kurdish individuals.

[7] en. "Auerbach's Hope"
[8] "Turkce Edebiyat ve Cogulculuk Sempozyumu", 14 May 2011 at Kadir Has University. http://www.kampushaber.org/kadir-has-universitesi/turkce-edebiyat-ve-cogulculuk-sempozyumu-43820.html
[9] The paper was later published in "Varlık" Journal of Literature in August 2011.

In this novel, Uzun narrates the love story of two individuals, a Kurdish woman and a Turkish soldier. In 1998 when he felt the pressure from PKK and his community to write a guerilla novel, Uzun chose to give up fetishizing the colonial divide and preferred hybridity instead. Strikingly, Uzun undertook the Turkish translation of his novel after he published it in Kurdish. It was the first occasion he reestablished his relations with Turkish language through literature. My meeting with Yılmaz enriched the way I interpreted Uzun's postcolonial stance. Turkish language, which was once the language of the perpetrator, provided the means for Uzun's detachment from his community.

One can observe similar complexities in Margosyan's stance as well. Margosyan tends to essentialize his community and undertakes nationalist stances predominantly in his early writings. He has close relations with Aras Publishing House, which was founded in 1993. Aras prepared forewords for Margosyan's short stories in the early and mid-1990's; presenting him as "the contemporary representative of Armenian country literature". Margosyan's letter to Hagop Mintzuri is crucial in this regard. Mintzuri, A prolific author of Armenian literature wrote a letter to Margosyan in 1977, praised his literature and called him to "continue narrating our people, our places." In reply, Margosyan narrates his alienation among Armenian community when he arrived to Istanbul from Diyarbakir. Margosyan was sent to Istanbul "to learn his mother-tongue". When he arrived at school, Armenian pupils called the following: "Kurds arrived from Anatolia". In his letter, Margosyan aptly criticized the expression "us" and "our places" and manifested his hybrid identities between Armeniannes and Kurdishness. He was at the same time experiencing the publishing house's intentions for "national canonicity" since despite his detachment from his community manifest in this book, Aras still called him the representative of Armenian country literature. When Magosyan published "*Tespih Taneleri*" in 2006 in Turkish, it is crucial to see that Aras did not include any foreword regarding Margosyan's position in the canon. Turkish language for Margosyan became the means for his detachment from his community, similar to Uzun experienced. Yet, it doesn't mean that Uzun and Margosyan gave up resisting the oppressive tendencies of the nation state. Rather, they began to manifest resistances from an alternative sphere, which displays their proximities to minor literature.

In light of the observations mentioned previously in this chapter, I would like to discuss the significances of the following chapters and the inquiries that they will engage to. Uzun and Margosyan developed a mutual friendship and were also interacting with each other throughout their writing careers after 90's. As the writers of resistance against the colonial oppression, the two share similarities for they act through literature in voicing such resistances. The main similarity between the two is already evident in their mutual declarations of resistance and persistence to each other. Besides, the common denominator on the basis of which their literature arises is the fact that they seemingly belong to the minority communities who were and are still oppressed by the colonial will of the Turkish nation-state. The complexity of the Turkish experience of postcolonialism can be summarized as follows: First, one cannot mention an era of independence of the colonized communities. And second, keeping in mind the events of 1915 during when Kurds were also the perpetrators, there are no clear-cut dichotomies between the perpetrator and the oppressed.

Accordingly, the ways in which Margosyan and Uzun develop relations with the colonial will and with their communities get complicated. Their literatures display two distinct yet concomitant sorts of tendencies. On the one hand in their different writings in different eras, they tend to *essentialize* Kurdish and Armenian cultural autonomies, which can be described as *cultural nationalism* and *essentialism*. This nationalist stance is manifest within the literary narrative structures in their writings, which I prefer to call *hierarchies of culpability and victimhood*. Their narratives are employed for the reproduction of particular hierarchies between the perpetrator and the victim. The authors tend to identify the reader with the victimized characters and to distance them with certain actors who are deemed as absolute perpetrators. In this respect, the victims are Armenians or Kurds while the perpetrators are the Turks who represent the colonizer. Accordingly, the authors aim to react the denial of the atrocities committed against those colonized communities with the application of the particular hierarchies and let the reader be aware of such historical events. In doing so, the authors imagine their communities whose senses of belonging is reproduced on the basis of loss. In the following, I will discuss the ways in which the two writers interpret the "agency" of their characters under the colonial rule. The characters are passive subjects as they are deprived of agencies due

to the absolute totalization of the colonizer. Therefore, in light of the presented excerpts, which tend to *essentialize* and *nationalize* the communities through the hierarchy axis processing throughout the narrative structures, the second chapter is reserved to illustrate the proximity of Uzun's and Margosyan's literature to "nationalist" literature. For this aim, I will analyze Uzun's novels *Tu*, *Siya Evine*. Later, I will briefly mention the significance of his novel, *Roni Mina Evine Tari Mina Mirine*. For my analysis of Margosyan, I will focus on his short stories *Rışeş*, *Elmalı Balayı*, *Çocığın Adi Ne Olacağ?*" and some passages from *TT*.

However, simply posing these writers' literature as nationalist literature would be a misunderstanding of the further complexities and the capacities of their literature. Contrarily, Uzun and Margosyan also develop certain pathways through literature, by which they engage to a critical interrogation of the very perceptions of a homogeneous experience of a minority community under the colonial rule. The third chapter is reserved for such exploration as Uzun's novel *HD* and his autobiography *Ruhun Gökkuşağı*; Margosyan's book *Biletimiz Istanbul'a Kesildi* and *TT*. This time, they challenge another form of totalization, which is inherent in the very communal bonds. This transformation becomes most visible after 1998. In this period, they manifest hybridity through their literature, rather than focusing on the clear-cut dichotomies of the colonial divide. They reserve their criticisms for their communities; the way in which these communities follow a nationalist path and base their belongings on the basis of loss. This transformation points out the double-bind of Uzun's and Margosyan's literature. Both authors engage to a constant negotiation and conflict with the colonizer and their respective communities. On the one hand their literature conform to nationalism and essentialism, which reproduces the communal relations via resisting the colonizer. Concomitantly, they also stay critical to their own communities and manifest their detached identities through their literary works. In their different writings in different eras, Margosyan and Uzun challenge the established boundaries between the colonizer and the colonized and refuse to reproduce particular hierarchy axis between the oppressor and the oppressed. As well as particular themes that arise from certain anti-essentialist approaches, the authors further tend to challenge the nationalist paradigms through literature in virtue of their different experiments with the Turkish language and the particular radical themes that they

introduce. At this juncture, their works are distanced from the perceptions of the national and/or nationalist literature. Rather it establishes a proximity to what Deleuze and Guattari called *minor literature* since they undertake certain deterritorializations, which travel outside the realm of the *national* as well as the *essential*, together with the experiments with the major/colonial Turkish language.

The two poles of this academic inquiry should not be regarded as a concrete dichotomy essentially distinct from each other. The two notions do not constitute or represent two different genres of writing such as "national literature" and "minor literature" during the different stages of writing in the authors' lives; they rather exist concomitantly. Although it is possible to be able to detect particular date such as pre and post 1998 when Margosyan's or Uzun's literature display certain proximities to the national or minor, this would eventually be a miscomprehension of the two authors' acts of writing under the colonial rule. Since the very coexistence of these seemingly distinct performances through the *national* and the *minor* are the unique characteristics of this particular postcolonial experience in Turkey. The coalescence of the distinct proximities of these authors' literatures to the national and the minor in their manifestations of decolonization constitutes *the double bind* of their postcolonial literature. It further proves the complexities of the colonial condition in Turkey where the writers continuously negotiate with and are constantly regulated and pressured by the colonial will and the perceptions of their communities.

Chapter II

Proximity to Nationalist Literature

2.1. Hierarchies of Culpability/Victimhood

2.1.1. Reverse Orientalism Under Colonial Oppression in Uzun's *Tu*

Uzun's first novel "*Tu*"[10] was published in 1985 during his exile in Sweden. Written mostly in the tense of second person singular, the narration consists of the dialogue of the narrator/protagonist with an insect in his prison cell. The novel proceeds with flashbacks. They depict the inmate's experiences before and after his imprisonment. The narrator speaks to the insect throughout the novel, lying down unconsciously due to severe torture that he was subjected. He testifies his experiences after being detained as a political activist in second person singular. The name of the narrator is unknown. It can be anybody from the Kurdish community in Diyarbakir. Uzun's first novel heavily includes autobiographical remarks. It includes Uzun's meeting with Kurdish intellectuals such as Musa Anter, Ismail Besikci and Ferit Uzun in Diyarbakir military prison. Especially Musa Anter[11] figures as the most important actor in the inmate's life. He was Uzun's Kurdish language and literature teacher in the prison, as Uzun describes his importance in his memoirs (2008a, 338). The novel ends when the protagonist is taken out of his torture cell. He is unconscious and unable to walk. He is brought back to the cell in which he lives with other Kurdish inmates. He smiles and cries at the same time on Anter's shoulder.

The state power on the Kurdish community was intensely felt between the two military coups happened respectively at 1971 and 1980. Mehmed Uzun was one of Kurdish revolutionaries who were subjected to the torture and violence. It was March 3, 1972 when 18 year-old Uzun was taken from his house in the early morning and detained

[10] tr. "Sen", en. "You"

[11] Anter (1920-1992) was a prominent Kurdish writer and intellectual. He was assassinated in 1992. Turkey was found guilty of this murder in 2006 by the European Court of Human Rights (EHCR), who sentenced Turkey to a fine of 28,500 euros.
http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=151355

for interrogation. He was basically accused of nothing. According to his memoirs, a few nights before his detention, he went out with his couple of friends. They altogether wrote "protesting slogans" on the walls of the streets in Diyarbakır. He was suddenly taken to detention and was subjected to various tortures for 3 days. Consequently he was imprisoned. He was sent to the Diyarbakir Military Prison, which was populated by the Kurdish intellectuals and militant activists of the era. According to Uzun, he was in a place where "there was no freedom, law and human rights." His expressions reveal that it was a prison experience where the "state of exception"[12] was visibly felt and experienced, routine torture, lawlessness (2008a, 330).

Uzun initially felt desperate at his experience of imprisonment at the age of 18. As the time passed, he discovered that "this particular misfortune was indeed his first real chance in life." According to the report published by *The Times* magazine (Hines, 2008), Diyarbakır Military Prison which has a reputation for being one of the most notorious jails in the world from the times of the Ottoman Empire to the republican era. Indeed it was Uzun's first "school" since he had the chance to learn his mother tongue with the guidance of Kurdish intellectuals. He was able to pursue a writing career in Kurdish language throughout his life. Uzun describes the prison as follows: "I could finally get rid of all the lies and invalid knowledge that I learned throughout my schooling days and get to know the ones that were crucial, necessary and real." In his memoirs, Uzun further notes that his first novel *Tu* was telling the prison experiences of an unknown, unidentified young person. He underlines that, he was influenced by the environment he encountered in prison while writing his first novel (2008a, 340).

The novel *Tu* is significant for being Uzun's first novel in exile. It marks an important milestone shows how Uzun responds to the Kurdish oppression and represents it through literature. In 1977, Uzun had a long journey to Sweden as a political refugee. He illegally passed the Syrian border in a deadly adventure with the companion of Kurdish militant Necmettin Büyükkaya. With the illegal passport that was prepared for him, he managed to travel to Sweden from Syria. On the day of his arrival he asked for a political refugee status from the Swedish government (2008a, 353). Uzun decided to live an exilic life so that he could write novels in Kurdish language. He had an ideal for

[12] Giorgio Agamben. 2005. State of Exception. University of Chicago Press.

"reviving" this language and producing a modern novel from it (2008c, 21). In the first 8 years of his exile life, Uzun worked on his first novel *Tu* and published it. The novel is his first manifestation of Kurdish oppression in Turkey. The reason why he maintains his ideal for the mother tongue regards a reaction against nation-state's oppression. Uzun was imprisoned for the second time during his university education in Ankara. He was editing a literature journal publishing essays, short stories and poems written in Kurdish and Turkish. In his trial, he was accused of "separatism" for publishing in Kurdish. The judge told him the following: "there is no such thing as Kurdish language and literature" (2008a, 145) In light of this traumatic experience, Uzun was determined to prove and revive the dismissed Kurdish language and literature.

As Margosyan aptly observes, Uzun's 1995 work *Anthology of Kurdish Literature* is a resistant response to this dismissal and oppression. In the meantime, the military coup took place in 1980. Uzun's citizenship rights were abolished. The following four years witnessed the brutal repression of Kurdish intellectuals especially in Diyarbakir Prison until 1984. During his days in exile, Uzun was studying the works of Kurdish literature and world literature for his first novel by the help of other Kurdish writers abroad and Swedish intellectuals. In the meantime, one of his main inspirations for pursuing a writing career in exile, Necmettin Buyukkaya was murdered in Diyarbakir Prison in 1984. Uzun caught gastric bleeding when he heard the news, he could only get better when he managed to publish *Tu* in 1985 (2008a, 356).

Uzun's reactionarism for such oppression and dismissal of Kurdish language by the colonial will of the Turkish nation-state is evident in the ways in which he constructs the literary structures and devices in his first novel. Other than becoming the first product of his ideal for "reviving the mother-tongue", *Tu* offers hierarchical structures. These structures display the axis that depicts certain characters as "absolute victims" while some others as brutal, inhumane perpetrators. The prison provides Uzun with an efficient metaphorical space of testimony. He can clearly identify the two poles of the events: the soldiers and the police who occupy the pole of the perpetrator as representatives of the colonial will, and the victims who are essentially Kurds with total deprivation and powerlessness and are subjected to immense forms of torture and repression. The second person singular is employed for a mechanism of identification. The reader can effectively

identify him/herself with the victim and blame the perpetrator for the inhumane deeds that they committed. For this aim, *Tu* is significant since it is the only novel that Uzun wrote with second person singular. It is significant for his aims to engage to a total hierarchization of culpability and victimhood. These hierarchies introduce several axis throughout the story in order to effectuate identification mechanisms in the reader.[13]

Tu begins with the depictions of the colonial condition in Turkey. The oppression was felt among Kurdish community in Diyarbakır. The oppression causes the alienation of Kurdish community. Its representations are later accompanied and further instrumentalized for the sharpening of the hierarchies of the culpability/victimhood. In one of the scenes, the narrator tells his experience of a "national holiday" which was celebrated by the elites of the city: "These days were just lies. You couldn't celebrate your own national days." Under the slogans in Turkish everywhere such as "Long live the republic! Long live our holy and brave leader" which implicitly celebrates the founder of the nation-state, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the narrator desperately replies: "You had to tolerate these lies, you had no choice." The narrator also remarks that as a response to the national day celebrations in 29 October in Diyarbakir, every 21 March was the day of *Ironman Kawa*, a traditional celebration day for Kurdish nation. The narrator concludes, "despite the pressures, lies and the republic, every year the fires of Newroz was flaming above your city" (2010a, 20). Whenever the locals wrote slogans on the castle, which was significant for the Kurdish national independence struggle, "the state used to turn mad, the soldiers and the police used to erase those immediately." The Kurds were not allowed to enjoy their culture and identity. They couldn't celebrate their national days due to the oppression of the Turkish state. In the end, the inmate calls those perpetrators as "devils", who are "passionately engaged to the darkness" as opposed to the Kurds who are "in search of light" (34).

The hierarchies of culpability/victimhood seem to be visible within such representations of the colonial condition. They are also significant for displaying the ways in which Uzun proceeds from a nationalist paradigm with his emphasis on "Ironman Kawa" and the revolutionary stance of the "light-seeking" Kurds. Their passion

[13] Erdal Öz's influence on Uzun's *Tu* is worth mentioning. Öz wrote "Yaralısın", another prison testimony at second person singular at 1974. It was written in Turkish.

for independence is manifest during the days of Newroz, which is the Kurdish national holiday. I will further explore the representations, which depicts certain sorts of proximities to the nationalist literature in the following sections in details. Additionally, the narration proceeds towards the consolidation of axis with specific events in the novel. These strongly establish the hierarchies of culpability/victimhood. In a scene where the narrator cries in pain due to severe torture in his cell, he speaks to the insect and tells the following: "the left knee cap hurts so badly. They hit there with clubs and kicked. In reality, they are the best at their occupation. They know where to hit so that it would hurt most" (37). After this occasion which shows the brutal remains of the "professionally conducted" torture on the inmate, the narrator begins to tell his experiences of his initial detention and the police visit to his house for this reason:

> 'We're waiting here knocking the doors for half an hour, why don't you open? What are you hiding?' said the police. It was the voice of the commissioner. It was like a bear's voice, he wasn't talking, he was roaring. … His eyes were like a frog's, enormously huge and bulging. His mustache was thick, and voice was something like a monster's murmur (2010a, 43).

The "monstrous" officer comes in, while the household stands surprised and they naively ask the purpose of their visit in a fragile manner. The police want to search the house with guns in their hands. The narrator politely asks them to put down their guns so that her mother and sisters wouldn't be terrified. The police refuse and plunder the house. The police get angry upon hearing the mother crying in Kurdish: "It is forbidden to speak in Kurdish" the police say, "This time I forgive you, but you can't do that again." The police were like "a fox", who "spoliates a chicken coop". Within such hierarchical structure of power that the scene depicts, the representation of the victim as the "chicken" who is robbed by the "fox" is metaphorically applied to the narrative as an axis. It aims to enhance the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood.

In the meantime, the police see the narrator's library, which is occupied by the books of Western Literature such as Tolstoy, Joyce, Rilke, Faulkner, Kavafis and many others. One of the officers opens pages of Lorca's poetry and read a few lines: "Is this poetry? They all write nonsense!" as he goes on to read the lines "terribly". The narrator says the following: "36 years after Lorca was murdered, this time the police was murdering his poetry in your house, Lorca's beautiful aesthetics was turning into a briar

in his mouth." A similar axis engages to the narrative in order to illustrate the realities behind such power structures: it is actually the perpetrator who is uneducated, devoid of universally acclaimed cultural values and ignorant whereas the Kurdish narrator is the fan of the classics of Western Literature, well-educated, intellectual.

This kind of an axis performs in two distinct yet interrelated fashion through the narrative regarding the mechanisms of identification on the reader: First, it enhances the hierarchy of culpability/victimhood since it conveys the idea that such an "ignorant" perpetrator "unjustly" oppresses such a Kurdish "intellectual". The scene sharpens the perceived victimhood of the narrator to a higher degree. Secondly, the author undertakes an "orientalist" dichotomy and reverses it in a way that positions the perpetrator as the "inferior" versus the victim as the "superior" no matter what the power positions oppositely differ in-between the two poles.

Within such dual representation of hierarchization of the victimhood structures and reversed orientalist dichotomy, the police find out a piece of poetry in Kurdish written on the narrator's notebook. Due to this discovery and the suspicious looks of the police on the narrator, he agrees to go to the police station and bids farewell to his family. He gets on the police car and the commissioner continuously curses him on the road. When they get on the station and head to the detention room, the narrator again naively asks: "What am I guilty of? Why are all these handcuffs? Why are you cursing me all the time?" The naivete of the narrator is replied with a brutish force on the side of the police: "The son of a dog is still speaking! Beat him up!" The scene ends with the enhancement of the opposite poles of the axis, the naïve victim on the one hand who is aware of nothing and the perpetrator who brutally tortures for nothing (2010a, 57).

2.1.2. *Tu* and *Siya Evine* as National Allegories

The following chapters of *Tu* depict narrator's memoirs of imprisonment in Diyarbakır Military Prison. It includes the narrators' interaction Musa Anter, Ismail Besikci and Ferit Uzun. They all were influential for the narrator to learn his mother tongue and Kurdish literature. The narrator is deported to a torture cell through the end of the novel. Another series of torture scenes follow up. Here, the narrator was "bridled"

and turned into an animal with the brutal torture accompanying the grotesque image. Among the vehement cries, the narrator asks: "Why were they so barbarian?" (2010a, 187) The torturers later force him to eat his own pee and excreta, when he wants to go to the toilet: "You cannot go to the toilet whenever you want, you have to face the consequences! Do not forget, you will have to drink your pee if you do that!" In the midst of such violence, the narrator complains: "no, they were not humans. They did not know how to speak as humans." And what's more, the narrator further notes that, "even they couldn't speak Turkish properly": "Their bad Turkish got even worse when they speak of such things" (192).

After the various scenes of torture, the narrator is held back again in the detention room for interrogation: "There are no Kurds! You know that right? We are all Turks and brothers. We want to hear this fact from you." The moment when the narrator refuses to express such a thing, he is brutally tortured once more. The scene concurrently enhances the ongoing hierarchy of culpability: "The enemies of the Turks, the foreigners are deceiving you. They are rebelling you up against us. You poor ignorant race are deceived. So, tell us everything, the reality." Standing in pain and lots of wounds, the narrator is unable to answer. Indeed he has no idea about what to say to the perpetrator, therefore keeps silent. He is tortured again to death and locked up in a cell. Here, he meets an insect, with which his dialogue begins.

The metaphor of insect is crucial in the sense that he was reduced to the status of an "insect" rather than a "human being" in prison. Secondly, he could only speak to and testify an insect. The insect wouldn't even hear him and make sense of his testimony. *Tu* is the story of a Kurdish individual who is reduced to a "bare life"[14] status and who can only testify to an *impossibility* where no one can hear. Following Jameson (1986), *Tu* can be read as the "national allegory" of a colonized and oppressed nation. The identity and autonomy of the nation is dismissed by the colonial will. Borrowing from Agamben, the nation can only bear witness to "an impossibility of bearing witness"[15] due to the extreme forms of torture and violence. Within such a national allegory, the hierarchies of

[14] Giorgio Agamben. 1998. Homo Sacer: Sovereign power and bare life. Stanford University press.
[15] Giorgio Agamben. 1999. Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive. New York: Zone Books. 39.

culpability and victimhood are utilized for the illustration of that allegory, which would embody a mechanism of identification in the reader.

Referring to Deleuze's insights on the establishment of the literary text, Jameson draws attention to the particular structural tendencies within the acts of writing which is significant for not "what it means, but how it works" (2000, 403-404). The hierarchies of culpability and victimhood are important since they display certain forms of structures within which the literary text evolves. These structures work through the text in order to establish a mechanism of identification for the reader. Here, the procedure exceeds the mere meanings conveyed by those structures. The text proceeds with the repetitive performances of axis building. The particular meaning conveyed through the act of writing is static and concrete, whereas its repetitive employment throughout the text provides the sharpening of the hierarchies. The distance between the two poles of the colonial divide occupied respectively by the perpetrator and the victim increases. Uzun's first novel *Tu* offers hierarchies of culpability and victimhood. They repetitively work through that particular stable meaning regarding victimhood throughout the text. In a claustrophobic and catastrophic fashion illustrated effectively within the space of "prison", *Tu* is introduced to Kurdish literature by Mehmed Uzun as a national allegory. It attempts a particular act of "decolonization" through literature from a nationalist point of view. Accordingly, it consolidates "counter-discourses" to colonialism undertaken by the Turkish nation-state.

Following to the publishing of *Tu*, Uzun's published his second novel, *Mirina Kaleki Rind*[16]. It is a novel that narrates the death of an old and wise Kurdish deity in a magic realism style. Uzun's third novel, *Siya Evine*[17] (hereafter referred to as *SE*) was published in 1989. *SE* was Uzun's another attempt of decolonization through literature yet in a different manner from *Tu*. In this novel, Uzun turns his attention from the "prison" as the setting of colonial oppression to the themes of "exile" and "forgotten Kurdish history". Uzun narrates the life of Kurdish intellectual Memduh Selim. *SE* can be read as the biography of Memduh Selim with Uzun narrating. The novel covers most of the events from the early 1900's till his death at 1976. It narrates an individual tragedy,

[16] tr. "Yaşlı Rind'in Ölümü", en. "Death of the Old Rind"
[17] tr. "Yitik Bir Aşkın Gölgesinde", en. "In the Shadows of a Lost Love"

which at the same time reflects the collective tragedy of the Kurdish nation for nearly a century.

Memduh Selim inevitably begins an exilic life after the foundation of the Turkish nation-state at 1923. He aims for an independent Kurdish state liberated from the colonial oppression throughout his life. The focus of the story is on *Mount Ararat Revolt* organized by Kurdish guerillas at 1930 under the leadership of Memduh Selim. Within a two-way narration, the reader is also exposed to Memduh Selim's love affair. He is just about to marry his beloved Feriha when he had to figure out the plans for revolt at Mount Ararat. Memduh Selim had to leave Feriha back at Syria during the war against Turkish armed forces. Kurdish guerillas lose the war. In the meantime, Feriha gets married to an Arab feudal lord and become only one of his wives. Memduh Selim is devastated to lose his love. He also loses the independence war after a catastrophic defeat on the mountains. The Iranian state plays an important role in their defeat since they support the Turkish forces. The neighboring countries such as Russia and other Europeans do nothing to stop violence. Memduh Selim escapes from the mountains somehow and continues his exile life in various countries. He writes letters to his deceased father and his love Feriha; unnamed, unaddressed letters.

SE is different from *Tu* in terms of plot and setting. But *SE* also displays a national allegory by projecting the fate of the nation onto the life/fate of the individual. Memduh Selim's life story is accompanied with the hierarchies of culpability/victimhood. Memduh Selim's exile life and the way in which his beloved is taken as a wife to "feudalism" are significant counterparts of this allegory. Similar to the protagonist of *Tu*, Memduh Selim is a well-educated intellectual, capable of comprehending both Western and Eastern literature, art and philosophy. In 1927, Memduh Selim and his friends founded a national organization for Kurdish resistance named *Xoybun*, with the aid of an Armenian patriarch Vahan Papazian. After the Armenian genocide in 1915 and the consecutive suppression of Kurdish national revolt Sheikh Said in 1925, Kurds are Armenians abroad were in some sense of unification against the colonial will of the nation-state (Tan, 2009, 270). Despite the solidarity ties in-between the diaspora communities, Memduh Selim and his company was unable to cope with the violence they were subjected to during the revolt of Mount Ararat. The

narration of the war significantly marks the reproduction of hierarchies of culpability and victimhood.

Uzun introduces a narrative of resistance to his novel where certain hierarchies are appropriately established. The guerillas call Memduh Selim "Alexander" for his leadership, yet despite a few heroic connotations, the situation is much more pessimistic. Even before the war began, the narration is constituted in a way that Memduh Selim, sitting in his cave, waiting for the catastrophic end, already knows that they will inevitably lose:

> He is staying here for more than two months. However neither he returned to Syria nor people arrived at Ararat. The roads are closed due to snow. Everywhere is cold, and the Turkish army… And most importantly, Iran betrayed them. The return form here doesn't seem possible (2010b, 187).

The desperate Kurdish guerillas are waiting for the inevitable end: defeat and brutal death at the hands of the Turkish army. The image of the Kurdish guerillas, betrayed and left alone, trying to survive among the freezing cold, positions them at the "victim" pole of the hierarchy of culpability and victimhood. The Kurdish guerillas are going to fight in a war that they know will be lost. This pre-knowledge about the future strengthens the hierarchies on the side of the victims:

> News arrives from all over the place. Everywhere is under fire. Murder, death, attack, fear, guns, fighter aircrafts, bombings, tanks… These words are whistling through Memduh Selim's ears. This world is a world made out of hell. In the middle of a silenced, hurt, beaten up world… (2010b, 182)

Memduh Selim is under the violent attack of the Turkish armed forces and his guerillas cannot do much. They cannot resist, the perpetrator is overpowered with tanks, planes, all kinds of technologies that the guerillas don't have. Yet they fight, despite the fact that they will lose in the end. The nationalist heroism in the narration is accomplished by the motive of a vehement defeat under the brutish hands of the Turkish forces. In the meantime, Memduh Selim stands in the midst of death, which lasts for months. Yet he is so not interested in any kinds of violence despite the fact that he is called "Alexander". He constantly refrains from violence despite the fact that he is supposed to be leading the troops. He cannot look at the corpses and all the blood, which is shed all around. Within the catastrophic war scene that is going on very close to

Memduh Selim, the narrator notes that "he lost weight" during the war, "his beard got longer", "he stands silence, thinking all the time", and he is constantly "writing" in the midst of violence. Besides, during the war, Memduh Selim frequently gets flu and tries to cope with it:

> Oh dear Memduh Selim! He got sick again. Among this freezing winter and glaring war, he lies down sick, desperateness, difficulties… (2010b, 189)

Among all kinds of violence, the narrator attaches certain naïvete to Memduh Selim. As a Kurdish intellectual he is very dear and sensitive to brutal affects of the war. He is even so sensitive that he can catch flu under the freezing cold, which altogether further sharpen his position as the victim within the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood. The narrator describes the violent suppression of Kurdish guerillas by the Turkish army as follows:

> The wounded guerillas are lying in the caves, crying. A scene which affects the heart deeply. The human heads are shattered into pieces, body parts everywhere, broken legs, stomachs… Cries of death. (2010b, 204)

As such brutal events take place, the way in which Memduh Selim lies with "flu" once again enhances his position as the victim. It positions Turkish army as the absolute perpetrator who shatter human bodies into pieces and cause such cries of death. For the narrator, the Turkish state "attacked Ararat with all its force". In opposition to a "bunch of Kurdish guerillas", Turkish army fights with its "60000 soldiers, 10 bombing batteries, 550 machine guns and 50 planes." The brutal suppression of Kurdish revolt is not unexpected since as suggested before. The Kurdish uprisings were met with brutal responses during the early republican era of the Turkish nation-state.

Proceeding from the presented image of this certain form of brutal suppression, the narrator goes on to reproduce and enhance the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood with the following catastrophic observation: "A bomb fell on the 110-year old mother of Bıro Hesiki Pasha…" (203-204). Accordingly, the bomb, which was thrown by the Turkish armed forces to a very old, innocent mother of 110 age once again warns the reader about the extreme culpability of the perpetrator. The axis it forefronts widens the hierarchy between the innocent Kurds and the perpetrating Turks. Eventually,

SE contains the reproduction of the hierarchy axis consolidated for a *counter-nationalism* whose subject matter in terms of heroism is the brutal defeats that the nation and the individuals inevitably suffered.

Uzun's early fictional works, *Tu* and *SE* work through this colonial divide which consists of the perpetrator and the victim. The power hierarchies in-between are continuously widened and sharpened by the narrative strategies. The hierarchies of culpability and victimhood are the acts of "decolonization". They aim at a "counter nationalism", which "produced national identities on the model of, but also against the domination of" the nation state (Prasad, 1992, 158). The orientalist dichotomy was reversed and transformed into a counter-discourse against the perpetrator in *Tu*, which showed the ignorance and the belatedness of the perpetrator. Similarly, the counter nationalism inherent in *SE* manifests the Kurdish valor in light of the "lost" national struggle of independence against the imperial/colonial will, during which "violence is a cleansing force" (Fanon, 1963, 94) for decolonization.

2.1.3. The Absence of the Perpetrator in Margosyan's Literature

Margosyan's literature presents an alternative account for decolonization. It is slightly different than Uzun's literature in terms of the structures of hierarchies of culpability and victimhood and counter-nationalism. Margosyan's short stories and his memoir-novel *TT* are entirely occupied with the authors' early childhood and youth memories most of which took place in Diyarbakır. Herein, the way Uzun describes Margosyan's literature as an "inventory of the oppressed" is realized through the fictionalized memories of Margosyan's childhood. *Gavur Mahallesi*[18] (hereafter referred to as *GM*), which figures in most of the stories of the author, consists of Armenians, Turks, Kurds, Assyrians, Chaldeans and Jews where the inhabitants develop neighboring interactions. Throughout his narrations of the neighborhood, Margosyan does not emphasize a kind of a power imbalance in-between the particular communities residing in the urban setting. The inhabitants are multi-lingual, capable of speaking different languages such as Armenian, Turkish and Kurdish. Despite the multi-cultural setting, the

[18] en. "Giaour Neighborhood"

Turks rarely figure in his stories. Margosyan primarily narrates the experiences of Kurdish and Armenian residents who have established close links with Margosyan's family members. Among the motives that are conveyed through his literature there are daily interactions in public, the religious and cultural ceremonies and issues, notable individuals such as the priest *Der Arsen* and the mid-wife of the neighborhood *Kure Mama* whose stories are presented in a humorous way, as well as cultural specifities from traditional ceremonies to food recipes, the children's play in the streets and the ordinary daily dialogues between the individuals of *GM*. In terms of the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood, there are quite a few connotations that are not so much visible in the text unlike the way it was in Uzun's. It is this very invisibility that characterizes the ways in which Margosyan establishes certain axis.

In addition to the themes that primarily occupy Margosyan's literature, there are also references to the events of 1915. In a polyphonic manner, Margosyan narrates the experiences of the several characters throughout his short stories about the catastrophic events of 1915. In one of his short stories named "*Rışeş*", Margosyan narrates his experiences of Armenian traditional celebration day. He describes his aunt as "a woman who lost her husband and her children in goddamn '*sevkiyat*'" (displacement). She had to work in the construction yards after then, just like other Armenian women. The reference to 1915 is indirectly conveyed, with the word "goddamn displacement". It impoverished Armenian women and they became workers under terrible conditions.

The hierarchy is evident, yet in a distinctive manner: the Armenians are victimized but the reference to the perpetrator is absent. *Rışeş* is written for the memory of Margosyan's mother and his aunt who have been subjected to various traumas and pains in 1915. Nevertheless as the story depicts, they passionately try to make a living in terrible conditions afterwards. They are still strictly loyal to their national belongings and celebrate the traditional *Rises* day. In addition to his aunt, Margosyan's "long-suffering" mother desperately cries the following: "Ah! Goddamn *'Seferberlig'* (country-wide mobilization)" Despite the brutal consequences of the "*Seferberlig*", Margosyan's "heartsick" mother still survives to feed her family at the same time not dismissing her cultural and national duties (2008, 67).

In this regard, the women appear in Margosyan's writings as the foremost victims of the catastrophe of 1915. His story maintains a "gendered" hierarchy of culpability and victimhood. In another story in *Söyle Margos Nerelisen*?[19] (hereafter referred to as *SMN*) Margosyan mentions the life of Armenian women called Yegisapet, living alone in Giaour Neighborhood. He describes her as "a remainder from '*Kafle'* (the convoy of people)" who had to work in construction yards after 1915. She survived from the catastrophe of 1915 and continued to live a solitude life in the neighborhood. "She was married with loneliness", says Margosyan, "after she lost her husband in '*Kafle"*" (2010d, 46). There is a gendered hierarchization, which tends to invoke identification in the reader. The ways in which Margosyan chooses to concentrate on the lives of the "desperate" female survivors of the catastrophe tend to sharpen the victimization. The frequent emphasis on Armenian women "occupied in construction yards" increases the degree to which Armenian women are victimized.

In his later work *TT*, Margosyan once again employs such a hierarchy. He narrates her grandmother Sero Nene's words with en emphasis on "*Seferberlig*" in the following passage:

> (in vernacular) Let go, never come back, let all your wills fail Seferberlig! You ruined us, you too get wretched Seferberlig...[20] (2008, 277)

In his literature, not only female survivors of the catastrophe but also men are engaged to a repetitive performance of remembering the traumatic events of 1915. In these passages the position of the perpetrator is once again absent as the dialogue between Sarkis and his friends shows:

> Although, while my father and others were changing the subject not to reopen this "unfortunate issue" (in vernacular) ever again when they realize us, the children, accompanying their sorrow with the tears of our own as they were telling each other about their struggles between death and life at those past years on the road to "Kafle", why would they recount the same events from the beginning till the end during their "visit" (in vernacular) to another house two days later?[21] (2008, 253)

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[19] en. Tell me Margos, Where Are You From?

[20] tr. Gidesen, geri gelmiyesen, bemurad olasan Seferberlig! Evımızi, barğhımızi yığhtın, çarğhımızi, çubığımızi kırdın, sen de kuri dal kimi kırılasan, kökin kuriya, işallah sel sefil olsan, sürüm sürün sürünesen, bızi mehf ettın sen de mehf u perişan olasan Seferberlig…

[21] tr. Babam ve diğerleri birbirlerine o yıllarda "Kafle" yollarında ölümle yaşam arasında gidip gelişlerini anlatırken onların nemli gözlerine biz çocuklar da gözyaşlarımızla eşlik edince, bari

Within such recurrent emphasis on the perpetrator as "*Kafle*" and nothing further, Margosyan narrates the "*Kafle*" experience of his father as follows:

> (in vernacular) I was very young that time, but I remember indistinctly. My mother gathered us to her near, she was telling 'Mın ertenk, mın ertenk!" on the one hand, she was crying on the other... As my mother was saying that, we were going to travel, but where? Anyway, we hit the road... I was very tired and felt asleep. Kafle (the convoy) went on the journey, I stayed back. My mother did not realize that I was back because it was very noisy, when she realized she couldn't return to get me because the soldiers wouldn't let her... Zaza women found me near the fountain. Surely, they understood that I'm a child of *Fılla* (in vernecular), a child of *Hay* (in Armenian). They call us Fılla... What happened to us is a long story, but it happened already, Allah knows what will happen...[22] (2008, 352-353)

The narrations of the catastrophe in Margosyan's literature establish a two-pole structure of hierarchization. It is occupied by the Armenian victims of the catastrophe on the one side. The other pole of the hierarchy, namely where the "perpetrator" is positioned is represented with the words that are frequently employed throughout his short stories: "*Kafle*, *Sevkiyat*, *Seferberlig*." Armenians in Giaour Neighborhood continuously refer to such words in order to refer to the events of 1915. Eventually, Margosyan constitutes a literary space where the "perpetrator" is absent. Yet the victims of the certain acts of perpetration are present. The way in which Margosyan doesn't point at a particular perpetrator of 1915 doesn't signify the abandonment of the hierarchies of culpability of victimhood altogether. Rather, the pole of the perpetrator is emptied whereas the degree to which the victimhood is furthered is continuously emphasized. There is no particular axis, which proceeds in order to enhance the distance between the perpetrator and the victim.

çocukların yanında bu "uğırsız mesele"yi bir daha açmamaya karar verip konuyu değiştirdikleri halde, iki gün sonra bu kez bir başka evde "mısafırlığa" gittiklerinde aynı şeyleri sil baştan neden anlatırlardı?

[22] Tr. O zaman küçüğtım, hama ğheyal meyal ğhatırliyam. Anam bızi başına topladi, bi tereften 'Mın ertenk, mın ertenk!" diyidi, bi tereften da ağlidi… Anam bele dedığına gore bi yere gideceğığ, hama nereye? Neyse, düştığh yollara… ben yorğınlığhtan orda yuğyuğhım gelmiş, yatmişam. Kafle kağhmış yürümiş, ben orda kalmişam. Anam da o gürıntide ayılmamiş ki ben orda kaldım, ayılınca da daha edememiş geri done, candarma başlarındadır… beni Zaza karilar çeşmede bulilar. Tabi anlilar ben Fılla çocığiyam, yani Hay çocuğiyam. Onlar bize Fılla diyiler… Bu bızım başımıza gelen uzun bi meseledir, lakin bi kere oldi işte, gerısi Allah'ın bılecağı iştır…

Rather than working through such colonial divide, Margosyan utilizes such hierarchies in order to emphasize certain forms of cultural/national essentialisms of the Armenian community. By leaving aside the quest for emphasizing the identity of the perpetrator and by solely concentrating of the ways in which the Armenians are victimized, Margosyan aims to focus on the essentials of the Armenian community by the "inventory" of culture that he proposes. That inventory consists of the Armenians' cultural/national belongings, rituals, speeches, dialogues, jokes, tariffs, games that they perform in their daily lives, to which Armenian community are still attached despite the traumatizing and destructive consequences of the catastrophe.

While Uzun clearly establishes the boundaries between the oppressor and the oppressed on the two contrary poles of the hierarchy in his novels *Tu* and *SE*, Margosyan does not prefer to point out a specific oppressor. Yet colonialism is still evident, without the mention of the identity of the colonizer. The way Uzun draws heavily on such hierarchy in-between the (Turkish) perpetrator and the (Kurdish) victim announces his proximity to counter-nationalism and a reverse-orientalism. Margosyan's strategy to leave the pole of the perpetrator blank bears problematic as well. Not clearly specifying the perpetrator who undertook brutal atrocities in 1915 indeed conforms to the will of the perpetrator, which is "the will to annihilate" (Nichanian, 2002, 210). The perpetrator strives after the ambition to deny what happened, to turn the events into a "non-event" in which the perpetrator is not addressable (Adak, 2010). It is impossible to challenge the national taboo of remembering Armenian genocide with undermining the primary role of the very perpetrator who initially constituted these taboos.

Although Margosyan seems to achieve what Adak endorses in the recent depictions in published memoirs regarding 1915 events focusing especially on Fethiye Çetin's "My Grandmother" (2004), that is, the point of "not to fetishize the definitions of perpetrator and the oppressed", the very abandonment of the positioning the perpetrator into the picture puts forth a certain problematic. Margosyan's narration on the one hand signals the dissolution of "mono-ethnic autobiographical self" which struggles to distinguish him/herself (the victim) with the other (the perpetrator) (Adak, 2007, 252) yet it does not abandon the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood. The only exception is that the pole of the perpetrator is emptied while the focus shifts on the narrations

regarding the victimization of the Armenian community by "*Seferberlig*, *Kafle*, *Sevkiyat*", whose addressee is unknown. Rather, the way Margosyan reworks on this hierarchy in this particular way paves the way for him to draw attention to the *essentials* of the community and attempt at decolonization.

2.2. Towards Cultural Nationalism and Essentialism

2.2.1. *Loss* as the Basis of Kurdish and Armenian Communities

On the side of the victim pole that Margosyan operates, He utilizes various axis with a set of an inventory of culture. It points at the essentials of the Armenian community in Diyarbakir. By the concept of "essentials", I refer to the narration of the autonomous meanings attached to certain practices, remembrances, which distinguish the Armenian community from others and reserve a distinctive space for it among other cultures. Besides, the representations of the essentials of the Armenian community lay the foundations of the distinctive presence and the spirit of that community which was founded on the very metaphors that convey essentiality. Margosyan works through several metaphors uttered within the community, which paves the way for him to focus on such essentials.

The word *Garod* for this reason plays a crucial role. As the equivalent of the Armenian word for "missing", *Garod* is continuously figures in the imaginations of Armenians in his literature. The word is concomitantly used when Margosyan speaks of the memories of "Heredan" throughout *TT*. Heredan is the hometown of Margosyan's grandparents. It is important for being the "lost hometown" since they had to leave for *Kafle* long ago and can never return Heredan:

> ... *Garod*, longing...
> ... Heredan, the place where the people, who were forbidden to set foot on their homelands, (in vernacular) "indistinctively" remembered, was no more an ordinary village on the mountainside, it was the name of the longing...[23] (2008, 462-463)

[23] tr. Garod, özlem… Doğdukları topraklara ayak basmaları, emdikleri sütün bir bakıma bedeli olarak yasaklanan bacı kardeşin "ğheyal meyal" hatırladıkları Heredan, artık su ya da bu dağın yamacındaki sıradan bir köy değil, özlemin adıydı…

In the following, Margosyan one by one narrates what the word "garod" means for the individuals of the community:

> For Pese Ohannes, garod was Ğhop village that he had to leave when he was 6 years old. For Hovsep Keşişyan who called me his fellow townsman from the beginning of my education in Patriarchate, garod was Silvan. … And for the American Bill Nacaryan, garod was Maden, Bakırmaden...[24] (2008, 463)

Margosyan sorrowfully laments the common experience of every single individual as being an exile. The loss of homeland appears the common experience of Armenians. The "goddamn Seferberlig" tragedy strikingly becomes the very essential constituting agent of the sense of totality among the members of the community. The *loss* is foundational for the national totality of the Armenian community to emerge. It points at the "productivity of loss" in Butler's terms:

> Loss becomes the condition and necessity for a certain sense of community, where community does not overcome the loss, *cannot* overcome the loss, without losing the very sense of itself as a community. (2003, 468)

Butler underscores the *paradox of loss*, that is, a *new* community is generated after the catastrophe on the basis of loss. The sense of loss then has to be dissolved so that the community should recover the loss. However, loss continues and the community can never recover. In Margosyan's literature, the act of decolonization doesn't attempt at the dissolution of the particular sense of community, which gets embodied after the catastrophe of 1915. Rather, throughout his postcolonial attempt, Margosyan undertakes decolonization by focusing on the very loss caused by the perpetrator. Margosyan's narrative suggests that the loss in turn became the founding essentials of the sense of totality within the Armenian community.

Similarly, Uzun's character in *SE*, Memduh Selim also does not attempt to overcome that loss. On the contrary he fights a war which he knows will be lost. He attempts the impossible. Eventually particular sense of loss arises that reproduces the sense of national totality. The narrator of *Tu* bears witness to the impossibility of bearing

[24] tr. Pese Ohannes için garod, altı yaşındayken kopup ayrıldığı Erzurum'un Ğhop köyüydü. Patrikhane'de ilk günden hemşerim diyerek bana anadilimi öğrenmem için yardımcı olan Hovsep Keşişyan için garod, kendi adını bile gölgeleyip şiirlerinde mahlasa dönüşen Silvan'di. ... Ve Amerikalı Bill Nacaryan için ise garod, Maden'di, Bakırmaden.

witness. Memduh Selim is the ultimate and constant *loser* who writes unnamed and unaddressed letters to his lost beloved. Their fates coincide with the fate of the nation. Similarly, Margosyan's characters undertake repetitive performances on the basis of loss which is manifest through the Armenian words of *Garod* and *Heredan*. The loss, which is the consequence of the colonial will, figures very much in the postcolonial writings of Uzun and Margosyan. It marks the essentials of their community since it reproduces its sense of national totality under the colonial rule. Throughout his experience of torture, the narrator in *Tu* continuously remembers the "strans" (Kurdish folk songs) of his grandmother, the laments where Kurdish oppression under the colonial rule is narrated. Memduh Selim writes letters to his father who had long ago died in 1923 on the year of the foundation of the Turkish nation-state. Margosyan's characters continuously remember and gather for sharing remembrances.

Eventually, thinking through the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood are significant. They signal the establishment of the senses of nationhood on the two sides of the colonial divide: the perpetrator maintains a particular sense of national *totality* on the basis of the atrocities that it committed against the colonized Kurds and Armenians. On the other hand, Armenians and Kurds apply counter-nationalism in virtue of the very atrocities that the colonizer committed which resulted in loss. Despite the fact that its perpetrator is addressed in Uzun and hidden in Margosyan, the loss becomes the essential constituting element of the characters' subjectivities and perceptions within their narrations in different fictional and autobiographical works analyzed for this purpose. These narrations display the authors' proximities to nationalist literature.

2.2.2. Essentialism in Margosyan's Short Stories

The emphasis on the essentials of national belongings in the representation of Armenian community is manifest with respect to particular motives other than the theme of loss in Margosyan's literature. Margosyan refers to the very *Armeniannes* of himself on many occasions. In his short story written for the memory of his father Sarkis in *SMN*, Margosyan narrates his childhood memories with his father who frequently asks the following question to Mıgırdiç: "Where are you from?" Margosyan almost *automatically*

replies the following: "I'm from Heredan father", although he is not, but his ancestors were before 1915. At this juncture, the essentiality of loss as mentioned through the metaphor of Heredan is passed on the younger generation. However, rather than engaging to a critical interrogation on this particular essentiality of loss and even on patriarchy, Margosyan comments the following: "I didn't know what Heredan meant exactly. But I felt myself better when I uttered it." (2010d, 102) The narration implies that a young Armenian who has no knowledge on the hometown, is nevertheless capable of attaining such innermost feeling that the word "Heredan" conveys.

Margosyan's narration of this story goes on as he further underscores the importance of the longing for Heredan: "They lost their hometowns during the first world war, yet it was still occupying their memories." Within such narration in which the axis of hierarchy exists without any mention of the perpetrator, Margosyan concentrates deeper on the side of the victim in order to declare the essentials of a counter-national sense of belonging: "One couldn't leave Heredan aside. It was the blood that ran through our veins." (104) In a patriotic fashion, Margosyan once again illustrates the ways in which the image of the hometown, which was annihilated by the colonizer, figures in the "blood" of the Armenians. He once again attempts decolonization through counter-nationalism and national essentialism.

Regarding the emphasis on national essentialism, Margosyan's another story occupies a crucial position. First published as series in Marmara newspaper at 1973, "*Elmalı Balayı*" (Honeymoon with Apple) later appeared in his book, "*Biletimiz Istanbul'a Kesildi*"[25] (hereafter reffered to as *BIK*). The story is a parody of the famous biblical Adam and Eve story. Bhabha highlights the use of parody as a useful literary tool in postcolonial writing, especially instrumentalized for the re-reading of the particular colonial texts (1984, 126-127). Margosyan's use of parody in this specific story is slightly different, definitely a re-reading of a religious story yet imbued with national essentialism. One day God decides to build the world and creates Adam and Eve. Before his creation of Adam, God looks whether the earth is doing fine by itself:

> The animals have reproduced and their populations got much higher, the plants have grown and the amount of water has reduced. In front of this scene that he

[25] The name of the book is translatied into English by Aras Publishing House as follows: "To Istanbul were Issued our Tickets"

> observes, God murmured: "Amen inc lav e, payts gardzes te noren al pan mi gi bagsi. Lav, bagasi inc e artyok?" The Turkish equivalent of his words in Armenian was as follows: "All right, everything is fine, but there is something missing, then what is it?"[26] (2007b, 85)

Then Adam was created. In the following sections of the story, Margosyan depicts the lives of cheetahs in the forest, one of which expresses her appreciation for "her short hair" by saying "in Armenian, ayo, ayo!" Adam, who sees the love relationship between (Armenian speaking) female and male animals in the forest, desires a female mate for himself and writes a petition to God: "The petition was in cuneiform script and was written in classical Armenian." When God sees the petition, he says "No!" and cries: "Voc! Voc! Voc!" After a while of evaluation, he calls Adam in Armenian: "Ataaam, yeg hos!" which means "Adam, come here". God asks Adam this time in English: "What is your problem?" The narrator says that Adam, who "doesn't know any language other than Armenian since his birth" doesn't understand (95). Later Eve was created and the two eat the forbidden apple. Consequently, God throws them on earth, on the very city of "Amed", Diyarbakir. In the end Adam and Eve drink wine and sing an Armenian song in joy:

> Come on let's go to the church
> How great is the mother who gave you birth
> She gave you birth, but put me in trouble
> I heard that you are Armenian,
> You are the remedy of my heart.[27] (2007b, 107)

In this parody, Margosyan plays with the roles of God, Adam and Eve. He transforms them into Armenian individuals who speak and write in Armenian since the beginning of the world. Here, the biblical story of Adam and Eve is nationalized with the introduction of the Armenian identity to the beginning of human life. Besides, the

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[26] tr. Yıllar sonar hayvanlar üreyip çoğalmış, ağaçlar büyümüş, sular giderek daha azalmıştı. Tanrı, bu manzara karşısında, bıyığını burarak alçak sesle söylendi: 'Amen inç lav e, payts gardzes te noren al pan mi bagsi. Lav, bagası inç e artyok?' Ermenice söylenen bu sözlerin Türkçe karşılığı şöyleydi: 'Hersey iyi hoş da, yine de eksik olan birşeyler var galiba. Peki, eksik olan acep ne?'

[27] tr. (in vernecular):
El el ever gidagh pirotghanaya
Kurban olam seni dogran Anaya
Seni dogdi, beni saldi belaya
Yengi de duydum Ermenisen Ermeni
Şu goynumun dermanisan dermani

emphasis on Diyarbakir as the center of civilization is also significant. It displays Margosyan's not only nationalist but also regionalist intentions. As a response to the cultural/national oppression of the Armenian populations by the colonial will of the Turkish nation-state, Margosyan nationalizes the epic story of the Adam and Eve and turns God into an Armenian. Through the parody, he counters colonization by emphasizing the essential potentials of the Armenian civilization. Here, the national impulse is present for the implication of Armenian civilization as a "valuable" entity as opposed to the ways in which colonial will engages to a dismissal.

In another story that appeared in *SMN*, with the title "*What will be the name of the child*?" Margosyan narrates the story of his pre-birth discussions among the family members about the name of the infant Migirdic. Margosyan mentions that her parents named him and his brothers and sisters with the names of the Armenian Kings and Queens. For Margosyan, his parents intended to write Armenian history through the names of their children: "But they realized that it is very hard to write all Armenian history and had to give up a while later." (2010d, 29) Margosyan also makes claims about history in-between the lines of his writings in order to prove that essentially Armenian nation and language is valuable, yet he doesn't again narrate the fact that they are suppressed by the colonial will. Once again not addressing a perpetrator and solely relying on the national essence, we see that Margosyan's language even before his birth was Armenian. In another story called "*Malez*" published in *SMN*, his family is surprised to see the baby Mıgırdiçuttering Armenian words so early:

> I called Gaaaaat! They were very surprised to hear me calling for milk in Armenian. Though what is more natural than this! This was the language spoken in my previous life before birth.[28] (2010d, 75)

Margosyan further essentializes his Armenian identity when he criticizes his surroundings:

> Actually, the question was, how did they learned this language? … We were all speaking Armenian but their Armenian was so affected with the local dialects, yet mine was the real and very old Armenian.[29] (2010d, 75)

[28] tr. Bu kez hiç ummadıkları bir anda "süüüüüt!!!" diye Ermenice bağırmama şaşırıyorlardı. Oysa bundan daha doğal ne olabilirdi ki! Önceki dünyamda da konuşulan dil buydu.

[29] tr. Asıl onlar bu dili nasıl öğrenmişlerdi? … Ben gerçek ve kadim Ermeniceyi kullanırken, onlar yenisiyle ve yöre şivesiyle konuşuyorlardı.

Herein Margosyan's emphasis on essentiality transcends generations and bears legitimacy on the basis of nature vs. culture dialectics. His narration suggests that an "Armenian baby" already possesses the old, real Armenian language inside. It is natural and unchanged whereas the Armenian of his parents were "spoiled" with local dialects and lost its purity. Although he doesn't directly refer to the suppressive acts of the colonial will, Margosyan tends to revive what is dismissed and goes unnoticed in history by suggesting a particular national essentiality that exceeds culture. The proximity to the natural inherent in Margosyan's literature also manifests a proximity to the national. Both of them are utilized by the axis throughout the literary text. They elaborate deeply the pole of the victim with respect to the essential qualities of it. In Margosyan's narrative as a whole, it concurrently abstains to point at the addressee as the perpetrator.

2.2.3. Nature Dominates Culture!
Essentialism in Uzun's *Roni Mina Evine Tari Mina Mirine*

The emphasis on national essentiality manifest on the basis of the dichotomy of nature versus culture also appears as a significant theme in Uzun's novel "*Roni Mina Evine Tari Mina Mirine*" (hereafter referred to as *RME*). The novel was published at 1998. Similar to the style of *Tu*, *RME* (2009) tells the story of two individuals in a place called "The Great Country". The real names of the characters and the places are unknown. Uzun calls the male "Baz"[30] and the female character "Kevok"[31]. Kevok is a university student around her 20's. She lives in the capital city of The Great Country. The Great Country is an allegory applied to narrate the Turkish experience of colonialism. The country consists of Kurdish region where Kurds experience the colonial oppression. The Great Country is governed with authoritarianism, with General Serdar leading the military government. General Serdar seizes power after a military coup and subjects the locals of "Country of the Mountains" (refers to Kurdistan) to a forced deportation. There is fierce suppression of language and cultural rituals as well. Kevok was born in the

[30] en. Hawk. The names of the characters are included as their original Kurdish names in Turkish translation.
[31] en. Pigeon.

Country of the Mountains yet her family moved to the capital city right after her birth. She studies French language, which is the second official language of The Great Country. The existence of French language among the elites presents an *imperialist* perspective next to the colonial one. The leaders of The Great Country are allies with the major European powers both of which oppress the people of The Country of the Mountains.

Kevok has a love affair with Jir, another university student who is also from The Country of the Mountains. Unlike Kevok who is almost assimilated within the cultural dominance of colonialism, Jir is a revolutionary who knows his mother language, and is aware of the oppressing dynamics against the People of the Mountains directed by the military government. As the time passes, Kevok gets more and more acquainted with her cultural and national heritage during her relationship with Jir. In the meantime Jir decides to leave school and continue his living on the mountains and join the guerillas in order to fight against General Serdar's forces for independence. Jir leaves, but Kevok does not. She lacks the courage and she continues her life waiting for her love to return. When she gains the courage, she too decides to join the guerillas. She heads to the mountains to go after Jir so that the two can reunite. After a series of struggles, Kevok cannot find a trace of Jir and she is captured by the armed forces of General Serdar, which are led by Baz.

One of the leading commanders of The Great Country and the right-arm of General Serdar, Baz gets to know Kevok, interrogates her for her guerilla activities and forces her to obey the "uniform, homogeneous" country without any ethnic differences. Kevok, who represents the Kurdish opposition to the colonial suppression resists. Baz represents the colonialist will of the Turkish nation-state. The two began to interact, engage to dialogues with each other about the political issues and Baz begins to transform. He falls in love with Kevok. He becomes more and more suspicious of the colonization project of General Serdar. Toward the end of the novel, Baz is ordered to kill Kevok. Baz refuses to obey. Concurrently, Baz discovers that he was actually born in The Country of the Mountains. His family was murdered by the forces of The Great Country and Baz was captured at a very small age, converted, and raised as an obedient soldier. Eventually, Baz discovers his "Kurdishness" and escapes with Kevok. In the end, they are caught and killed by the armed men of General Serdar while they were about to escape the country.

The story of Baz includes a striking awakening of the character where the "natural" which is affiliated to *national essentialism* once again dominates the "cultural". Though converted into a soldier and raised in accordance with the will and the mission of the colonizer, Baz nevertheless manages to "sense" his essential national identity during his interaction with Kevok. Here, the essentialism inherent in the radical transformation of Baz operates within the boundaries of the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood. The "victim" pole is once more deepened with the introduction of essentiality. This allegory shows that it is possible for one to move from one pole of hierarchy to the other. The narrative challenges that the boundaries between the two are not so strict: Baz was a brutal soldier handling all kinds of torture to the Kurdish guerillas and civilians just before his transformation. However, this displacement from one side of the hierarchy pole to the opposing other is only possible to the extent that the individual possesses the *essential* identity of the victim, that is, Kurdishness naturally. It is immune to cultural mechanisms of internalization through education but comes from birth, as *natural*. Just as Margosyan already knew the Armenian language in its most "real" form even before his birth, Uzun's allegory suggests that one is born with "Kurdishness" at hand. No matter how much he/she is exposed to various cultural mechanisms of internalizing particular kinds of social behavior, one nevertheless possess the *essentiality* of the "natural" identity throughout his/her life.

Written in 1998, *RME* offers mutualities between the colonial divide in the sense of Bhabha's insights on hybridity. It emphasizes the interaction between the perpetrator and the oppressed. Yet the narrative maintains a paradox. While it challenges the boundaries between the two poles of the hierarchy, the moment when Baz realizes that he is *Kurdish in essence* marks the reappearance of the ever more strict boundaries between the colonial divide. The essentialism both in Uzun's and Margosyan's literature fetishize the dichotomy which consists of the perpetrating colonialist "in essence" and the traumatized colonized "in essence". Their essentiality is utilized for the sharpening of the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood in order to strongly establish a mechanism of identification in the reader. Cultural/National essentialism, as the common motive in Uzun's and Margosyan's postcolonial writings that were analyzed for the purposes of this section, naturalizes the distinctions on "ethnic" level. It writes back to the colonial will in

the form of a counter-nationalism, which in the end approximates their literature to a nationalist stance.

2.3. The Impossibility of Active Agency

Regarding the characteristic of the postcolonial writing, Edward Said propounds that "many post-colonial writers bear their past within them as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending towards a future." (1994, 55) Uzun and Margosyan both instrumentalize the "past" in their writings, as responses to the colonial will. Besides, the ways in which they narrate the past also provides insights on their stances about the "now" and the "future" of the conditions of the colonized communities. Margosyan's inclination towards presenting an inventory of Armenian culture and Uzun's testimony of imprisonment and narration of the independence movement of Kurdish community which was brutally repressed, stand for a revising of "History" (with capital H). It is a meta-narrative, which is propagated by the colonial will in accordance with the two taboos highlighting the oppression of Armenians and Kurds. Uzun's novels *Tu* and *SE* and the excerpts from Margosyan's short stories analyzed for the purposes of this chapter are employed in order to undertake such an historical implication through "local narratives" referring to Lyotard's use of the term (1984). These narratives are resisting. They tend to revive the past dismissed by the colonial will. They pose historical implications as a challenge. The hierarchies of culpability and victimhood and the essentialist stances in a reverse-orientalist and counter-nationalist way, aim at effectuating a mechanism of identification in the reader with the victim.

Such revision of the painful past of the colonized for the intentions of an historical implication becomes a resistance during which the postcolonial author "writes back" to the colonial oppression. They pose counter-discourses to the systems of domination, which is perpetuated by the colonizer within the colonial divide. Despite the counter-nationalism and the essentialism that emerges out of their literature, they nevertheless pose challenges against the knowledge-production of the colonizer by the alternatives that they pose on the basis of historical implications through literature. Following

Foucault, Said (1979) investigates the "powerful" site of the oriental dichotomy, the West, and characterizes it as the agent, which produces an *episteme* on the orient. Despite his emphasis on the ongoing knowledge production on the oppressed, Said underscores the possible venues for resistance: "No matter how apparently complete the dominance of an ideology or social system, there are always going to be parts of the social experience that it does not cover and control." (1993, 289) Literature arises as the appropriate ground for that social experience to be conveyed. The narrator in *Tu*, Memduh Selim and Margosyan himself and his protagonists in the urban setting of Giaour Neighborhood represent the manifestation of that social experience which is inherently resistant to colonialism.

Margosyan and Uzun are "storytellers" in the sense of Walter Benjamin (2007). They are influenced by their respective traditional forms of story telling. They tend to utilize modern literature as the space where experience will be conveyed to the reader through "memory". In doing so, one comes across the emergence of the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood and the essentialist, counter-nationalist performances. These storytellers intend to transfer the past experiences to the now and the future of their communities in the ongoing process of decolonization.

Until now in this chapter, I analyzed the ways in which Uzun and Margosyan constitute their literary spaces of postcolonial writing, which approximates their literature to a nationalist literature. The social experiences of the Kurdish and Armenian communities and individuals narrated in their writings also necessitate a discussion of "agency". Within such proximity to nationalist literature, how do Margosyan and Uzun produce their characters in terms of their abilities to react and further produce ideas and undertake acts independent of and in resistance to the colonial domination? In an era which is characterized by the colonizer's knowledge production on and suppression of the colonized communities, to which actions do these authors and their characters engage in order to establish resistance against the colonial will?

As previously mentioned referring to his short story "*What will be the name of the child?*" Margosyan poses his family's quest for writing the Armenian history with the names of their children as a resistance against the colonial conditions of oppression. Although one of his friends warns Sarkis about not to assign an Armenian name to his

child since "he will face difficulties later in his life because everyone will realize that he is Armenian" and advises him to name "Burhan" instead of "Migirdic", Sarkis insists on giving him the name Migirdic. Because it is the name of his father (2010d, 28). Here, Sarkis undertakes a resistance, no matter which pressures that may arise from such an act, he conforms to the norms of patriarchy and a national belonging in order to reproduce the Armenian descents of his family. On the other hand, Margosyan narrates his father's intentions to sustain his Armenian descent. In the other story "*Malez*" where he talks about his early memories of infancy, he states the following: "Now that I was born, I was a slave. The fact that I am who I am was determined by other forces except myself." (2010d, 64) Yet this is slavery, which maintains a national identity. As previously exemplified, he is essentially an Armenian infant who even speaks Armenian before his birth in a better dialect than his family. Margosyan declares that as an individual born into an Armenian community, one has no agency. Their names are assigned by the elders of the community. They have to make a living under the colonial conditions of oppression where "the sounds of the prayer calls from the mosques were much higher than the sounds of the church."[32] (2010d, 57) Besides, the way in which Margosyan's father continuously asks him "Where are you from?" to hear the answer of "Heredan" which has a symbolic importance for the Armenian nation, displays the ways in which Margosyan's life is under constant surveillance of the national belonging.

Similar to the ways in which Uzun's *Tu* and *SE* conforms to a national allegory, Margosyan's writings display a similar attitude. The infant in Margosyan's imagination figures as an Armenian who is trapped between patriarchy, feelings of nationhood on the basis of loss and colonial oppression. He/she is deprived of the necessary credentials to determine his/her life as an active agent. However, similar to *the paradox of loss* mentioned in reference to Butler, the very non-existence and the deprivation of agency due to nationalism and colonial oppression is the very basis of the Armenian identity. This basis is reproduced by the very fact that it is under constant threat, regulation, suppression and surveillance. For this reason, though he doesn't know the meaning of the word, the infant Mıgırdiç desires to utter the word "Heredan". It is the manifestation of

[32] tr. Ama ne bizim "aleluya"larimiz, ne Keldanilerin "keddise"si ve ne de Süryanilerin, Pirotlarin bilmem nesi, hiçbirisinin sesi … kilise ve hamam kubbelerinden yansıyıp şehri çepeçevre dolanan surlarda yankılanan "Allahu Ekber, Allahu Ekber …" sesleri kadar Tanrı'ya ulaşamıyordu.

the loss, which deprived Armenian community of their agencies and turned them into passive subjects under the colonial rule; the loss later became the very basis of that community. Within the proximities to the national literature, Armenian and Kurdish characters represented throughout the analyzed works of Uzun and Margosyan are *made passive subjects* rather than *active agents*. They occupy the lowest hierarchy of the colonial divide as absolute *victims*. Their activism is oppressed by the colonialist. Although they undertake acts of resistance and display some sort of agency throughout, they eventually face the oppressing mechanisms of the colonial domination. Consequently it leads them into a desperate struggle in life.

The narrator in *Tu* undertakes resistances in a similar fashion. In course of declaring his agency by writing poetry in Kurdish, he is detained and subjected to brutal torture in prison. He struggles to resist the colonial will but he encounters the repercussions of the colonial domination. The more he strives after the will to determine his life by refusing to accept the norms of the colonial domination throughout his imprisonment, the more he is tortured and brutally repressed. The prison as a space where Kurdish intellectuals gather becomes his school for learning his mother language and culture. Yet prison as a space of agency in this regard, consequently becomes the very space of violence against attempts for independence and decolonization. Within such a dialectical relationship on the two opposing poles of the colonial divide, the agencies of the individuals become obsolete. The very space of prison inhabits agency as well as colonial mechanisms of regulation and oppression. It inevitably and eventually suppresses the attempts toward the establishment of agencies for the Kurdish reactionaries.

Moreover, what is significant in *Tu* is that the inmate/narrator is not indeed a revolutionary militant who is imprisoned for his use of violence. Rather, he is only an ordinary and an anonymous Kurdish individual who speaks and writes in his mother language, therefore subjected to brutal torture. In his novel, Uzun declares the systems of constant regulation and surveillance held by the colonial will, in which it is not possible for any Kurdish individual to display his agency against the colonial mechanisms of suppression. As the hierarchy axis towards the victim deepens in order to emphasize the "anonymity" of the oppressed, the question of agency becomes once again obsolete.

Another character in Uzun's narrative, Memduh Selim engages to resistant activism

against the colonial Turkish nation-state. He founds the revolutionary organization *Xoybun* in Syria with couple of his friends. He writes essays and articles on the issue of Kurdish oppression. Besides his intellectual activities, he also leads the guerilla troops of Kurdish militants who fought against the Turkish forces in Mount Ararat in 1930. These are significant acts of resistance and agency on behalf of Memduh Selim. The narrative reveals Memduh Selim's ambitions to determine a life for himself and for his nation. Yet, Memduh Selim is deprived of hope. Even before the war with Turkish armed forces, he already knows that they will be defeated. The representations of agency in *SE*, clearly situates the impossibility of being an active agent under the overpowered colonial rule. The very impossibility of being an active agent and the ways in which the victims are *made passive subjects* despite their activist will, functions throughout the narrative in two ways: It enhances the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood since it shows that there is no possible way for one to free oneself from the colonial mechanisms of oppression and determine one's life. Second, next to such hierarchies, *the paradox of loss* is repetitively established. The impossibility of agency once again manifests loss as the founding sense of the community.

Although the writings of Uzun and Margosyan inhabit the traces of a national allegory in several aspects, which is for Jameson, the characteristics of a "third-world literature", such conceptualization of the works would be inappropriate. In this chapter, rather than aiming to contextualize the analyzed works of Uzun and Margosyan into the margins of a possible "third-world literature", I tried to show the ways in which they undertake counter-discursive strategies against the colonial domination. These strategies show their proximities to nationalist literatures of the respective communities. For this aim, the consolidation of axis of hierarchy between the colonial divide is one of the most significant characteristics of their proximities to nationalist literature. The fetishization of the distinctions between the perpetrator and the victim which is worked through their literature with the themes of particular hierarchies, essentialism and agency, leads to the reproduction of these binary oppositions of the colonial divide.

However, one cannot characterize Uzun's and Margosyan's literature solely as literary works which approximates and strongly engages to the nationalist performance. They also undertake distinct positions which challenge the fetishization of the strictly

established boundaries within the colonial divide with their experiments through language, established relations with the colonial-major (Turkish) language and the occurrence of the themes that are radically distinguished from the "hierarchization of culpability and victimhood", "national essentialism" and "the impossibility of agency". These radical deviations will be the main point of investigation of the following chapter of this thesis.

I will refer to Uzun's later works that he wrote after he published *RME* at 1998 to illustrate such themes. Indeed his early works that I reserved for interrogating the proximity to the nationalist literature also bear the signs of particular distancing from the nationalist literature. Such that, Uzun's novel *Tu* begins with an epigraph by Antonio Gramsci, who says the following: "What we should not forget is fact that it will be very hard to create a 'new' type of intellectual in the society which lacks the tradition to reproduce intellectualism." (2010a, 7) In his different essays, Uzun insistently reserved his criticisms for the Kurdish community, accusing it of staying isolated to the contemporary intellectual waves of thought in the world (2010d, 146). His criticism of PKK is also important in this regard. In his essays that he wrote throughout 1990's, Uzun strongly refuses to employ violence in the Kurdish independence struggle. He accuses PKK for its ignorance against intellectual facilities and its sole rely on violence in course of decolonization (2010d, 129). Uzun's observations during imprisonment encouraged him to engage to a critical interrogation regarding the Kurdish community. It was reflected in his later works and with his re-established relations with the colonial-major (Turkish) language.

For Margosyan's literature, it is not possible to exactly point out particular date for transformation in his writing career, maybe with the exception of the story "*Honeymoon with Apple*" which was his essentialist early work. Although his narrative is frequently oriented around such nationalist and essentialist themes, they at the same time contain narrations of the themes in opposing directions. In his book *BIK* where his story "*Honeymoon with Apple*" appears, Margosyan's letter to Hagop Mintzuri, the pioneer of Armenian literature in Turkey throughout 20th century, is controversial in this respect. In his letter named "*My Mother Language Adventure*", Margosyan narrates his childhood memories in Giaour Neighborhood. He narrates the recurrent themes regarding "loss" in

relation to 1915 events and the ways in which her family members undertake struggles for survival post-1915. He tells his memories regarding the Armenian priests who visited Diyarbakır in order to pick up children. Their aim was to educate them in Armenian religious high school in Istanbul. When Margosyan was "chosen" as one of the students which will be sent Istanbul through the late 1940's, he complains that "his ticket was issued to Istanbul" without his consent (2007b, 37). In an interview with a popular broadcast NTV (2007), Margosyan explains the following: "It's never good when one's ticket is issued by other people. You must issue your tickets by yourself."

Once again underscoring the lack of agency, Margosyan this time turns his attention to the dynamics of his culture in order to criticize it for its regulative behavior. On this paradoxical occasion, Armenian community displays an agency by determining a child's life, where the agency of the child is absent. Moreover, Margosyan ends his story in a striking fashion: "Come on! Come on! Kurds arrived from Anatolia!" (2007b, 38) On the first day of "exile" in Istanbul with the issued tickets, Margosyan and his friends are otherized by the Istanbul Armenians as "Kurds". Eventually, Margosyan's literature attains a more complex position within the same book consisting of different stories. He attempts towards establishing essentialisms and "naturalizing" nationalism within the Armenian community. Yet he also points out the discriminative dynamics inherent within the Armenian community on the basis of racism against Kurds and patriarchal oppression.

Chapter III
Proximity to Minor Literature

3.1. Detachment from National Allegory: Emerging Themes Towards Hybridity and Agency

Mehmed Uzun and Mıgırdiç Margosyan undertake postcolonial performances for decolonization. They resist the social and political setting where the independence of the respective communities was not accomplished. They are the members of minority communities under the domination of the Turkish nation-state. On the one hand Uzun and Margosyan emphasize loss as the founding sense of their communities. They perform counter-nationalism as illustrated in the previous chapter. Uzun and Margosyan proceed through essentialization of their respective communities, concomitantly establishing particular axis, which further constitutes hierarchies of culpability and victimhood. The hierarchies of culpability and victimhood focus on the two distinct poles of the colonial divide, that is, the colonizer as the perpetrator and the colonized as the absolute victim. Throughout these particular acts of decolonization, they tend to operate on the boundaries of nationalism to counter the colonial will. Uzun and Margosyan instrumentalize their literary spaces in order to differentiate their respective communities from the major/colonial will in terms of their perceived victimhood.

The ways in which Uzun and Margosyan's characters declare their autonomies is nevertheless regulated by the colonial will. It brings about the impossibility of being an active agent under the colonial condition. Through cultural nationalism, the autonomy of the characters in terms of their active agencies is deemed an impossible task. Their narratives emphasize the fact that the colonial will is too powerful to be able to dominate. The more the characters whose stories are inscribed within the meta-narratives of the nation, are victimized, the more the power of the perpetrator is manifested which indeed makes the active agency impossible. This particular instance that I analyzed in details in the previous chapter is the shortcoming of the cultural nationalist literature. It destroys the possibility for the characters to manifest their individual active agencies, which is distinct from the allegory of a nation. Such stance also makes it impossible for the

authors to establish an autonomous space for themselves through literature, which is reproduced by such a dichotomy of victimhood. Not only the characters are absolute victims who can only witness the atrocities committed by the perpetrator, Uzun and Margosyan are also passive agents of their nations who can only narrate such victimhood. The victimhood is indeed the very basis of the loss, continuously reproduced through literature since it is also the very basis of the community.

On the other hand, their relations with the major/colonial language and the themes that they work through in their literature point at their departure from nationalist literature. It displays their proximity to minor literature. Alternative narratives of resistance are also available, which successfully distinguishes themselves from cultural nationalist performances. Uzun and Margosyan's relations with the colonial/major language are influential in the construction of such narratives. The authors aim to perform decolonization in order to speak to the reader in the major/colonial language. They also utilize the language of the colonizer to detach themselves from their communities and manifest their autonomies.

Despite their attempts at essentializing their respective communities and depicting narratives of loss on the basis of the clear-cut dichotomies of culpability and victimhood, the authors chose to negotiate with the colonial discourse. Such a process brings forth the crucial position of the target reader. Their narratives of loss not only speak to their own communities, but they also tend to operate within the colonial/major discourse and language to be able to narrate that loss to the "society of the colonizer". Such a negotiation is where the complexity of the postcolonial literature resides in Uzun's and Margosyan's literature. This is a negotiation, which should not be interpreted solely as the authors' wish to be able to tell the rest of the colonial society the experiences of their community. Though this might be the main motivation, such a complexity of negotiation with the colonial/major language inevitably encourages alternative themes of depictions of loss to arrive through the medium of literature. Unlike many others exemplified in the previous chapter, these themes are strikingly oriented around the plurality of differentiating experiences within a single community, which was once considered as a uniform, homogeneous entity. The way in which Uzun and Margosyan undertake such differing approaches through literature that doesn't foreground the cultural nationalist

position, paves the way for them to detach themselves from their communities. They manage to maintain critical stances towards hybridity, which do not fetishize the colonial divide. Rather, they perform alternative resistances for decolonization, which altogether point out the constitution of *hybridity* in Homi Bhabha's term.

Eventually, the ways in which the authors narrate the "true" stories of their respective communities differ from a narrative, which highlights the authors' truth on the basis of the "community of loss". Their writings move towards a novel, which is in Bakhtin's terms, "an active creation of the truth in the consciousnesses of the author, the characters, and the reader, in which all participate as equals." (Morson & Emerson, 1990: 234-37, 251-59). Such a new tendency for the creation of the truth through the medium of literature takes into account the participation of the characters and the reader. It further points at Uzun and Margosyan's proximity to minor literature through their detachment from uniform experience of their communities. It further displays the authors' detachment from their own languages. The proximity to minor literature points at their established relations with the major language, which provides such detachment.

3.1.1. Heteroglossia in Margosyan's Novel

Margosyan published his first novel *TT* in 2006, one year after Uzun published his autobiography "*Ruhun Gökkuşağı*"[33] (hereafter referred to as *RG*) and four years after he published "*Hawara Dicleye*"[34]. Throughout this chapter I will focus on the significance of these texts with respect to the authors' alternative approaches towards decolonization. As I mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Uzun and Margosyan are closely affiliated to one another. Their friendship exposes the similarities of their literature in post-2000 period. The only distinction is that Margosyan spent all his life in Turkey whereas Uzun was an exile in Sweden. Margosyan began his literary career in Turkey. He performed a negotiation with the colonial/major language earlier than Uzun. As a writer who spent his entire life in the colonial country under the taboo of speaking of the Armenian catastrophe, Margosyan developed alternative ways to be able to cope with

[33] en. "The Rainbow of the Soul"
[34] en. "The Sound of Dicle"

such oppression under the colonial condition. Eventually, the way in which he develops relations with the colonial/major language occurs much earlier than Uzun does.

Unlike Uzun who remained in exile for the most of his life writing in Kurdish, Margosyan substantially wrote in Turkish. Margosyan's early stories were much more occupied with cultural nationalist and essentialist positions. Especially two of his writings, *BIK* that he published in 1998 and *TT* that he published eight years later, express his rejection of counter nationalism on the basis of essentialism. In these books, Margosyan also refuses the constitution of hierarchies of culpability and victimhood. He rather undertakes a criticism of Armenian community and the way in which nationalism is reproduced in that community. Moreover, he concentrates more on narrating the experiences of Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish individuals in the multicultural urban setting of Diyarbakir throughout 40's and 50's. He doesn't necessarily inscribe their stories to the grand narrative of the nation. His literature deviates from national allegory. By applying heteroglossia to his text, Margosyan manages to secure active agencies to his characters. He writes predominantly in Turkish but he also utilizes many words and phrases of Kurdish and Armenian languages throughout *TT*. By this way, he invites the reader to participate to the text. He performs a resistance for decolonization in a pluralist, non-essentialist manner without drawing heavily on hierarchies of culpability and victimhood.

Smith and Watson introduce Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia as which "assumes a pervasive and fundamental heterogeneity to human subjectivity. The text is multivocal because it is a site for the contestation of meaning." (1990, 30) In relation to that, Bakhtin defines the genre of the novel as "a diversity of social speech types, (sometimes even diversity of languages) and the diversity of individual voices, artistically organized." (1981, 262) I've already given examples of the instances where the vernacular language and non-Turkish words are utilized in Margosyan's narrative in the previous chapter, altogether harboring the diversity of voices. *TT* contains narrations in vernacular language and in languages other than Turkish. They altogether pave the way for social diversities to be reflected onto the literary space. Margosyan uses the vernacular of Turkish language. His autobiographical-I and the characters also utter words and phrases

from Armenian and Kurdish. These Armenian and Kurdish words become integral to the narrative.

Margosyan's usage of the vernacular and non-Turkish languages in *TT* helps the narrative to embody a diversity of social speech types and the diversity of languages. Margosyan's text actualizes Bakhtinian heteroglossia in that regard in two ways: First, by the use of the vernacular of the Turkish language spoken by Diyarbakır Armenians; second, by the integration of certain Armenian and Kurdish words and phrases (i.e. words like "*garod*") to the text. According to Bakhtin, "the novel demands a broadening and deepening of the language horizon, a sharpening in our perception, of socio-linguistic differentiations." (1981, 366) Margosyan's text accomplishes Bakhtinian understanding of the novel as illustrated in the following passages.

In addition to Saro Nene's and Sarkis' speeches oriented with the use of the vernacular as presented in the previous chapter, *TT* consists of various other instances where characters express themselves in their own languages; such as when Margosyan's mother tells Mıgırdiç the fable of the tale of the Nymph, (2008, 153-154) when she talks about her neighborhood in *Giaour Neighborhood* in Diyarbakır, (2008, 304-311) when the cook of Mıgırdiç's school in Istanbul speaks of her past experiences with the students (2008, 233-235), in addition to several other expressions of ordinary people throughout the text. On the other hand, Margosyan not only applies the vernacular to his text in order to enable other narrators to speak. His text also contains many instances where people of Diyarbakır anonymously appear throughout the narration and express themselves. For example, when an Armenian priest arrives at Diyarbakır to gather students for their newly established minority school in Istanbul, we hear the townsfolk gossip and murmur:

> (in vernacular) A *vertebed* came from Istanbul, gathering the children... He wants to take them to Istanbul and make them *vertebed*... ... A *vertebed,* who is white bearded and haired, angel-like. They say that he studied a lot, educated in Eruseğim...[35] (2008, 84-85)

In another section when the priests from Istanbul revisit Diyarbakır for a religious gathering, Margosyan narrates the complaints of townsfolk (2008, 177-186).

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[35] tr. İstanbol'dan bi tene *vertebed* gelmiş, çocığ topli… Çocığlari İstanbol'a götıri, *vertebed* yapmağ isti… Saçi sakali bembeyaz, nur yüzli bi *vertebed*miş. Diyiler ki çoğh oğhımiş, Eruseğim'de tahsil görmiş…

On these occasions throughout the text, Margosyan actualizes what Bakhtin expects from a prose writer to conduct: "The author doesn't express *himself* in them (as the author of the word), rather he *exhibits* them as a unique speech thing, they function for him as something completely reified." (1981, 299) In this respect, Margosyan's exhibition corresponds to his style to fictionalize lived data, that is, the *novel* part of the title he assigns to *TT*. In those exhibitions, as Bakhtin aptly reminds, the author is far from exhibiting himself by means of generating heteroglossia. Secondly, Margosyan's adoption of different languages in his text may be exemplified with the following passages:

> As if this annoying news was not enough, on top of it if your father's work went wrong, who knows how much he was exhausted to struggle to eject the "köki" of the tooth by the help of an "elevatör", the "merat" root which was broken while he was pulling the tooth out; when the person suffering from a toothache from nearby villages, maybe from Alihapur, arrived at the towncenter in the early mourning on horse, with the dirty kerchief wrapped on his chin, in order to see the great Armenian Dentist Ali in his place at the towncenter in accordance with the praises of "Dişçi Ali pir baş hoste e. Fılla e. Dukanê wi li meydanê Belediye e", ... after which would he purchase a "du mitro bezê Amerikan" for his second wife in Bezezler shopping center..., two "keyd" from the blacksmiths shop for his horses, ... a red collor cotton kerchief for his daughter-in-law and a black one for his son as well as "kilo ki şekirê aqide" for his "zarok", his all small children, thereafter would like to return to his village as soon as possible...[36] (2008, 288)

At this long passage, Margosyan begins to narrate his father Sarkis' unfortunate workday. However, he abandons narrating the story of his father and begins to narrate others' experiences. In so doing, not only he makes use of the vernacular language, but he

[36] tr. Bu can sıkıcı haber sanki yetmezmiş gibi, üstüne üstlük bir de o gün babanızın işi ters gitmişse, kim bilir kimin dişini çekerken "köki" kırılıp içerde kaldığından, "elevatör" yardımıyla o "merat" koku çıkarmaya uğraşmaktan imanı gevremisse; ya da yakın köylerden, belki de Alipuhar'dan sabah karanlığında atına binip kendini ağrıyan dişiyle, cenesinine sardığı kirli mendiliyle bir an önce şehre atıp, "Disçi Ali pir baş hoste e. Fılla e. Dukane wi li meydane Belediye e." methi uyarınca, "dukkanı Belediye Meydanı'nda, çok iyi bir usta olan Ermeni Dişçi Ali'ye" uğrayıp, bu vesileyle şehre gelmişken, İspayi Pazarı'ndan da atına yeni bir yular, bitişiğindeki Bezazlar Çarşısı'ndan ilk karısı için kırmızı güllü basma fistan ile ikinci karısına da mor çiçekli pazen ve "du mitro beze Amerikan" aldıktan sonra, Demirciler Çarşısı'ndan yine atının ve eşeğinin ayağına bağlamak için iki tane "keyd", Yemeniciler Çarşısı'ndan gelinine kırmızı, oğlina da siyah birer Yemeni ve sekerciden ufak çocukların hepsine, tüm "zarok"lara da "kilo ki şekire aqide" alarak gerisingeri bir an önce evine dönmek isteyen adamın dişine "ğırğır" yaparken şeytanın da acele ise karışmasıyla "ğırğırın çarğhi" kırılınca sınırı tepesine vurmuşsa; o da yetmezmiş gibi bir de ortağı Aziz Beg'in daha aybaşına sekiz gün varken Gavur Mahallesi'ndeki kendi mülkü olan Paşa Hamamı'nin külhanında çıkan yangın yüzünden tamirat yapmak bahanesiyle ilerideki "hisap"lara mahsuben yüklü bir parayı avans istemesiyle aralarında durup dururken münakaşa çıkmaz mı?

applies Kurdish and Armenian words and expressions to the passage as well. Though it seems that the author begins to represent an unfortunate day of his father, the focus of narration is neither central nor coherent. It is split, when Margosyan depicts the adjacent stories of the people (in this case, people of Kurdish origin) that does not necessarily relate to and explain Sarkis' experiences. Further, this passage and many others alike, are not necessarily related to the grand-narrative of loss of Armenian community. Rather they focus on the everyday existences of people. Their stories do not necessarily link to a grand narrative of national allegory. In *TT* Margosyan actualizes a particular detachment from "loss" which is the sense of a community. Instead of choosing to essentialize culture with the axis of hierarchies of culpability and victimhood, he prefers to concentrate on the active agencies of the individuals in the urban setting of Diyarbakir. He narrates their daily experiences, which do not refer to the fate of an oppressed nation under the colonial will.

Eventually Margosyan allows his literature to penetrate into social diversity and diversity of languages ceaselessly. His literature paves the way for the deepening of the language horizon and sharpening of the readers' perception of language. In that regard, Bakhtin remarks:

> But no living word relates to its object in a *singular* way: between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of the other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that it is often difficult to penetrate. It is precisely in the process of living interaction with this specific environment that the word may be individualized and given stylistic shape. (1981, 276)

Margosyan actualizes what Bakhtin acknowledges as the penetration between the word and to which it is directed. He deepens his narration into the adjacent stories. He points at the diversity of languages. He assigns the active agencies of the individuals through their daily existences.

At another long passage, Margosyan tells the story of Uncle Gerebed, a dwarf Armenian in his seventies:

> By recognizing the voices of the ones who greet him warmly by saying something like "welcome Uncle Gerebed", in his mother tongue Armenian as "Tun perov ğherov egir is Gerebed Dayi" or in Kurdish as "Tu xer hati Apê Gerebit, ser sere min, ser cava min", he replied to them in Armenian as "Peri dısenk Meryem!" or in Kurdish as "Sağ bir Gîrbo!", or as "hoş bulduk, "sağ olasın" ... He uttered his

> gratitudes in Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish: "*Kakuleyov kahveyin hemı ağgig* e, şekirê wi pir baş e, elıze sağlığ…"[37] (2008, 122-123)

Margosyan's literary world flourishes with cultural diversity. Though he is an Armenian, his identity and his literature is indeed entwined with Kurdishness and Turkishness. Margosyan does not simply intend to create a utopian world with various kinds of diversities and multiplicities. Indeed he works through literature to explicitly remark that this diversity and multiplicity were *once* existent in the 30's and 40's Diyarbakır. In doing so, Margosyan appropriates the vernacular and the diversity of languages. He aesthetically organizes his text in Bakhtin's understanding. Subsequently, one should be reminded of Bakhtin's famous dictum:

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adopting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to the moment of appropriation, the word … exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions. (1981, 293-294)

In light of Bakhtin, Margosyan appropriates the words and creates a space of his own, that is, his literary text through his aesthetic use of the vernacular and different languages. At this juncture Bakhtin concludes: "It is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own." (1981, 294) Margosyan applies heteroglossia to his narrative, and constitutes a text, which would pave the way for him to make the words and speeches "his own". Within this appropriation, Margosyan pertains to a crucial position that consists of multiple identities established by Armenianness and Kurdishness without necessarily positioning himself in contradistinction to Turkishness. Hence he overthrows the clear-cut dichotomies between different ethnic and socio-cultural groups through literature. He refuses to establish axis of hierarchies of culpability and victimhood. In the course of engendering heteroglossia in his text via exhibiting different languages and the vernacular, Margosyan, as Bakhtin would suggest, "does not speak in a given language (from which he distances himself to a greater of lesser degree), but he

[37] tr. … eşikte onu her defasında sevinçle "Tun perov ğherov eğir iş Gerebed Dayi" diyerek anadili Ermeniceyle veya Kürtçe "Tu xer hati Ape gerebit, şer sere min, şer cava min" sözleriyle "hoşgeldin, baş üzerine geldin Gerebit Amca" gibisinden karşılayanları sesinden tanıyıp onlara Ermenice "Peri dusenk Meryem!" ya da Kürtçe "Sağ bi Girbo!" diyerek "hoş bulduk", "sağ olasın" gibi karşılıklar vererek, … kahvesini höpürdetirken teşekkürünü Ermenice, Kürtçe ve Türkçe dile getiriyordu: "Kakuleyov kahveyin hemi ağgig e, şekire wi pir baş e, elize sağlığ…"

speaks, as it were, *through* language…" (1981, 299) The position of the prose writer that Bakhtin acknowledges points at Margosyan's stance within the ambiguous yet multiple borders of identity among the diversity of speech types. Hence in his *polyphonic* text, rather than proceeding with just one language either to exhibit heteroglossia or to express himself through his autobiographical-I, Margosyan utilizes the vernacular and Armenian and Kurdish in order to work *through* language.

Margosyan's autobiographical style is also incorporated into the novel in the sense of Bakhtin, which further helps to "stratify the linguistic unity of the novel and further intensify its speech diversity in fresh ways." (1981, 321) Such stratification consequently introduces his ambiguously yet diversely oriented identity to his novel. He manages to maintain heteroglossia incorporated either with the lived or with the fictionalized experience of his and others. Thus *TT* isn't only a novel. It comprises an autobiography with the very presence of the author, the reader and the characters throughout. *TT* in its totality signifies the exhibition of languages already present in the social speech types and their projection onto the author's subjectivity. Therefore, in addition to the author who narrates what is present in language as what Bakhtin suggests, Margosyan incorporates the autobiographical-I to his novel in order to intensify the speech diversity as Bakhtin proposes.

Margosyan *remembers* with all his other characters in the text simultaneously remembering. Such remembrances are not instrumentalized for a narration of the grand narrative of the nation, which is reproduced on the basis of loss under the colonial condition. Rather, Margosyan aptly utilizes the remembrances to secure autonomous spaces for his characters and expresses their active agencies. The remembrances in this regard produce a literary space, which is constituted by the active participation of the individuals of Diyarbakır under the colonial condition. In the meantime the words and the phrases in vernacular and in different languages invite the reader to participate to the text. Margosyan was once proceeding through counter nationalism with respect to essentialization of culture. This time, he chooses to exhibit heteroglossia not in order to point out an allegory of the nation but to trace the founding urban interactions of his life under the colonial oppression in Diyarbakır. This shift in his literature paves the way for him to secure not only his characters' autonomy, but also his own as a writer. The way in

which Margosyan applies heteroglossia to his text coincides with his effort to express his very self.[38] Since *TT* is very much founded upon the projection of the rhetorical (i.e. vernacular narration) onto the text, the author as the speaker makes the word "his own" through the process of artistic craft and aesthetization. In another passage in Bakhtin asserts:

> The prose writer as a novelist doesn't strip away the intentions of others, from the heteroglot language of his works, he doesn't violate those socio-ideological cultural horizons (big and little worlds) that open up behind heteroglot languages – rather he welcomes them into his work. The prose writer makes use of words that are already populated with the social intentions of others and compels them to serve his own intentions, to serve a second master. (1981, 299-300)

The "second mastery" which Bakhtin proposes points at the very existence of the polyphonic novel, which refers to, for Bakhtin, "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices" (1999, 6) Margosyan allows the characters of different ethnic and socio-cultural origins to freely express their consciousnesses and remembrances. This procedure paves the way for *polyphony* to arise out of his text and maintain the *heteroglossia* of the novel. In doing so, Margosyan gives up his attempt to the mere reflection of characters' perceptions of their community on the basis of loss and paves the way for diverse social speech types to be realized within the text.

Eventually, the existences of the characters become detached from that which the national allegory dictates for them. They manage to maintain agency. Uzun, on the other hand moves towards polyphony in *HD*, at the same time assigning agency to its characters and readers. Following Margosyan, I will now illustrate the ways in which Uzun's literature transforms with his close affiliation with the colonial/major language. I will open a discussion on the newly emerging themes in his literature, which no longer operates on the boundaries on counter nationalism. It rather applies heteroglossia and assigns active agencies to his characters. It at the same time takes the reader into account as an active participant to his literary space.

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[38] I would like to remind Margosyan's challenge regarding Butler's paradox of loss: on the one hand he "recovers" in virtue of his detachment, whereas he continues to narrate the community's sense of loss. Margosyan's operation as an author in both ends of this duality signifies his writing an autobiography for the former -Butlerian individuation- and his being a novel writer for the latter -hence realizing Bakhtinian heteroglossia-.

3.1.2. Transforming Signifier of the "Perpetrator" in Uzun's *Hawara Dicleye*

HD, a two-volume novel consisting of "Dicle'nin Yakarışı"[39] and "Dicle'nin Sürgünleri"[40] was written and published in 2002 and 2003 respectively. In the beginning, the novel claims to narrate "the voices of the forgotten" such as "Armenians, Kurds, Yezidis" (2002, 15-16). It proceeds with the storytelling by Dengbej Bıro, the narrator and the protagonist of the novel. Uzun produces such a protagonist and a narrator as an old man who witnessed the atrocities committed against Kurds, Armenian, Chaldeans and Yezidis throughout 19th century. He implies Benjaminian understanding of history as "the history of the perpetrator". In the opening section of the novel, Bıro states the following: "They are forgotten since they are defeated." (17)

The novel introduces its ambition to the reader from the beginning. It aims to capture the voice of the forgotten, which is symbolically manifest under the name of "Dicle River". This signifier does not only refer to a geographical space in the southeast Anatolia and the Middle East. It also connotes the coexistence of the victim and the perpetrator on the very geography. The Sound of Dicle according to Bıro, is equivalent to the sound of the dead, betrayed and forgotten in the pages of history (22). And what's more, the theme of "death" occupies a central position throughout the narrative. In the opening section Bıro sorrowfully laments: "At this very location, I saw the dead with my own eyes, their wide-open eyes, cold faces, still bodies, I heard the songs that are written on behalf of death." (26) Now that Bıro has nothing left but his ability to speak the truth, he is telling the reader the story of a tragedy in an environment where there is no one other then himself to bear witness left. He is the sole witness. From the opening sections of the novel, he is the only source that the reader can know about the atrocities throughout 19th century around Dicle River.

Despite the seemingly dominance of a God-like protagonist and a narrator who assigns himself with the mission of telling the truth, the upcoming chapters of the novel performs otherwise. Bıro gives up his authority in terms of the themes that he narrates.

[39] en. "The Cry of Dicle"
[40] en. "The Exiles of Dicle"

He also speaks to the reader and assigns him/her a participatory role. In the meantime, he does not inscribe his life story to the grand-narrative of the Kurdish nation. Accordingly, the act of "witnessing" appears as the crucial motive throughout the narrative. It exposes the power relations between the perpetrator and the victim. Bhabha mentions the importance of witnessing in the writings of the postcolonial authors. He suggests that, "postcolonial novelists do not have an organized subjectivity which instantiates a type and permits the tones and authority of the old narrative voice, anymore than do other writers after modernism." Rather, for Simon During, what is important in the acts of the postcolonial writers is the fact that "it remains important for them to *witness* their society, and their writings, which produces images, remain firmly placed in the imagination either of narcissistic egos or of magicians." (1990, 152) In light of what During suggests regarding the attributes of the postcolonial literary space in terms of witnessing, Bıro appears to function in such a manner. Uzun witnesses the 20th century Dicle through his protagonist. He suggests a continuum of atrocities up to date. He was continuously taking notes on the geography throughout his visits to the area. He was undertaking a close study of the history of the region. He was at the same time working on the organization of his novel since 1985. *HD* has such a powerful existence in Uzun's psyche as a postcolonial writer as he underscores that this novel is his "will" for the future generation of readers (2008a, 12-13).

Uzun develops an existential link with his novel. In *HD* Uzun narrates the sounds of anyone "who has been exposed to violence and death and who does not have the sufficient means to express themselves under any kinds of power" (2008b, 184). He does this through many traditional sessions of storytelling called *stran.* Uzun successfully manages to produce a modern form of narrative on the basis of tradition. Bıro begins to narrate the multicultural society existent in the federal state called Cizira Botan in southeast Anatolia under the power of the Ottoman Empire towards mid 1800's. The multicultural society consists of Turks, Kurds, Yezidis, Nasturis, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Armenians, Jews and many other ethnic and Muslim and Christian religious communities. They live together peacefully under the power of Mir Bedirhan, a Kurdish lord and the leader of the Botan state. In an era when nationalist impulses were increasing and the conflicts between the different ethnic communities were already on the way

throughout the Ottoman Empire, Mir Bedirhan manages to unionize the different groups of people in the just social system in Botan. Bıro likens Mir Bedirhan to a historic figure, who manages to unite different nations in a peaceful country (2002, 79).

Bıro praises Mir, but soon he is disappointment. Suddenly Mir Bedirhan declares war on his neighboring federal state. He cooperates with the Ottomans. They together declare war on the federal state ruled by another Kurdish lord Sait Bey, who revolted the Ottomans. In the stran called "skepticism and despair", Bıro narrates the beginnings of such conflict between the two states and within the society. The war begins. In his previously analyzed novels, Uzun was narrating graphic war scenes by aestheticizing violence. However in *HD*, the violence of the war is not conveyed to the reader. Bıro travels to the city of Van during wartime. Mam Sefo, Biro's close friend of Armenian descent, lost his wife. Biro leaves the war zone and attends the funeral. Unlike Memduh Selim who takes active role in a war, which he is sure to be lost, Bıro is not interested in participating or witnessing the war against the neighboring state. At this point, Bıro is disillusioned. He is detached from his community and his state under which he makes his living. For Biro, Mir was "intending to handle justice with sword" (291) as "the history of violence was just began to be written." (294) In the meantime, Bıro returns to Botan when the war is over. He hears from townsfolk that, Mir was planning a war against Chaldeans in the cities of Van and Hakkari soon. This occasion enhances Biro's disillusionment (297).

For the second time, the war begins. Mir Bedirhan aims to enhance his power after his victory against Sait Bey with the cooperation of the Ottoman Empire. This time he declares war on the Chaldean community in Van and Hakkari. The war begins, and once again, Bıro is absent. He does not narrate the atrocities of the war. Uzun once again refuses to aestheticize death and violence. People of Botan attend the war in order to glorify their nation. Bıro stays at home in Botan doing art, working on strans (310). Kurdish army wins in the end. But it is nearly impossible to call it a war in Bıro's reflection. Chaldeans had no power to resist Mir Bedirhan's forces. Bıro characterizes the whole event as a massacre, rather than a war. The whole event happens with the motivation for a brutal search for power. It was legitimized on the basis of Islam vs. Christianity debate. Bıro's close friends, Ape Yakup and his son Bedros ask him to trace

the existence of his relatives in Hakkari. They belive that Bıro's relations with Kurdish community and Mir Bedirhan can provide him to get into the war zone and find their lost family. Bıro's mission begins. After series of adventures, Bıro comes across Bedros' sister, Ester, lying unconscious, almost dead.

The first volume of the novel ends with Bıro's meeting with Ester. The second volume begins with Bıro's adventures of saving Ester. He manages to return to Botan without causing any suspicion to Mir Bedirhan's forces dispersed all around the country. He finds out that the state officers released a decree. They ordered the murder of Chaldeans left alive throughout the country (2010c, 29). Bıro's disillusionment and detachment once again enhances when he says: "the cries of murder were handled in Kurdish." (26) In a country, which is ruled "by the people whose hands are covered with blood", Bıro refuses to deliver her to the officers. He openly declares resistance against Mir Bedirhan's decision to massacre Chaldeans (39). In the meantime, an anti-militarist narrative accompany Bıro's political intentions:

> If we could define the war, which occurs for this or that reason, that no one can prevent, we can say that, war is atrocity. On the other hand it is repression and violence. We can also characterize it as murder and destruction. Or, plunder and migration. Or all of these, come on, pick one, one is terrible than the other. Some come to subject ones to violence who are powerless. While some others, who were subjected to very violence, come to apply it to the ones who were once the perpetrators. And some others come to subject to violence those who came victorious. And others, others, others… It all continues like this. To win and to lose, the two realities of war become a bloody game, which destroys both countries and people.[41] (2010c, 58)

For Bıro, after the two wars declared against Sait Bey and the Chaldeans, it would be impossible to say that the country got weaker. Contrarily it grew more and more stronger. However, this development does not satisfy Bıro due to the massacring of Chaldeans and the war against Sait Bey. Unlike Memduh Selim in *SE*, Bıro is not

[41] tr. Şu veya bu sebepten bir şekilde çıkan ve kimsenin önüne geçemediği büyük veya küçük savaşa bir isim verecek olursak eğer, diyebiliriz ki, savaş gözü dönmüşlüktür. Öte yandan savaş zulüm ve vahşettir de. Cinayet ve yıkım diye de adlandırabiliriz savaşı. Veya talan ile göç. Veya bunların tümü, buyrun, seçin, biri diğerinden berbat. Bazıları gelip kendilerinden güçsüz olan ötekilere karşı vahşet uyguluyor. Bazıları da gelip, vahşeti yapanlara karşı, ötekinden daha beter olan yeni bir vahşet uyguluyor. Başkaları da gelip bu sefer kazananlara karşı yepyeni bir vahşet rüzgârı estiriyor. Ve başkaları, başkaları, baskaları… böyle sürüp gidiyor. … Savaşın iki esası olan kazanmak ve kaybetmek, hem ülkeleri, hem de insanları yok eden kanlı bir oyuna dönüşüyor.

interested in the victories of the political groups. His position pertains to a humanistic and anti-militarist perspective. Mir Bedirhan undertakes a project to construct factories for armory production. The citizens soon possess guns and all other kinds of armory at their houses. Botan was once a peaceful society. It was the prototype of an ideal multi-cultural setting with its inhabitants living peacefully. It now becomes an urban setting of vast militarization due to the massacres handled by the political administration (2010c, 76-77). Ester and Bıro were resisting the totalitarianism emerging in Botan (124). Dengbej Bıro tells the "truth", which is the historical reality that signaled the emergence of a new colonialism conducted by the Kurdish state administrators.

Unlike *SE* and *Tu*, the narrative in *HD* draws attention to newly established power relations. Especially the Chaldeans living under the political authority of Kurds are victimized. According to the narrative, the Kurds this time occupy the position of the perpetrator. Throughout such a narrative of alternative colonization, Uzun does not glorify the Kurdish nation with cultural nationalism. He doesn't emphasize the loss as the foundational sense of national belonging. Rather, Bıro continuously and consciously escapes from war. This occasion displays Uzun's resistance against militarism and essentialism. Bıro's only relation to the war is his mission to save Ester. The war becomes the attempt for salvation and survival, rather than the narrative of loss. It points at the possibilities of being rather than the sense of national belonging on the basis of loss. The life that Bıro and Ester live together is peaceful, no matter what the political situation is: "We had a peaceful life, everything was great so far. Far from all atrocities. Silent." (2010c, 126) The lives of the protagonists in Uzun's national allegory represented the fate of the nation. In *HD*, Bıro and Ester continue lives independent from national allegory. Bıro's detachment from national sense of belonging, points at his active agency. Bıro is not a passive victim. His life is peaceful despite the atrocities committed against Chaldeans and Kurds by newly emerging colonial condition.

The peaceful life that Bıro and Ester live together does not continue for long. Ester is captured by the state officials. She is detained and deported to another city. Meanwhile Bıro is imprisoned for not delivering Ester to the state as declared (2010c, 127). On this occasion, Bıro's disillusionment with the Kurds as the colonial power gets even more enhanced: "These decrees were not just ones. They were devoid of mercy and

justice." Bıro is totally detached from his community when he declares, "What have I done other than saving an innocent women from the ashes of an unjust war?" (133) In response to his criticism against the will of the state, Bıro is ordered to "shut up and forget about that woman". For Bıro, this was another instance where "the oppressor came up victorious." (135) In the prison, the inmates who are "reading verses from the Quran all the time" were looking at him devilishly, just because of the fact that he is carrying Bible on his bag (141). The multiculturalism, which once characterized the Botan federal state, was now non-existent. Due to the atrocities that the colonial will has committed and further provoked its citizens to participate, Bıro was now living in a merciless, non-humanist and a militarized society.

Following to the acts of militarization in a totalitarian fashion throughout the countrywide mobilization in Botan, Mir Bedirhan declares war on the Ottomans to gain its independence from the Ottoman Empire. In the meantime, Bıro is released from prison. In this third sequence of war, Bıro is once again absent. While the nation is mobilized for a deadly war against the empire's forces, Bıro travels to Diyarbakir to find Ester. He eventually comes across her in a slave market. By this time, Ottomans heavily defeat Mir Bedirhan's forces. The colonial will is replaced by the Ottoman rule, who mercilessly massacres the populations in southeast Anatolia. Consequently, Mir Bedirhan is forced to come and visit the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul to demand apology for his deeds. Mir lists Bıro as the official artist of the palace. Bıro travels with Mir to Istanbul. The "exile" begins, to a country where "people speak a foreign language." (243) Bıro manages to include Ester to the convoy as a servant of the palace. The two face serious oppression under the Ottoman forces. Throughout experiences of exile, the focus of the narration radically shifts from the colonizer Kurds to the colonized and victimized Kurds. They are now imprisoned in a country where "they were treated as nothing but dirty dogs" and whose language as Ottoman language "was a dirty state language." (2010c, 253-254) Once again Bıro manifests the Benjaminian sense of history as "the history of the perpetrator". He situates himself in a position of a story-teller who can only bear witness to the atrocities and resist such understanding of history by the voices in his psyche: "History is shaped by the voices of the oppressor, I'm the carrier of the sounds of the defeated, the oppressed; my voice is the shout of the plundered." (258)

In light of what Bıro witnessed so far, Uzun aptly manages to overcome the clear-cut boundaries between the perpetrator (as Turks) and the victim (as Kurds). Rather than being the narrative of the victimized Kurds, *HD* is the narrative of the oppressed regardless of ethnic belonging. Pertaining to radical humanism and anti-militarism, Bıro insistently identifies himself with the victim. He draws axis of hierarchy of culpability and victimhood in accordance with such transforming boundaries of the colonial condition. After years of Mir's imprisonment, the Ottoman Sultan accepts Mir's apology and allows him to return to Botan with his family. Ester and Bıro continue a peaceful life after all unfortunate adventures. The axis of culpability and victimhood is once again realized when the Yezidi Heme appears. He is a prominent figure throughout the novel characterized as a fundamentalist and militarist individual. He murders Ester in order to seize Ester's necklace in the figure of "Melake Tawus", the holy signifier of Yezidi religion. For the fourth time, Bıro does not directly witness the crime as he arrives later at home. He finds Ester dead. Heme confesses that he murdered Ester for such ambition. Also he was the one to denounce her to the officials, which led Bıro's imprisonment and Ester's ending up in slave market. For Heme, Ester and Bıro's path "was not the right path." (2010c, 448-449)

At this point of the narrative, a Yezidi individual also comes up as the perpetrator. It enhances the complexity drawn on the basis of the colonial divide even more. After all he saw and lived, Bıro decides to tell his experiences to seven young men who are interested in the story. In the end of the novel the readers realize that Bıro is actually telling his story to seven people consisting of Kurdish, Turkish, Jewish, Chaldean, Arab, Yezidi, Armenian individuals. We were not alone throughout the journey to Dicle River. On the other hand, it is only at the end of the novel when Bıro eventually becomes a true dengbej, being able to tell his first and only pieces of strans at once. The end of the novel highlights hybridity which points at the mutualities across the colonial divide, rather than establishing clear-cut boundaries between the perpetrator and the victim. *HD* refuses to instrumentalize the medium of literature for cultural nationalism and essentialism where loss becomes the basis of communities. Uzun ends his novel with a problematization of the relationship between the author and the reader. As a result, Uzun undertakes an alternative attempt for decolonization. His literature takes sides with the oppressed

regardless of its ethnicity. He even attempts to decolonize the Kurdish history. Uzun aptly manages to speak to the reader to transform Bıro's witnessing through strans into a modern narrative, which Bakhtin characterized as the cooperation of the reader, author and the characters.

3.1.3 The Reader: From *Insecthood* to *Authorship* in *Hawara Dicleye*

Uzun performs a radical attempt within postcolonial literature, which diverts from nationalism. The way in which Uzun characterizes Bıro as the protagonist and the narrator of the story is crucial in this regard. Despite the fact that he introduces himself to the reader as a "dengbej", Bıro is indeed a powerless individual and has many lacks. Unlike Memduh Selim in *SE* and the narrator in *Tu*, the image of Bıro does not synthesize the Kurdish intellectual trying to survive under the colonial oppression. It is only at the end of the novel, with the introduction of the reader to the novel that Bıro truly succeeds in becoming a dengbej. The story of colonial oppression is also a story of success for Bıro in this regard. It is the story of Bıro's active agency.

Bıro is the only source that the reader can achieve the truth. Yet he does not claim an authority for that. Contrarily he frequently reminds the reader about his sick condition at his old age. He warns that he may not be powerful enough to finish the story. Remember that Margosyan applies many narrators to his text other than himself and lets them speak on their behalf with their own active agencies. *HD* also inhabits adjacent stories of Armenian, Kurdish and Yezidi individuals. Their stories are not necessarily relevant to the main theme of loss and oppression that Bıro narrates throughout. The experiences of Ape Xalef as a an old dengbej in Cizira Botan wandering around the country and telling strans of love and despair, Mam Sefo, an old Armenian intellectual helping Mir in state affairs, his son Mıgırdiç, with whom Bıro departs from Botan to a voyage in Syria to discover the lands of Yezidis, and people like Heme, Yezdinşer, Ester all accompany the narrative. Rather than solely relying on the lived experiences of a single individual like Memduh Selim and the narrator in *Tu*, to narrate the story of a nation, in *HD* Uzun diverts his attention to the adjacent stories of individuals of Botan state. Their stories do not necessarily contribute to the narrative of nation at an allegorical

level. Lastly, the reader is assigned a participatory role in a narrative of multiculturalism and complex colonial relations where characters other than Bıro interplay. The reader is not passive subject of the act of reading. It is provided with an active role, which he/she suspects throughout the novel, and fully realizes at the end.

Uzun produces his protagonist, Bıro not as Kurdish but as Yezidi. This is the primary detachment that he undertakes from his previous cultural nationalist literature. Uzun represents the atrocities committed by transforming colonial powers through 19th century from the perspective of a Yezidi individual. He does not eventually pose Yezidis as the ultimate victims. The ending of the novel where Heme murders Ester proves such understanding. In his postcolonial account in which he performs a re-reading of history, Uzun problematizes militarism, power and colonialism. He doesn't solely focus on the experiences of different ethnic groups. Uzun's narrative shows that a Yezidi individual can also become a perpetrator when he/she is exposed to the lust of power, religious and ethnic fundamentalism and chauvinism. Instead of posing a particular ethnic group as "monstrous" like he did in his previous works, Uzun determines the degree of perpetration not on the basis of a particular nation but on the basis of anti-humanist ideals. In situating the perpetrator and the victim historically, Uzun doesn't perform an identity politics on the basis of ethnic differences. The way Bıro defines himself, as "half-Yezidi, half-Muslim, half-Jew, half-Armenian" in *HD* (2002, 150), clearly underscores Uzun's ambitions.

Consequently, the reader reads the experiences of a protagonist, who perceives his experience in a heterogeneous way. Uzun narrative in *HD* differs from his previous writings. Memduh Selim was fighting for Kurdish independence on the Mount Ararat. The narrator in *Tu* symbolized Kurdish people. He was speaking to an insect about how badly he was beaten by the perpetrator. The identity of perpetrator was presented as "Turk-the colonialist". Contrarily, Bıro is devoid of a particular identity, which is uniform, homogeneous and fixed. Eventually, he can grasp the experiences of others. He can present them in a heteroglot manner. Accordingly, the narrative doesn't inscribe the charcaters' experiences into the grand narrative of the nation. In hybrid manner, Bıro's narration is non-essentialist and polyphonic as he declares the following: "My voice is the voice of everybody, it belongs to everyone, every era and everything. But the reverse

is also possible, such that my voice can also belong to nobody and not of any eras." (2002, 29)

In this particular instance, Uzun transforms his narrator into one who wanders around the boundaries of transcendence and nothingness. Within such philosophizing, Bıro claims to narrate a *subjective* outlook on history. He doesn't claim to have established the "Truth" in an objective manner. Bıro's is a wise attempt for engaging to a critical interrogation with the objectivist, truth-seeking approach to history. Bıro becomes an active agent whose subjectivity relies on multiple identities of existence. Uzun distinguishes the search for "truth" from the search of "what happened" when Bıro warns the reader:

> Do not ask me what is wrong, what is right; what happened, when and how it happened. My voice is the voice of truth but not of swords and armories, lords and sheiks, mirs and pashas, sultans and emperors. The truth of my voice is the truth of Dicle…[42] (2002, 29)

In such a differentiation between the Truth and the subjective inquiry of what happened in history, Uzun succeeds manage to come with an ethics of truth. Edward Said draws attention to the power relations between the Orient and the Occident. He propounds that it is the West, which produces knowledge on East. Foucauldian understanding of power also shows that the establishment of "truth" is a result of power relations. In *HD*, Uzun differentiates himself from such understanding by attributing the very word "truth" a transcendental value. For Foucault and Said, it would be impossible for one to determine the truth. The knowledge production occurs as a result of power relations. The power further legitimizes the truth by claiming particular objectiveness. Uzun is optimistic in this sense. He produces a literary space where truth lies beneath the voices of Dicle. These voices are positioned distinct from the "objectively acquired truth" of history, which is the history of the perpetrators. The resistant ethics of Uzun's postcolonial account arises from such a claim to truth in a subjectivist sense, rather than the objective manner. All in all Bıro comes up with a truth established on the very

[42] tr. Bana neyin doğru, neyin yanlış olduğunu; olan nedir, ne zaman ve nasıl olmuştur, sormayın. Sesim gerçeğin sesidir, ancak kılıç ve hançerlerin, top ve tüfeklerin, ağa ve beylerin, şeyh ve seyitlerin, soytarı ve vakanüvislerin, mir ve paşaların, sultan ve imparatorların gerçeği değil. Sesimin gerçeği, Dicle'nin gerçeğidir …

subjective grounds. He continuously warns the reader about such differentiation in the beginning of the novel.

In the introductory chapter of the novel, Bıro manifests that "no one is left other than me, everyone has gone." (2002, 42) In such a tragedy of loneliness, Bıro encourages himself to "voice them, narrate them" (43). He begins to textualize his witnessing and re-establish heteroglossia through the medium of traditional story telling. For Bıro, in such a testimonial quest, "the listeners, the story teller and the characters should unite and altogether constitute a new fate." (43-44) Here, Bıro calls for the reader to participate to the subjective creation of truth. In course of such a mission which is handled together with the shared work of the narrator, listener and the characters, Bıro begins to tell the story of Ape Xelef under the title of "The voice of Ape Xelef". He then moves on to "the voice of the peacock", "the voice of silence", "the voice of ancients", "the voice of people" and "the voice of Mir". Many others follow. Uzun maintains heteroglossia in his text when he paves the way for many other agents' voices to be recovered through the act of story telling of Bıro. The sub-strans constitute different voices of the people, history, ideas, inanimate objects and geographies.

The voicing of the past towards a subjectivist understanding of truth is enhanced in the second volume of *HD*. Bıro and Ester experience the transforming boundaries of the colonial condition. Bıro speaks to the reader more frequently then ever. In the section "the voice of dungeon where Meme Alan is imprisoned", Bıro narrates the famous Kurdish stran called "Mem-u Zin"[43]. He stops and makes the following call to the reader:

> Alright then, but who would tell the pains of me dengbej Bıro and a Chaldean girl Ester, the love of our solitude, the despair of us? Is there anyone who will tell this other then myself? Me, first me. Then it's you. When I pass on my life to you constituted by dreams and realities, you, who are the voice and the tongue of today and future, will tell them.[44] (2010c, 148)

Bıro assigns such a role to the reader and invites him/her to actively participate in reproduction of his life story. He makes a following remark about literature:

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[43] Kurdish classic love story written in 1692 by Ehmedê Xanî. It is considered the first important work of Kurdish literature.

[44] tr. Peki bencileyin dengbej Bıro'nun, biçare Yezidi çocuğu ile yaralı Nasturi kızı Ester'in, biz kimsesizlerin aşklarını, hüzün ve acılarını kim söyleyecekti? Benden başka bunu söyleyebilecek kimse var mi? Ben, önce ben. Sonra sizler. Hayatımı gerçek ve hayallerden meydana gelmiş bir hikaye olarak size devrettigim zaman, siz, bugün ve geleceğin dil ve sesi olan sizler de onu söyleyeceksiniz.

> And maybe one day someone who knows literature and the prowess of the pen, someone who knows how to transform the oral narrative into a textual one, will take this story of the repressed and write it down to notebooks so that it can pass to further generations.[45] (2010c, 149)

In the following sections where Bıro narrates the war between Ottomans and Cizira Botan, another hesitation disrupts the narrative when Bıro laments in pain: "I had no strength left dear listeners, I cannot resist much." Then he informs the reader/listener that he will be roughly summarizing the story by leaving the unnecessary details aside so that he can finish it in his lifetime. Nevertheless he is afraid not to be able to end his story accordingly, and suggests the following: "If such thing happens, that the story remain untold, you must finish the remaining of it." For Bıro, the reader/listener is the "new masters of narration." He will pass away one day. His narrations will remain. They will be inscribed through literature, which is "much more stronger and effective then oral narration." (182) In such a formula that he maintains between his story and the reader, Bıro further claims the following:

> There is no more option for now, I will tell, you will listen; when my voice ends, your turn will come, you will be a part of this story, you will enter it world, you will identify with it, you will tell it; you will also have listeners, and this time, your story will be listened. [46] (2010c, 184)

In one of his essays, Uzun characterizes his literature in *HD* as "an authorship together with the reader" (2008b, 171), similar to Bakhtin's propositions regarding the novel. The particular authorship is illustrated as the given passages above. Similar to Margosyan's polyphonic novel, Uzun also welcomes social speech types with the story telling by Bıro. In the meantime, Bıro constantly speaks to the reader throughout the narrative. Consequently, there is not only the plurality of voices, but also the plurality of authors. As the narration continues, Bıro calls the reader to be the author in case he passes away. This occasion destroys the hierarchy between the author, protagonist and the reader. The author and Bıro are not the all-knowing people any more. They do not

[45] tr. Ve belki de bir gün edebiyatı ve kalemin hünerini bilen, sözlü anlatımı yazılı anlatıma dönüştürmeyi becerebilen biri, yaralıların hikayesini alıp, her yeni döneme kalabilsin diye defter ve kitaplara geçirecek.

[46] tr. Artık çaresi yok, ben anlatacağım, sizler de dinleyeceksiniz; sesim kesilince sıra size gelecek, hikayenin bir parçası olacak, onun dünyasına girecek, onunla özdeşleşecek, onu anlatacaksınız; artık sizin de dinleyicileriniz olacak, bu kez sizin de hikayeniz dinlenecek…

represent and even claim the truth by themselves. The reader is introduced to the subjective process of truth creation. Uzun's performance in this regard is further enhanced through the ending sections of the novel. In the stran called "Hell", Bıro repeatedly manifests the following: "I would like to end the story, but if I can't, you are here to do this. You will know how the story will end and be able to tell the remaining parts of it." (2010c, 353) The reader/listener is exposed to the hints of possible authorship. They now become fully able to be counted as authors.

In the ending stran called "The Candle", Bıro is done telling the story of the murder of Ester. He asks the listeners to blow out the candle and leave. Tired of sleepless nights of story telling, he briefly summarizes his life: "A man, who became nothing in his life, just as he is not a dengbej." For Bıro, the actual dengbej is supposed to be the maintainer of truth residing around the Dicle River (2010c, 455-456). Bıro refuses to position himself as "the" author who is the possessor of concrete reality. He reflects his subjectivity through the act of storytelling for a historical implication, which is opposed to the will of the perpetrator. Through this particular act of decolonization, Uzun manages to distinguish Bıro's life story from the story of the nation, unlike Memduh Selim in *SE* and the narrator in *Tu*. Bıro is unhappy when the state of Cizira Botan comes up victorious due to his fluid identities of belonging. Eventually, Uzun attempts at decolonization through literature by fictionalizing the subjective truth as opposed to the objectively what happened. In doing so, he invites the reader to become authors. Within such narrative formation, the reader realizes that he/she was not alone during such authorship process. Indeed, there are multiple authors. The narration in this regard, rather than inscribing "the spoken message" or, representing "the message event, it becomes a new event." (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 184)

Remember that in *Tu*, Uzun's narrator was speaking to the insect and at the same time to the reader. The reader was reduced to an insect status. The narration was oriented around the *insecthood* of the narrator. The reader was forced to identify with that insect throughout the narrative. *HD* maintains a revolutionary twist in Uzun's writing. The reader who was turned into an *insect* in *Tu* in 1985, becomes an *author* in 2003 when *HD* is written. The reader further becomes Yezidi, Kurd and Chaldean. He/she enjoys the hybrid boundaries of existence. This becoming of the reader into an author constitutes a

new “event”. Literature, rather then functioning merely as representational, signifies an active becoming and productivity attributed on behalf of the reader. *HD* in this regard signifies the progression of Uzun’s literature from a postcolonial narrative which is characterized by homogeneity, reactionarism, cultural nationalism, essentiality of culture, national allegory and the representation of the colonized as passive victims, to an attempt of decolonization which is heterogeneous in essence, anti-nationalist, and hybrid. Uzun’s writing focus on the mutualities and negotiations across the colonial divide, humanism and anti-militarism. It assumes the authorship in the reader with an active agency which is not merely reactive, but active and productive.

3.2. Detachment from Language & Community

3.2.1. Margosyan’s Conflict with Canonicity

In this section I aim to explore the ways in which Uzun and Margosyan develop relations with the colonial language Turkish. Until now I analyzed the ways in which Margosyan’s and Uzun’s postcolonial approaches transform towards the heterogeneity of cultures, multiplicity of identities, as opposed to their narratives which propound cultural nationalism, essentialism through the axis which establish hierarchies of culpability and victimhood. Margosyan carefully applies heteroglossia to his text and welcomes different social speech types in his postcolonial account. He applies different narrators other than himself to his text and introduces the vernacular and non-Turkish languages. In *TT* Margosyan constitutes a literary space, which display the agencies of the characters. It represents their daily life routines. Their lives no longer function as the allegories of the nation, unlike his previous short stories.

It is evident, on the other hand that Uzun’s writings also shift focus in its resistant performance for decolonization through literature. Rather than relying solely on the national allegories, which narrate the degree to which Kurds were victimized under the colonial power of the Turks, *HD* concentrates on the multiplicity of identities, the hybridity inherent in postcolonial relations of power, the newly emerging colonialisms where Kurds occupy the position of the perpetrators. Uzun’s *HD* and Margosyan’s *TT*

and *BIK*, show an alternative attempt for decolonization on the basis of hybridity. The narrations are no longer based on cultural nationalism and essentialism. There is a particular twist in their literary careers. The themes radically transform. Their narratives point at the proximity to minor literature. This particular proximity occurs when Uzun and Margosyan re-establish relations with the colonial language of Turkish.

Uzun principally wrote all his novels in Kurdish language, whose significance I will analyze in the following section. Margosyan is much more inconsistent and hesitant in this regard. Other than two collections of short stories, "*Mer Ayt Gogmeri*" and "*Dikrisi Aperen*" written in Armenian, his other writings are written in Turkish. His short stories in Armenian were translated into Turkish. They were published in different books under the titles of *GM*, *SMN* and *BIK*. There are three ambiguities regarding Margosyan's relationship to language. Firstly, it is impossible to clearly detect which story is written when. Secondly, there is no information, which stories were written in Armenian or Turkish in the first place and when. Third, the translators of his Armenian works are not mentioned.

The foreword written by the publishing house to *GM* mentions Margosyan's writing career in Armenian daily newspaper, *Marmara*. It implicitly tells that the stories in this book are collected and edited from this newspaper (2002, 7-8). *GM* was firstly published by Bebekus Books in 1992. What is more ambiguous is that, the cover page of the book informs the reader that the book won Eliz Kavukcuyan award in 1988, although the book was not published at that time. The foreword about the biography on the author also mentions that three of the stories, which won the award, was translated into Turkish and published in this book (2). Yet it is impossible to identify which specific stories are translated into Turkish. There is also no information that it was *GM* or another book that won the award.

One comes across an ambiguity in terms of the exact dates of the stories written in *SMN* as well. In addition to the roughly given introductory foreword, which consists substantially of biographic data, the foreword of *SMN* published in 1995 by Aras publishing house conducts a particular interpretation of Margosyan's works. It carefully situates them as "*köy edebiyatı*" (provincial literature) and presents a background of such tradition in Armenian literature by mentioning the names of other writers such as Hagop

Mintzuri, Palulu elkon Gurciyan, Kegam Der Garabedyan, Hovhannes Harutyunyan and Rupen Zartaryan (2010d, 7-8). The publishing house locates Margosyan's literature within such traditional writing. It poses him as the "last representative" of such tradition. The foreword primarily focuses on the historicity of Armenian literature where Margosyan is merely a contemporary representative. It also reminds the reader that, "no other writer than an Istanbul Armenian Margosyan produces such literature, other then some occasional columnists conveying their experiences of the past through pieces of newspapers." (8)

Lastly, only one sentence of information is included to present Margosyan's short stories to the reader. It informs the following:

> Margosyan should also be considered as an author of Turkish literature other than him being merely an author of Armenian literature since some of the stories in the book are not direct translations from Armenian to Turkish but they were directly written in Turkish. (2010d, 8)

Still, there is no further information revealing which story is written when and the date of its translation into Turkish. Evidently, the aim of the publishing house is to introduce the Turkish reading audience with what they refer to as the genre of "Armenian country literature" in which Margosyan is a contemporary author. Aras publishing house intends to claim a *canonicity* of Armenian literature in virtue of the introductory foreword. It implies the progression of the canon from Gurciyan who wrote throughout 19th century to Margosyan's writings through the end of 20th century. Although the foreword implicitly tells that Margosyan also wrote in Turkish, it conceals the number of stories written by Margosyan directly in Turkish. This particular concealment functions as a self-defense mechanism to reproduce the particular status quo of Armenian literature canon formation. It tends to preserve Margosyan's stance within. "A number of short stories" which is written in the foreword may come to refer to any number from one to ten. Yet the publishing house's very inclination to put forth a canon of Armenian literature in front of Turkish reading audience strikingly conceals this information in order to ensure Margosyan's position within such canon formation. Nonetheless, the way in which the publishing house claims a respectful space for Margosyan within Turkish literature next to Armenian canonical literature is a huge step towards a hybrid

understanding through literature, which overcomes the clear-cut boundaries founded on the basis of the national.

In terms of the themes that are conveyed through short stories published in *GM* and *SMN*, a similar kind of an ambiguity is manifest in the language issues. *GM* consists of Margosyan's narrations of Giaour Neighborhood in Diyarbakir on the basis of his experiences of childhood throughout 40's and 50's. The collection of short stories in this regard concentrates on the daily life rituals of the people of the neighborhood. They include diversity of languages, cultures and identities which was once existent in the urban setting. *GM* is revolutionary, in the sense that Margosyan developed a sense of hybridity and multiculturalism on the basis of heterogeneity of cultures. In *GM*, he does not establish particular axis of hierarchies of culpability and victimhood. He rather represents the multicultural space and hybrid existences through literature. An alternative attempt at decolonization, which effectuates mechanisms of remembrances and witnessing in order to counter the uniformist, homogenizing will of the colonial power is manifest in *GM*.

The stories in *GM* narrate the public's perceptions in a heteroglot manner. They focus on the experiences regarding the Armenian priest of the neighborhood, Der Arsen. Mama Kure the midwife appears as a legendary figure, who effected every single life in the neighborhood. The narrations manifest the multiculturalism inherent under the colonial condition, such as when Margosyan reckons the following:

> The muezzin of the nearby Seyh Matar Mosque was enduring the ringing of the church saying "ya sabır, ya sabır" (patience), and eventually remembering his task, calling from the minaret:
> "Allahu ekber, Allahu ekber!.."
> "Ding-dong, ding-dong!.."
> "Allahu!.."
> "Ding!.."
> "Ekber!.."
> "Dong!.."[47] (2002, 11-12)

[47] tr. Uso'nun bitip tükenmek bilmeyen çan seslerine, yakındaki Şeyh Matar Camii'nin müezzini de "ya sabır, ya sabır" diyerek katlanıyor, sonunda o da görevini hatırlayıp, tarihi Dört Ayaklı Minare'den sesleniyordu:
"Allahu ekber, Allahu ekber!.."
"Ding-dong, ding-dong!.."
"Allahu!.."
"Ding!.."
"Ekber!.."

In this particular instance, the muezzin is uncomfortable hearing the chime of the Armenian Church, yet the two manage to coexist together. In this narrative, Margosyan realizes that this particular coexistence also brings about conflict. He makes use of language on the basis of the sounds that simultaneously impressed him. His narrative shows that there is no multicultural space under the colonial condition, which is devoid of power hierarchies. Rather than mystifying and further proposing the neighborhood as a prototype of multiculturalism under colonial oppression, Margosyan narrates the tensions between different cultures, which do not necessarily end up with particular acts of perpetration or victimization. The conflict is visible but the hierarchies of culpability and victimhood is absent.

In another passage from the story entitled "*How happy for those people for they are poor on this world*", Margosyan develops a class-based analysis of his family in the neighborhood. He refers to their deprivation of social welfare. Margosyan's literature differentiates itself from Uzun's in this regard. Uzun narrates the lives of Kurdish aristocrats, mystical dengbejs and prominent intellectuals of his society. Margosyan turns his attention to the daily lives of the low class individuals of the neighborhood. In doing so, he aptly utilizes Turkish, Armenian and Kurdish. He illustrates their daily life activities and interactions. The story begins in a rather irrelevant fashion depicting the child Margosyan lying on his bed during daytime, counting from one to ten:

> Indeed, it was an ordinary day for me. An ordinary autumn morning. I just opened my eyes and began to pick my nose. While I was picking my nose with my index finger, I was counting the stanchions of our house: "One, two, three, four, five, six…"
> After I was done with counting them in Turkish, this time I began to count them in Armenian: "Meg, yergu, yerek, cors, hink, vetz…"
> … One more time, I was counting in Kurdish: "yek, du, se, car, penc, ses…[48] (2002, 44-45)

"Dong!.."

[48] tr. Aslında benim için sıradan bir gündü. Sıradan bir sonbahar sabahı. Gözlerimi yeni açmış, burnumu daha yeni karıştırmaya başlamıştım. İşaret parmağımla burnumu karıştırırken bir taraftan da yattığım yerden evimizin direklerini sayıyordum: "Bir, iki, üç, dört, beş, altı…" Türkçe saymayı bitirince bu kez de Ermenice saymaya başladım: "Meg, yergu, yerek, cors, hınk, vetz…" … bir kez de Kürtçe sayıyordum: "yek, du, se, car, penc, şeş…"

This particular experience warns the reader regarding Margosyan's hybridized existence within the fluid boundaries of identities of Armeniannes, Kurdishness and Turkishness. In the meantime, Margosyan continues to make a comparative analysis between languages and links them to his perceptions of the environment:

> Car, the fourth stanchion, was the source of fright and anxiety for me. It was more humpback and older than the others. … although "car" in Kurdish means "remedy" in Armenian, indeed car, wasn't car, yet it was a good stanchion.[49] (2002, 45)

The way in which Margosyan perceives his existence within the fluid boundaries of identities reflects on his literature. He manages to maintain such a hybrid literary representation. The possibility of existing among this diversity of identities is introduced to the reader, through the coexistence of different languages. The rest of the story depicts the collapse of the roof of their house because of the very pylon, which Margosyan named "car" in Kurdish. Meanwhile, his father was busy with pulling out a tooth of a Kurdish man, who asks Sarkis in Kurdish: "Diraneme zer çeke" (build a golden tooth) (2002, 48). Due to the worsening weather conditions, their roof collapses. Margosyan's family recognizes the collapsing "car" and they were able to survive (52). The utilization of non-Turkish words into the narrative is not merely representational, but performative. In such an existential link between language and identity, Margosyan establishes his literary space, which flourishes cultural diversity. It is not instrumentalized for the constitution of a national allegory.

In *GM*, in addition to the passages which introduce the coexistence of languages and social speech types in order to constitute a literary space on the basis of hybridity, another distinctive status regards the "agencies" of the individuals through the use of language. In Uzun's writings, it is impossible to trace whether the Kurdish characters are speaking Kurdish or another language in their daily interactions. In *RME*, for example Uzun narrates the stories of Kevok and Baz, who are of Kurdish origin. The text is written in Kurdish and Uzun makes his characters speak in Kurdish language for this reason. Yet Baz doesn't know Kurdish. Kevok studies French Literature in the Great

[49] tr. Car, dördüncü direk, benim için daima korku ve endişe kaynağıydı. Diğerlerinden daha kambur ve yaşlıcaydı. … her ne kadar Kürtçe'deki 'car', Ermenice 'çare, derde deva' anlamına gelirse de, aslında car, car değildi, ama yine de iyi bir direkti.

Country and doesn't know Kurdish as well. Despite Uzun's intervention, it is impossible for Kevok and Baz to know and speak Kurdish. However, the text dominates the characters on the basis of language and deprives them out of their agencies. Uzun eventually constitutes a homogeneous approach towards a non-hybrid, nationalist literature.

Contrarily, Margosyan's stories in Turkish insistently differentiate such manner. Margosyan aptly make use of linguistic differentiations in the urban setting of Giaour Neighborhood in his postcolonial account. One of the most important stories in this regard is called "*The Pigeon*". He informs the reader about the marriage rituals of the people of the neighborhood. At this instance, Margosyan narrates the following sequence where two Armenian women figure, Agavni and Hachatun:

> Hent Agavni - if we have to say this in Turkish, Mad Agavni – was indeed stark crazy. An old senile, tasteless dried mulberry.[50] (2002, 32)

Rather than engaging to an act of essentialization of the body of Armenian women, Margosyan openly manifests the madness of Agavni to the reader. His narrative also exposes them to a realization of the different languages. During their interactions with each other, Margosyan narrates the impressions of Hachatun as follows:

> Hachatun didn't say "no". She neither said "ce" in Armenian, "nabe" in Kurdish. Indeed she didn't have enough reason to say so.. Besides, saying in Armenian "ce, cem uzer" which means, "no, I don't want", would be a crime and sin against her husband Kejo.[51] (2002, 32)

Margosyan narrates a sequence of events regarding the relations between the neighboring individuals of the neighborhood. The way in which he performs such a narrativization pertains to heterogeneity. He carefully underlines the existence of different spoken languages. Margosyan doesn't merely narrate the reactions of Hachatun in Turkish and dominate his characters. He rather allows the native voices and

[50] tr. Hent Ağavni – Turkçe söylememiz gerekirse deli Ağavni – aslında zırdelinin biriydi. Yaşlı bir bunak, tatsız bir dut kurusu…

[51] tr. Hachatun, 'yo hayır' demedi. Ermenice 'ce' de demedi, Kürtçe 'nabe' de. Demesi için zaten geçerli bir nedeni yoktu.. Ayrıca Ermenice 'ce, cem uzer', yani, 'yo, istemiyorum' demek en azından kocası Kejo'ya karşı hem suç hem de günah olurdu.

perceptions to manifest themselves within the text. Agavni is frequently called "Hent" since it is the equivalent of the word "mad" in Armenian. Hachatun would definitely express herself in Armenian rather than Turkish by saying "ce, cem uzer". Margosyan recovers the native voice within the colonized individual. He doesn't dominate the colonized with the total regulation of a language, which he/she does not speak.

Such a domination of the language fails to invite the reader to participate to the literary tex. It makes the characters passive subjects of the narration rather than its active participants. Margosyan rejects the further colonization of the colonized subject by the homogeneous and the regulative use of a particular language. Instead he welcomes the characters within the literary text by letting them speak their own languages. In the case of Uzun, Kurdish language is the language of the colonized. However in *RME*, it becomes the major/authoritative language. The author dictates his characters to speak in Kurdish, although in fact they cannot. Uzun's stance signifies the pitfalls of the postcolonial attempt on the basis of cultural nationalism. On the flipside, Margosyan manifests the interplay of languages through the agencies of his characters. He rejects such further colonization as it displays the agencies of the characters with the way they express themselves.

Margosyan enjoys his existence and his literary world within the fluid boundaries of identities. I will now return to the discussion of canonicity. There is a particular conflict between Margosyan's hybrid existence and the attempts for canonicity. In Margosyan's *SMN* that he published in 1995, the reader comes across the particular massage regarding Armenian literature canon in the foreword. Additionally, the story which assigns the name of the book "Tell me Margos Where are you From?" narrates Margosyan's experiences with his father Sarkis in his early childhood. It conforms to a nationalist position. The story emphasizes the longing for the lost Armenian country "Heredan" as analyzed in the previous chapter in details.

There is a huge contrast between *GM* and *SMN*. The stories of *GM* primarily consist of the narrations regarding the neighborhood and Margosyan's daily experiences with respect to fluid boundaries of identity. *SMN* propounds "loss" as the basis for the community. It essentializes the images such as the devastated father among the ruins of loss and "Heredan" where that loss constantly refers. As previously underscored, the

concealment of the amount of stories that Margosyan wrote in Turkish functions as a self-defense mechanism to reproduce the canonicity. After Margosyan's *GM* was published by Bebekus Books in 1992, Aras publishing house was founded in 1993. *GM*'s second edition was published by Aras in 1994. The way in which Aras claims canonicity and situates Margosyan as a representative of such a canon as a contemporary writer is clearly manifest in the foreword written for *SMN*. Such an attempt was absent in the presentation of *GM*. Aras published the foreword prepared by Bebekus Books in the second edition without any intervention.

But more importantly, such a claim for canonicity was absent for the stories in *GM* because Margosyan comes up with a complex and a hybrid understanding of language and culture in this book. It is hard to situate him as an Armenian country literature writer, among the manifestations of fluid boundaries between Turkish, Kurdish and Armenian identities. The nationalist and essentialist story, "Tell Me Margos Where are you From?" was powerful to assign the name of the book *SMN*. This story encourages the publishing house to manifest canonicity. The endeavor for canonicity brings forth the aim of the canon formation, which coincides with, in Jusdanis' terms, the endeavor to constitute a "national literature" which primarily concentrates on "narrating communities own tale." (1991, 51-52) Canon, in this regard, tends to establish and maintain "the identity of an entire nation" with respect to an organization of "communities stories in a neat hierarchy." (59). Such hierarchical establishment also tends to incorporate Margosyan's literature. Despite Aras Publishing House's attempts for such establishment, Margosyan nevertheless perform acts, which would deconstruct such hierarchy.

As Margosyan's writings are edited and collected by the directions of the publishing house, Margosyan's books travel ambiguously around the boundaries of hybridity and nationalism. In his later book *BIK*, the story entitled "Anadil Serüvenim" (My Mother Tongue Adventure) is revolutionary in this regard. In this story, Margosyan criticizes the nationalism and essentialism in Armenian community. He dedicates this story to Hagop Mintzuri. Mintzuri is recognized among the prominent writers in Armenian Literature. His importance was underlined by the foreword that Aras prepared for *SMN*. In a letter that Margosyan writes to Mintzuri in 1976, Margosyan once again refers to his childhood memories among the diversity of identities in Diyarbakir, yet with

a distinction. Among many lively memories throughout his childhood, Margosyan problematizes the date 1953, when he was sent to Istanbul to learn his mother tongue:

> While I was living with my dreams alone, my parents were sitting on the backyard, talking to each other in Kurdish, and Zazaki occasionally. … Definitely, they were talking about me, they wanted me to get married as soon as I can and make a family, and were discussing the possible brides that I can get married![52] (2007b, 36)

Margosyan here maintains an irony regarding the actual thoughts of his parents who speak in Kurdish at the household so that Margosyan would not understand. He discovers the debate soon:

> Yet, that night when I was sleeping above the stars with dreams for marriage, they kept talking about sending me to Istanbul like a swaddled baby.[53] (2007b, 36)

Margosyan, who is now suspicious of a possible threat of travel to Istanbul by leaving his beloved neighborhood behind, speaks to Mintzuri on this issue:

> My master, you can now rightfully ask "why travel to Istanbul suddenly?" since I wasn't requiring surgery for tonsil like you to do such travel. I fact, I wouldn't even consider going to Istanbul in the next forty years. What about my father? And my mother? They also wouldn't think about this possibility however that summer a monk in the figure of a crane made a sudden flight from Istanbul to Diyarbakir![54] (2007b, 37)

In this striking passage Margosyan mocks Mintzuri. Margosyan's first visit to Istanbul was not for "surgery" but for mother tongue adventure. Besides, the metaphor of the "crane" is ironically employed in his narrative to signify the opposite meaning. His

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[52] tr. Ben hayallerimle baş başa yaşarken anamla babam da aşağıda avluda oturmuş, kendi aralarında Kürtçe, zaman zaman da Zazaca konuşup duruyorlardı. … Ne ki, laf arasında zaman zaman benim adım geçtiğine göre, belli ki onlar da benim gibi bir an önce evlenerek yuva kurmamı düşünüyor, bu konuyu görüşüyor, kendi aralarında bana hangi kızın daha uygun olacağını tartışıyorlardı!

[53] tr. Ben evlenme hayalleri içinde yıldızlara dalıp uyuduğum o akşam, beni bebek kundaklar gibi kundaklayıp İstanbul'a göndermeyi konuşup durmuşlar meğer…

[54] tr. Üstadım, şimdi haklı olarak "İstanbul'a gitme işi de nereden çıktı?" diyebilirsiniz. Öyle ya, sizin gibi benim bademciklerim şişmemiş, ameliyat olmam gerekmemişti. Aslında kırk yıl geçse bile bir gün İstanbul'a gideceğimi doğrusu düşünmezdim. Ya babam? Hele anam? Onlar da bunu asla düşünmeyeceklerdi ama gelin görün ki o yaz, o günlerde aniden İstanbul'dan bir turna uçmuş, rahip kılığına bürünerek yıllar sonar Diyarbakır'a gelip konmuştu!

narrative implies that the priest who visited Diyarbakir to collect Armenian children was promising a tragedy instead of salvation:

> In fact years ago, it has been nearly forty years, during the darkest days of the First World War, after the years when you went to Istanbul for tonsil operation and didn't come back, couldn't come back, this white haired, white bearded crane who fell onto Diyarbakir was claiming to be the harbinger of a travel to Istanbul and education for the Armenian children in Anatolia.[55] (2007b, 37)

Drawing attention to Mintzuri's alienation and detachment from the hometown, Margosyan's mockery of this prominent Armenian writer continues. This time he accuses him for particular kind of elitism. Drawing a sharp contrast between the ways in which he was sent to Istanbul without his own will and Mintzuri's travel to Istanbul for surgery after which he never came back, Margosyan continues to question the motivations behind the decision to send him to Istanbul as follows:

> My honorable master, the main reason by the arrival of the crane and my immediate travel to Istanbul was because I was expected to learn my "mother-tongue". Actually, for me this wasn't enough of a reason for me to go to Istanbul. Was learning the mother tongue issues that important? Eh! No one asked me about this![56] (2007b, 37)

I already mentioned in the previous chapter that in a TV broadcast (2007), Margosyan declared that 'it is unfortunate for one if his ticket is issued by others, you should decide to purchase your ticket yourself."[57] In his narrative on the voyage from Diyarbakir to Istanbul, Margosyan attributes himself an identity, which is not different than an "exile". Similar to Uzun who had to leave the country for exile in Sweden, Margosyan was sent to Istanbul without his free will for his mother-tongue adventure. There is a distinction between two experiences of exile. Uzun decided to live in Sweden to escape the possible threats for imprisonment in Turkey. Secondly, he aimed to produce a modern Kurdish literature out of its ruins. Margosyan's exile also began with his

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[55] tr. Oysa seneler senesi, neredeyse kırk yıl, yani Birinci Harb-İ Umumi'nin o kapkaranlık gunlerinde, yani sizin de bademcik ameliyatı için yola çıkıp bi daha evinize donmediginiz, dönemediğiniz o günlerin ardından yolunu şaşırarak Diyarbakır'a konan bu kır saçlı, ak sakallı turna, Anadolu'daki Ermeni çocuklarını toparlayıp okutmak için İstanbul'a götüreceğini müjdeliyordu.

[56] tr. Muhterem hocam, turnanın gelişiyle benim İstanbul'a apara topar postalanmamın başlıca nedeni "anadil"imi öğrenmemdi. Doğrusu, bana kalırsa İstanbul'lara gitmem için bu, hiç de yeterli bir neden değildi. "Anadilini öğrenme" meselesi çok mu önemliydi? Eh! Bunu da bana soran olmadı ki!

[57] An Interview with Oğuz Haksever at 31.08.2007.

voyage to Istanbul. The reason of his exile regards his mother tongue. Yet unlike Uzun, this wasn't a voluntary process for Margosyan.

Margosyan's alienation and detachment from the national sense of belonging can be traced in the stories at *GM*, *BIK*, *TT*. Margosyan's exile began earlier than Uzun's. In 1976, when Uzun was about to escape the country to become a novelist of modern Kurdish literature, Margosyan was writing a letter to Mıntzuri with mockery and a sense of irony. He manifested his initial disillusionment from the sense of nationalism. In the meantime Margosyan continues his response to Mintzuri as follows:

> My dear master, I would like to tell you about my story after I arrived at Istanbul, but I guess this will be disrespectful for you since it will be unrighteous to spend your very valuable times; therefore, of you allow me to do so, I would like to reserve this story for another occasion some other time.[58] (2007b, 38)

Once again, problematizing Mintzuri's authority in an ironic way, Margosyan continues his concluding sentence as follows, referring to the way in which Armenian children of Istanbul Karagozyan Armenian Orphanage "mockingly" greeted him in the first instance:

> "Ruuun! Ruuun! Kurds arrived from Anatolia!..." (2007b, 38)

On this occasion, Margosyan points at the complexities of the colonial dynamics: The way in which an Armenian of Diyarbakir is likened to a Kurd signals a unique mechanism of colonization. The Istanbul Armenians perceive themselves at the higher level than Diyarbakir Armenians. Margosyan and his friends are discriminated as the "others" within the power relations. Margosyan's detachment from the sense of national belonging is enhanced even more when he witnesses the transforming boundaries of the colonial relations of power.

Margosyan characterizes such instance of alienation as "the moment, which would be influential for the rest of his life". It is manifest in his short stories where he

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[58] tr. Sevgili hocam, size uzun uzadıya bir de Haydarpaşa'dan başlayan İstanbul yaşamımızın sonrasını anlatmaya kalkışırsam, hakikaten saygısızlık edeceğimi, sizin kıymetli saatlerinizi, dakikalarınızı haksız yere çalacağımı, belki de ister istemez sabrınızı taşıracağımı düşünerek diyorum ki, eğer siz izin verir ve uygun görürseniz onu da başka bir gün, bir başka zaman anlatmaya çalışayım.

maintains hybridity and heteroglossia by the interplay of Armenian and Kurdish languages. Uzun was recognized as a Kurdish refugee in Sweden. Despite his citizenship, Margosyan is discriminated in Turkey for his fluid identity wandering around the boundaries of Kurdishness and Armenianness. The very colonialist argument which situates Kurds as "Mountain Turks" is once again established in Margosyan's introduction to the Istanbul Armenian community. Through the mother-tongue adventure, Kurds are once again colonized. The power is exercised, as Margosyan's letter to Mintzuri becomes the resistance to such an exercise of power.

Next to such attempts that I characterized as powerful attempts against nationalism in his postcolonial accounts, a further analysis of Margosyan's *BIK* brings about even more surprising findings. As I already analyzed their significance as foundational of essentialist, cultural nationalist literature in the previous chapter, two of Margosyan's stories "*Honeymoon with Apple*" and "*Rışeş*" also figure in the same book where Margosyan postcolonial attempt radically alters. Such an ambiguity can also be explained by the degree to which Aras intervenes to the collection of stories. The presentation of the book in the foreword in this regard is crucial. Unlike the previous ones, the text this time clearly presents the date 1973, when Margosyan wrote his short story "*Honeymoon with Apple*". It further informs that this story was firstly written in Armenian and then translated into Turkish by Margosyan himself. The foreword highlights this story as "a unique work of Margosyan who would later be reputed for being a successful writer of Armenian country literature." (2007b, 7) Margosyan's re-reading of Adam and Eve story in a nationalist and essentialist manner is highlighted as an experimental work of the author.

The intentions of the publishing house in this regard, attains more significance with its introduction of Margosyan's letter to Mintzuri to the reader. According to Aras, Mintzuri read Margosyan's one of earliest stories called "*Halil Ibrahim*" which narrates the region of Diyarbakir. He was impressed with Margosyan's skills. He decides to write a letter for him. In his letter, he calls Margosyan "to insist on literature, spend your days and nights, produce works for us." In response to such a call, Margosyan writes a letter, which is anti-nationalist. It aptly plays with the "us", that Mintzuri implies. However, this is not how Aras introduces his letter to the reader. For them, "Margosyan's letter reflects

what Mintzuri said to him regarding his stunning literature", which is not the case at all (2007b, 7). Eventually, Aras comes up with a different reading of Margosyan. It aims to fit him with the national canon that Mintzuri is stressing. Accordingly the publishing house tends to reproduce such canonicity.

Margosyan's narratives are in conflict with the aims for canonicity. The canonicity tends to inscribe Margosyan's works into the national canon as a "country literature". Secondly, it declares a space for Margosyan within Turkish literature. Aras re-reads Margosyan's works and reinterprets the function of his literature. They do not focus on his attempt of decolonization on the basis of hybridity. They rather proceed with respect to national canonicity. In this section, I primarily focused on the ways in which Aras Publishing House favored the national canon of Armenian literature. Yet simply putting the relation this way would not be true. Aras' recent work on Margosyan's *GM* proves the otherwise. Aras recently published "*Üç Dilde Gavur Mahallesi*"[59], where Margosyan's short stories was published in the same book in Kurdish, Turkish and Armenian languages (Margosyan, 2011). Aras' attempt is a hybridity-oriented one in this regard. Not only does Margosyan, but also Aras travels among nationalism and hybridity concurrently.

Margosyan's position as a writer bears a similar ambiguity. On the one hand he esentializes Armenian community and undertakes nationalist impulses in his particular writings. He performs the opposite through application of heteroglossia and hybridity in his later writings post-1998. Uzun also wanders around such duality. He maintains a particular kind of subjectivity between nationalization and detachment from the community. This approach constitutes the two opposing poles of the attempts of decolonization. Margosyan also wanders around such paradox. I argue that this very duality points at the complexity of the postcolonial condition in Turkey. In a social and political setting where the independence of respective communities is not established, the authors have to cope with oppression and undertake sufficient techniques of survival. They channel their intentions to nationalist impulses through their attempts at decolonization to declare the autonomies of their communities. By this, they aim to

[59] En. "Giaour Neighborhood in Three Languages"

survive and strengthen the communal bonds through their literature. It enables them to continue their lives in a communal setting of strong solidarity ties.

However they also do not give up criticizing the very sense of nationalism and essentialization as evident in the case of Margosyan and Uzun. I will continue to present its significance more in details in the following sections. Margosyan develops such a dual approach earlier then Uzun. Since he spent his entire life in Turkey under colonial oppression, he developed ways to cope with oppression in Armenian community by working through on both sides of the spectrum of decolonization. Uzun's transformation in this regard coincides with his reestablished relations with the Turkish language throughout his later writing career. The relations with the colonial language of Turkish necessitate a discussion of "minor literature" for a better comprehension of the two authors' positions within postcolonial literature.

3.2.2. Towards Minor Literature in *Tespih Taneleri*

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their co-authored book *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, define the first characteristic of minor literature as a literature which "doesn't come from minor language; it is rather that which minority constructs within a major language." Besides, in minor literature, "language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization." (2003, 16) Todd May explains Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term "deterritorialization" as "the chaos within and beneath the territories." (May, 2005, 138) Moreover, deterritorialization occurs when "an event of becoming escapes or detaches from its original territory." (Colebrook, 2002, 59) In that respect, Margosyan's literature, which is written in a major language (Turkish) and is produced by a minority author (Armenian), justifies the first characteristic of minor literature. In addition, Margosyan's work through language by intermixing Armenian, Turkish and Kurdish languages to each other signals the very ways in which he deterritorializes the major language (Turkish) in terms of challenging its boundaries and territories by the integration of different languages to the text written in the major language. I already presented such instances in the previous sections. The following examples from the text further illustrate Margosyan's assembly of minority languages into the major language:

> ... as a result of the emerging fights, *Dacig*'s on the one side, "Ğhaço"'s on the other, fighting with the shouts of "herb" on the snow...[60] (2008, 124)
>
> Narin *kuyrig* was not neglecting the necessary warnings.[61] (281)
>
> And there is also this *Krisdoya*nnes! ... Actually they can know you just by looking at your face and hearing your speech whether you are *Hay*, *Horom* or *Hırya*, without even looking at the official papers...[62] (282)
>
> They tear up your bag with a blade and take all what's inside, *Asdvadz vıga*, you won't notice whatsoever...[63] (283)
>
> … While her eyes seem to be very happy, the shared happiness of ours was on top due to monk Karekin's one word sentence: *Abris*![64] (362)
>
> ... years after in this *vorpanots*, in this orphanage as if we were begining for his sake back to the drawing board...[65] (14)

Many similar examples can proceed. In these passages, the Kurdish word *Ğhaço* and Armenian words, *dacig, zıngılig, kuyrig, Krisdoya, Hay, Horom, Hırya, Asdvadz vıga, Abris, vorpanots* are the expressions that are repeatedly used throughout the text. In their first usages, they are either footnoted with their translations to Turkish or their Turkish equivalent words, are presented by Margosyan next to their original usages. In their following usages, translations or any other remarks are not provided. The reader of the major language is expected to know those words to read and understand the book. Pursuant to Deleuze and Guattari's wishes, the application of Armenian and Kurdish words and phrases deterritorializes the major language and thus makes them "vibrate with a new intensity". According to Deleuze and Guattari, in minor literature "expression must break forms, encourage ruptures and new sprouting." (2003, 28) Margosyan's minor

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[60] tr. ... bu tepinmelerin ardından her defasında nedense ve ne hikmetse çıkan kavgalar sonucunda bu kez *Dacig*ler bir tarafta, "Ğaçolar" diğer safta, "herb" naralarıyla karlar uzerinde alt alta, üst üste savaşıp ...

[61] tr. Narin *Kuyrig* kendince gerekli uyarıları da ihmal etmiyordu.

[62] tr. Bir de *Krisdonya*lik var ya! Ismin Garbis ya da Giragos olunca, foyan hemen ortaya çıkar. Aslında kağıtlara bakmadan *Hay* misin, *Horom* musun, *Hırya* misin, ne oldugunu sanki yüzünden, konuşmandan anlarlar, ...

[63] tr. Çantanı ciletle kesip içinden neyin var neyin yok öyle bir çekerler ki, *Asdvadz vıga*, ruhun bile duymaz.

[64] tr. ... onun pırıltılı gözlerinden mutluluk okunurken, ikimizin ortak sevinci öğretmenimiz rahip Karekin'in tek kelimelik cümlesiyle doruğa ulaşıyordu: "*Abris*!"

[65] tr. ... yıllar sonra bu *vorpanots*ta, bu yetimhanede bizler sanki onun adına sil baştan başlayarak ...

literature is revolutionary since it envisions a new way of using the major language, at the same time affecting "the language in which it is effected." (2003, xvi)

And what's more according to Deleuze and Guattari "the second characteristic of minor literature is that everything in them is political." They further state that in major literatures, social milieu serves as "a mere environment and background", whereas minor literature's "cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics." To this respect "the individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it." From this point forth Deleuze and Guattari clarify that "everything takes on a collective value" in minor literature, rather than literature constituting a space for the possibilities of individual enunciation "that would belong to this or that master that could be separated from a collective enunciation." (2003, 17) One should distinguish the national allegory from minor literature in terms of being political. The national allegory is also political. Yet the politics inherent in national allegory is not the equivalent of the politics inherent in minor literature. Azade Seyhan (2001) explains Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term "political" as follows:

> Here "political" refers neither to an act of social intervention nor to a confrontational critique of political oppression. Rather, it implies a condition where the danger of disappearing national and collective consciousness outside the nation urges the writer to forge alternative alliances, to participate in different configurations of identity. (27)

With a collective enunciation, which manifests the social speech types, the interplay of languages and the possibilities of existing within the fluid boundaries of identity, the text is political. Not because it inscribes the story of the individual into the grand narrative of the nation but because it aims at decolonization throughout. Yet, as I've already investigated the duality inherent in decolonization, the particular form of decolonization, which deterritorializes is necessary. Nationalism and essentialism do not deterritorialize. They rather reproduce the particular territories. For this aim, the way in which Margosyan depicts his disillusionment with the nationalist, essentialist impulses operating within the strict boundaries of Armenian community, produces a hybrid account of postcolonial literature. It at the same time points at his proximity to minor literature.

Nükhet Esen underlines that Margosyan's narrative constitutes an alternative to "the long-dominant nationalist stories reflecting a non-existent homogeneity." Esen further remarks that Margosyan's literature contributes to "the possibility of multiple narratives in Turkish Literature." (2007, 135) Margosyan's short stories and his novel *TT* which promote hybrid postcolonial identities and calls attention to the point of departure from the long-dominant nationalist narratives in order to wipe the national taboo of remembrance out. Ulus Baker carefully reworks on the notion of minor literature by treating it not as a specialized genre but as a *kırık* (break) within the majoritarian literature (1999, 25). Margosyan's postcolonial writings effectuate mechanisms of remembrances. They help one to identify multiculturalism among society, which is deemed homogeneous by the colonial will. On the other hand, among his postcolonial writings, which set forth a nationalist and essentialist narrative of the Armenian community, the ambiguity resides within Margosyan's writings. The way he simultaneously wanders around the two opposing poles of postcolonial approach, nationalism and hybridity manifests the minor breaks within his literature. In addition to the attempts of Aras publishing house to include his writings in the national canon and his attempts at nationalization and essentialization for the particular purposes explained before, Margosyan nevertheless continuously tends to deterritorialize with his move towards hybridity. He calls for the reader to participate to the text. He assigns agencies to his characters. He applies different languages and the vernacular to express such agencies. He warns the reader about them concurrently. These constitute his main attempts to deterritorialize the postcolonial understanding on the basis of nationalization. He moves towards minor literature as hybrid phase of literature, which is anti-nationalist and anti-essentialist.

Accordingly, Margosyan's *individuation* is evident in his depictions of alienation from Armenian community in his novel *TT*. Margosyan's previously published books were edited collections of stories. *TT* is his first book that he wrote in totality. It is also his first and only novel in Turkish. In his novel, Margosyan narrates his experiences of youth in Istanbul among the Armenian community. They are the experiences that he couldn't narrate in his letter to Mintzuri and reserved for a better opportunity. His novel resolves the ambiguity of the translation and the date of the work written. It does not

necessitate the intervention of the publishing house. Margosyan finally decides to write in the major language of Turkish and takes control of his own literature in this manner.

Furthermore the novel can also be read as a response to the publishing house, which insistently positions Margosyan as a contemporary representative of Armenian country literature. In *TT* Margosyan turns his attention from his memories in Diyarbakir to his memories in the urban setting of Istanbul. Although within a two-fold narration his memories of Giaour Neighborhood appear occasionally accompanying the main body of the text, they are included to the text by the child-Margosyan remembering such instances while experiencing his very moments in Istanbul. Surprisingly, the novel does not have a foreword published by Aras in the beginning; *TT* signals Margosyan's total departure from the intentions of national canonicity to a postcolonial account of hybridity, which decolonizes through deterritorialization. Margosyan claims his autonomy as an author by the help of the language of the colonizer, Turkish.

The novel is significant for the way it begins; Margosyan takes over where he left in the letter he wrote to Mintzuri, about his alienation among Istanbul Armenians. Such an alienation and detachment from national belonging constitutes the main theme of the text. The introducing sections of *TT* consist of first person plural narrations of an autobiographical-we. Margosyan does not speak of his initial experiences just after his arrival to Istanbul from Diyarbakır, but *theirs*, together with his friends, which signals the embodiment of a collective enunciation. In the opening section of *TT*, Margosyan stays critical to the quest for the mother-tongue and says:

> We were quietly cursing to our mothers and fathers who sent us from Diyarbakır and Lice to here, to an orphanage in the corner of hell! Why were we here, in these stranger places? (2008, 9)

As for the elders of Diyarbakır-Armenians, the children's *mother-tongue adventure* is essential for the fulfillment and reproduction of their identities. On the other hand, Margosyan denotes critically Istanbul-Armenians' discriminatory stance towards them; as one of the Istanbul-Armenian students refers to them as *Kurds*:

> Karekin ağparig talked to you in Armenian, you did not understand. Besides, your Turkish is rude. Karekin ağparig told that you don't know Armenian since you are peasant Kurds... (2008, 39)

Subsequently Margosyan keeps quiet and soliloquizes with irony:

> We were having difficulties in comprehending the Armenian name of the cracked mirror while the scissor was working at the back of our heads at the barbershop, however from now on we knew that we were Kurds! (2008, 39-40)

Belonging to a community discriminated since the end of the 19th century; a Diyarbakır-Armenian Mıgırdiç is otherized by Istanbul-Armenians as well. Right from the beginning of his stay in Istanbul, Mıgırdiç is alienated to the Armenian community, which is assumed to be enhancing his very identity. He narrates his Armenian language course experience as follows:

> My world was way too different than my classmates who were continuously taking notes and carefully listening to the teacher lecturing on the board... (2008, 336)

Despite all the conflicts Mıgırdiç confronts, he is expected to learn the mother tongue perfectly. Mastering Armenian scrumptiously is, according to his teachers, "a matter of honor" (429). Moreover, Diyarbakır-Armenians are conceived as *non-modern* by the Istanbul-Armenians, especially for their habits of eating. The teachers are persistently watchful in order to admonish for a little mistake:

> ... I was failing in grasping the whole set of rules what the Patriarchate calls table manners, I was trying to adjust my new home by keeping my eyes open not to repeat the same mistakes. (2008, 260-261)

Margosyan stays critical to the discriminatory manner of Istanbul-Armenians who emphasize the necessity of the *common language* while otherizing Diyarbakır-Armenians

as *Kurds* due to that linguistic and socio-cultural differentiation. His narrative suggests that their behavior constitutes the new dynamics of colonization on the basis of ethnic differentiation and modernization. Within his double alienation, which stems from first his being an Armenian in Turkey and second, his residing in Istanbul as a Diyarbakır-Armenian, Margosyan does not prefer to abandon his Armenian identity altogether. However, he doesn't give away his *Kurdishness* either.

Therefore throughout the book Mıgırdiç continuously *remembers* in order to effectuate an escape mechanism by which he enrolls his memories of childhood spent among the diversity of *Giaour Neighborhood*. Giaour Neighborhood in this regard is an urban setting where Margosyan can enjoy his Armeniannes and Kurdishness concomitantly. Eventually, Margosyan re-elaborates on the themes that he worked on in his previous short stories on the basis of his disillusionment from Armenian community and his hybrid identity within the floating boundaries between Kurdishness and Armeniannes. As a result, he produces a text of postcolonial literature that he writes in Turkish.

Though consisting of *minor breaks* frequently then ever, *TT* still maintains narrations of essentialization on the basis of loss, especially with the author's reference to the words "Garod" and "Heredan". Nevertheless the distinctive feature of *TT* is that Margosyan can finally distinguish his literature from the authoritative approach of the publishing house. He rather secures an autonomous position for himself as an author of minor literature. With the publishing of *TT*, there is no question that Margosyan truly becomes a writer of Turkish literature without Aras speculating and problematizing it through the concealment of the translation issues. Margosyan establishes a secure place within Turkish literature with the use of Turkish language to perform acts of decolonization. He deterritorializes nationalism and colonial oppression more frequently then ever.

Margosyan's literature progresses towards a hybrid postcolonial account. His proximity to minor literature coincides with his strongly re-established relations with the language of the colonizer. From 1998 to 2006, Margosyan increases his proximity to minor literature. He at the same time develops literary interactions with Turkish language. Similarly, the period when Uzun begins to establish minor breaks, which

would evolve his literature into a deterritorialized postcolonial account of hybridity can be traced back to 1998. In 1998, Uzun was pressured by his community and PKK to write a guerilla novel. He published *RME* in Kurdish and immediately attempted to translate it to Turkish. Similar to the case of Margosyan, the way Uzun transforms his literature also coincides with his re-established relations with the colonial language of Turkish. From *RME*, to *HD* and finally, his only written work in Turkish "Ruhun Gökkuşağı", Uzun develops closer relations with the language of the colonizer.

3.2.3 Uzun's Reestablished Relations with Turkish Language

Mehmed Uzun's interest towards the colonial/major language begins in 1998, when he intends to translate his novel *RME* to Turkish himself. In one of his essays Uzun explains such an attempt with reference to the issue of the target reader. Finding a translator who would translate the novel into European languages from Kurdish is harder than finding a translator to translate his novel from Turkish to those languages. Therefore, Uzun undertakes a direct translation of his novel to Turkish so that he can make use of the "cultural capital" that the colonial language possesses in the sense of Bourdieu (1986). However, after a few tries, Uzun confesses that "being a translator is way too different than being a writer" and acknowledges that he cannot perform such a task. Therefore he hands his novel over to Muhsin Kizilkaya so that he can finish the translation (2010d, 14). This is the first step that Uzun performs through the boundaries of the colonial language in 1998. That colonial language, as he mentions in his autobiography, was the symbolic universe that he stepped into at his childhood, which signified his "first step to step out of heaven and enter hell." (2008a, 185) He was beaten by his teacher for speaking Kurdish in class, as he narrates that such event for unforgettable for him for the rest of his life, which repeatedly recurred in his psyche as a traumatic experience:

> The door which opened up the world of narrative was the door of an authoritarian world ruled by absolutism, bearing the traces of a militaristic rationalism. (2008a, 185)

The image of the colonial language occupies Uzun's mind for the rest of his writing career. His prison experience at the age of 17 in Diyarbakir Military Prison along the inmates of prominent Kurdish intellectuals such as Musa Anter and Ferit Uzun, signaled the first instance where he jumped out of hell and meet once again with the "heaven" where Kurdish language is freely spoken. The prison became his first school. Uzun was able to learn how to read and write in his mother tongue with the helps of Ferit Uzun and Anter (2008a, 332). For him, the colonial rule performed a crime against humanity in the very body of Kurdish language, which constituted his main motivation to write novels in Kurdish during exile (2007b, 124). Uzun draws attention to the "hysteria of brutal nationalism" under the colonial rule, which was first settled by the foundation of the republican regime in 1923. He notices the colonial dialectic drawn by the colonizer as follows: "We were the direct ambition of such a hysteria. We were barbarians who have to be Turkified, modernized, humanized." (2008a, 191)

Uzun further makes a rereading of the nationalist Turkish novel in order to expose the colonial motives inherent in the works of Karaosmanoglu, Gokalp, Yurdakul, Adivar, Safa, Guntekin, Kuntay, Atsiz and Bugra, which basically conveyed the massage of "I am a Turk, I'm right, I'm clever, I'm holy, I'm a hero, I'm happy and I'm worth the world." (2008a, 260) He characterizes such literature, which is purely ideological in terms of promoting nationalism which aims at colonization. For him, it is "dirty literature; a literature which violates the soul of humankind." (263) With such kind of an attempt of colonization through literature, Uzun remarks that "everything was Turkified, everything was turned into the story of the holy Turk, and this was disrupting my being." (266) He further notices that the nationalist novels that illustrate the Kurdish uprisings between 1925 and 1938 were depicting the events as the struggle of the moderns against the barbarians. For the nationalists, it was the struggle for modernization and civilization, which was evident in Karakurt's novel, "the Girl waiting for the mountains." (267) In his novel, Karakurt defines the Kurdish guerillas as "people with weird clothes and weird noises, heretics, outlaws, wild people, pillagers" which exposes the way in which colonial power relations in manifest through the nationalist novel (268). Uzun carefully focuses on the significance of this novel and poses it as one of the best examples of "dirty

literature" of colonialism. In such an attempt, the narrative becomes the work of "the perpetrator who takes the objective reality, interprets it with its own intentions and produce truths out of it" rather than the text being the expressions of "the victims, the oppressed, the barbarians who has never had the chance to speak for its own behalf." (270) As a response, Uzun writes his novel *SE* in which he narrates the same events this time on the side of the victims, who were deemed as barbarians by the colonial will (272). Despite the problematics of his novel in terms of its nationalist impulses and national allegory, Uzun's *SE* is nevertheless an important postcolonial attempt where the author re-reads the particular colonial text and reacts to it.

Under the constant surveillance of a totalitarian, colonialist political authority, Turkish language was a polluted language in the imaginations of Uzun. He draws attention to such discourses and literature by which Turkish language is instrumentalized to serve the perpetrator for its colonialist intentions. In such an understanding towards the colonial language, Uzun concentrated on writing his novels in Kurdish, the language of the colonized. Through, during his years of exile in Sweden, he was nevertheless multilingual. For him, Turkish and Swedish were his "intellectual languages" while he distinguished Kurdish as the language of his novels (2008a, 100). Until 1995 when he lastly published his novel "*Bira Qedere*"[66], Uzun's literature conforms to a nationalist stance as investigated in the previous chapter. His relation to Turkish language begins to transform in the mid 1990's. In an essay that he wrote on multiculturalism in 1995, Uzun makes the following regard about the relations between Kurdish and Turkish languages:

> I had prejudices against Turkish language once. Now I reconciled with Turkish since I began to use my mother-tongue freely. Now Turkish is among my beloved languages. (1995, 93)

In this particular reflection, Uzun declares his interest in Turkish language. He tends to re-establish relations with the language of the oppressor, the colonizer. Three years later he wrote *RME*, which I harshly criticized for being essentialist. Nevertheless

[66] tr. Kader Kuyusu. In this novel, Uzun narrates the life story of the Kurdish intellectual Celadet Bedirhan similar to what he did in *SE* as national allegory.

the novel was manifesting an inclination towards hybridity in the sense that it was overcoming the particular axis of hierarchy of culpability and victimhood. It focused on the negotiations between the colonial divide with the characters Baz and Kevok, rather than fetishizing these two ends.

RME constitutes a threshold in this sense for it is Uzun's declaration as a postcolonial author for a hybrid approach for decolonization. Further, he tends to translate his novel into Turkish. This is the first step he takes towards hybridity. He overcomes the clear-cut boundaries of the colonizer and the colonized. Here, I would like to explain the reason why Uzun undertook essentialism in this novel despite his attempts for decolonization regarding hybridity. Aytekin Yılmaz is the editor of the prison literature journal *Mahsus Mahal*. He was sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment due to his affiliation to PKK. He was later disillusioned with the organization's militarist discipline. He became friends with Mehmed Uzun. He was one of the organizers of the Mehmed Uzun Conference at February 17, 2007. He told me the following remarks after I gave a talk about Uzun's literature in a symposium in Istanbul (Nas, 2011b):

> At that time, around 1997, Uzun felt the pressure to write a guerilla novel. The expectation came from PKK, but also the community expected him to do so. The war reached its peak. He was expected to write a novel of the revolutionary guerillas, a heroic one. Uzun was already disillusioned with PKK and wrote this novel.

It was Uzun, who directly told Yılmaz about PKK's and Kurdish community's expectation to write such a novel. I could then make sense of why Uzun undertook such essentialism despite his attempts for hybridity in *RME*. He wanted to go beyond nationalism. But he could do it to a certain extent due to the communal expectations. Similar to Margosyan whose works are continuously reinterpreted by the publishing house for the purposes of canonicity, Uzun faces an expectation from PKK and his community to promote a guerilla novel. The complexities of the postcolonial situation reside within two senses. First, the authors have to negotiate with the colonial will and need the urge to find ways to cope with oppression in order to survive. Margosyan

experienced this more than Uzun since Uzun spent most of his lifetime as exile in Sweden. Second, the authors also have to undertake a further negotiation with the respective communities. They have to respond accordingly to their expectations of canonicity in Margosyan's case, and the need for revolutionary guerilla solidarity in the case of Uzun. The works of these postcolonial authors wander around such fields of conflict, which determines the authors' subjectivities to reflect onto their literature in two different proximities: National and Minor.

Uzun wrote *RME*, by which he aimed the following: "I wanted the reader to participate to the novel" (2007b, 103). He managed to perform a better job than he did in *SE* and *Tu*. Moreover, he states in one of his essays that he wrote post-2000 that "ideologies of nationalism deem languages static, which are indeed universal." (71) Uzun's disillusionment began when Ferit Uzun was murdered by Abdullah Öcalan in 1977. He dedicated his last work written in Turkish to Ferit Uzun, next to Anter, Buyukkaya and Edfelt (2008a, 7). In 2003, he was done writing his magnum opus *HD*, which reflects another case of striking manner in the novel's translation to Turkish. At this point, his translator Muhsin Kızılkaya remarks that Uzun asked him to work together in the process that he wrote his novel. For Kızılkaya, *HD* was "a beautiful work of cooperation between the author and the translator" since Uzun wrote the chapters and sent immediately to Kızılkaya who translated them and sent back to Uzun so that he can check them. Uzun was writing his novel, but at the same time he was editing and in some cases working on the Turkish translation by re-translating the copy that Kızılkaya sent him:

> Muhsin translated 230 pages of Hawara Dicleye, I spent sleepless nights on this translation until the mornings; its Turkish translation should be perfect, as perfect as its original Kurdish copy. (2010d, 118)

In such a relation of authorship and translation, the writing of the novel by Uzun in Kurdish and its translation by Kızılkaya was finished at the same time and submitted to the publishing house together (2010, 9). This is such a striking instance where Uzun totally re-establishes his relations with the language of the colonizer. He wrote his novel simultaneously in Kurdish and Turkish by the help of the translation. In this regard *HD*,

among the radical themes that it brings alone throughout the narrative as investigated, further manifests the coexistence of the two languages, which once occupied the two distinct poles of the colonial dialectic. *HD* manifests total hybridity in this sense, it becomes almost a bilingual novel; a huge step that Uzun performs from nationalist decolonization from a deterritorializing one among the floating boundaries of languages of the colonial divide. The moment when Uzun reestablishes he relations with the language of the colonizer strikingly coincides with the ways he handles the themes of decolonization on the basis of hybridity rather than nationalism, which was at the same time the case in Margosyan's literature.

In such a striking transformation, Uzun begins to care about Turkish language, as well as Kurdish language. He insists on the relations and the coexistence of the two. In one of his essays in this period, Uzun mentions that his foremost ambition is to "constitute a dialogue between languages." In course of attaining such a dialogue, his aim is to "open up a dialogue through time and space, within history." (2006, 31) For such an attempt, Uzun sorrowfully laments that, "my characters abandoned me; at first, they were mine, they came into being from my imaginations, but now, they belong to the readers, my characters, who continue their lives independent of me." (2007b, 20) Besides for him, "writing in Kurdish also enriches Turkey and the Turkish language." (82) Rather than bearing the sole mission to "save Kurdish out of its ruins", Uzun now transforms into a postcolonial author who reckons the cooperation of the languages of the colonial divide.

While focusing on the language of the colonizer, next to his attempts of transforming the themes that he handled on the basis of hybridity, Uzun further begins to undertake criticisms regarding Kurdish society. According to him, Kurds are also the perpetrators especially in their massacres against Armenians in 1915, cooperating with the Turkish forces (2007b, 181-182). Moreover, the urge to tell the history of Kurds to the Kurdish people, for Uzun, maintains didacticism, which is another form of totalitarianism (205). He responds to a Kurdish literary critic, who harshly accuses his novel *RME* for being a "superficial literature of vague humanism". He calls him a "Kurdish dinosour" and champions humanism as opposed to militarism and totalitarianism (2010d, 57).

From this point on, Uzun criticizes the totalitarian tendencies within Kurdish society in his notes on *HD*. His reference to PKK is critical: "A militant who disallowed love for himself/herself." Drawing attention to the strict rules of guerilla lifestyle of the mountains, which forbids any kind of sexual activity for the well-being of the revolution[67], Uzun refers to the authoritarian tendencies developed by Kurdish revolutionary forces. He draws a clear distinction between himself and any form of militarism: "I experienced my life between the two totalitarianisms, the state on the one hand and the Kurds on the other." (2010d, 129) Further, he also implicitly refers to Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the PKK movement, as "totalitarian leader of the Kurds", who represents "a decayed Sovietic ideology." (148) Among his criticisms of Kurdish society and his concurrent reestablished relations with Turkish language, Uzun declares that he is exhausted for writing in Kurdish after *HD*. He says the following: "I don't think I will be able to write any novel as deep as this one." (143) Consequently, he declares his next project, "*Tesadüfün Gökkuşağı*"[68] which he states that he will be writing in Turkish since "Kurdish took away his breath" (149).

In 2005, Uzun published his book, his last work of lifespan, with a slight difference in the cover: "*Ruhun Gökkuşağı*". *RG* is the only literary work that Uzun wrote in Turkish. It is presented as a collection of essays. For me, it can be read as an autobiography of Uzun. It is his most radical work in terms of displaying his marginal deterritorialization as a writer. It is a work of minor literature. After his reconciliation with the language of the colonizer, Uzun decides to perform an attempt of decolonization through major language, similar to what Margosyan did with *TT* in 2006. *RG* is the signature of the late transformation of his postcolonial subjectivity as an author from a nationalist writer of Kurdish literature into another. Uzun now wanders around the boundaries of multiple identities. He doesn't feel comfortable in any of them.

Although it is published in 2005, Uzun begins writing his autobiography in 2001 when he was sued for "terrorism and separatism" for his works *RME* and "*Pomegranate Flowers: Essays on Multiculturalism*". Uzun is disappointed to witness such a reaction, yet he is not surprised. He was not naïve enough to undermine the intentions of the

[67] This is a theme which was worked on later in a novel "Dağbozumu" by Aytekin Yılmaz (2011).
[68] en. The Rainbow of Coincidence

colonizer Turkish state. The case lasted from February 7, 2001 to April 4, 2001 and decided Uzun's innocence. In *RG*, he writes his impressions on the case. His reflections on literature (especially the re-readings of nationalist literature in Turkey as mentioned above), world, politics and his life experiences in Turkey and Sweden accompany the narrative. As referred to in earlier passages in this section, he shifts his attention to constitute a dialogue between languages in his future writing career. In a period when he establishes a dialogic space through the medium of literature with the interplay of the reader and the characters, Uzun undertakes a total detachment from his texts as "The" author when he says: "there is nothing belonging to me in my writings, I continuously wrote the voices of others." (2008a, 41)

In such a writing adventure, the voices of the oppressed inspired Uzun to write his own story for the first time, which is actualized in *RG* (41). In writing his own story, he also touches upon various issues of society and politics in order to convey his reflections. In doing so, he once again carefully analyzes the 1915 massacres against Armenians handled by the Kurds. According to him, "Kurds should feel shame for such atrocities." Yet drawing attention to the fact that most Kurds are unaware of or indifferent to such atrocities, he refers to Benjamin who says, "even the dead will not be saved from the enemy if he wins." (47)

Walter Benjamin, in this regard, is the most inspiring figure for Uzun to whom he identifies himself: "an exile writer, who has to recreate himself." (73-80) In situating himself at the status of an exile writer who floats among the diversity of identities, he engages to a critical discussion of the traditional feudalism inherent in Kurdish society and the ways in which such feudalism hinders individualism. For him, individualism is the true address for salvation of Kurdish community (99). Focusing substantially on PKK movement and feudalism in Kurdish community, Uzun carefully analyzes that literature for such circles is "nothing but a political engagement". It is instrumentalized for the promotion of ideologies. It further obstructs the freedom of speech in Kurdish society and conform it to homogeneity (128).

From there and on, Uzun moves on to narrate his experiences of imprisonment. He mentions his admiration for Turkish intellectual and film director Yılmaz Güney, whose bed and stuff he picked over after Güney's escape from Mamak Military Prison in

Ankara (139). Identifying with the two exile intellectuals, Benjamin and Güney, Uzun states the requirement for the writer to "open himself/herself up to different languages and cultures" in the voyage to reestablish himself (164). When the general attorney strictly states him that "there is no language such as Kurdish language" in court in 1976 (145), Uzun decides to save this language out of its ruins. His voyage later transforms into the voyage of an exilic author, who no longer fetishizes such a mission. Uzun now looks to establish a dialogue between different languages.

In such a transformative stance, in *RG* Uzun clearly re-identifies his literature. He turns his attention from Kurdish to "world literature." He says the following:

> The souls of the exile authors live within me. They are my mentors, friends, guides, confidants such as Homeros, Ovidius, Dante, Cervantes, Hugo, Mann, Broch, Canetti, Celan, Tucholsky, Mandelstma, Bubin, Nabakov, Hidayet, Berberova, Hikmet, Auerbach, Benjamin, Perse, Sachs, Faiz, Gombrovicz, Seferis, Singer, Asturias, Marais, Neruda, Brodsky… (2008a, 213-214)

Uzun situates his literature as "exile literature" which is for him at the same time "world literature." (213-214) In the meantime, Uzun refers to Ömer Türkeş' article (2000), which characterizes him as "the canonical author of Kurdish literature". Uzun harshly reacts to such analysis. For him, "the term 'canonical' is used in Western literature to characterize the prominent works of national literatures" and he refuses to engage to such interpretation by defining his literature as "exile" and "world literature." (2007b, 59) Uzun clearly manifests that he belongs to the tradition of exile literature. He radically departs from his mission as a mere Kurdish author (2008a, 222). Uzun highlights *HD* as a "ballad of exile" (229), which is not surprising keeping in mind the radical shift he undertakes with this novel. At thus juncture, what is problematic in a postcolonial account for Uzun is when a narrative serves to a mere reactionarism rather than the active production of a particular kind of truth within the literary aesthetics (298).

In the following, he refers to the Swedish author, Edfelt, who reckons that the literature of the oppressed should not be based on mere reactionarism with the intentions of "therapy" with the procession through the nostalgia revolving around loss; rather literature should be imbued with radical humanism with the constitution of a universal

emotion and empathy (314). In such a quest in which Uzun performs a total deterritorialization by no longer identifying himself as a Kurdish author, he once again refers to Edfelt who suggests the following: "only one can be saved from hell, the meaningless." What was important for a writer was to reside in that very hell and struggle to produce works of art among oppression (315). *RG* is the outcome of such an attempt through hell, which is the language of the colonizer. *RG* signifies the utmost point where Uzun deterritorializes himself and his literature. He manages to establish minor breaks within the language of the colonizer. Referring to Camus' insights on the "aesthetics of resistance", Uzun presents his autobiography at the beginning as "the story of a powerful resistance" (2008a, 5).

Uzun decided to end exile and return to Turkey in 2005 with the publication of *RG*, which he presented in an interview as his attempt to "say hello to Turkey in Turkish." In this TV interview with a popular broadcast CNN Turk, Uzun defines himself as a "hybrid author" who is comfortable with "writing in three languages, Swedish, Turkish and Kurdish concurrently." And what's more, Uzun furthers his understanding of hybridity as follows: "I do not use Swedish as a classical mainstream Swedish author, the same is for Turkish and Kurdish as well."[69] Despite his comfort with writing in all three languages, Uzun states that he "corrodes the boundaries of these languages" through his writing, which makes him an author of exile. In such a voyage between the languages in a hybrid manner, Uzun makes the striking commentary in one of his essays as follows: "I feel bored when I feel myself to much Swedish, the same is for Turkey, and I also get uncomfortable when I feel too much Kurdish." (2007b, 136) In the same interview, Uzun introduces his autobiography as he informs regarding his decision to write in Turkish: "After I wrote *Hawara Dicleye*, I was exhausted with Kurdish, and I decided to write in Turkish because I also had plans to return."

In 1998, Uzun felt the pressure from his community to write a guerilla novel. The novel was expected to promote nationalism. Uzun was disillusioned. He began to build relations with Turkish language afterwards. For him, Turkish language was the language of the perpetrator. It was a dirty language. However, it provided the means for Uzun to detach himself from his community. Like Margosyan, he was able to claim his autonomy.

[69] Interview, "Karalama Defteri" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WjpG_nHFJQ&feature=related

In 2005, Uzun and his literature were totally deterritorialized. He enjoys his existence among the fluid boundaries of identities of Swedish, Turkish and Kurdish. His transformation from the nationalist Kurdish author to an exile author of world literature coincides with the very ways he reestablishes his relations with the language of the colonizer. In *RG*, the metaphor of "rainbow" signifies "individualism" (2008a, 184), which is for Uzun, the basis of resistance to struggle against any form of totalitarianism and colonialism. In course of such resistance, he continues to witness and reinterpret "the voices" in history subjectively. It helps him to embody a collective enunciation through literature in order to establish even more minor breaks within Turkish language.

3.3. Toward "Becoming-Minor" in Turkey

In sum, among such complex relations and struggles of power in Turkey, the postcolonial writers of exile come up with utilizing the language of the colonized, which manifests their disillusionment with their communities. Their affiliation with the major/colonial language also paves the way for them to acquire a different target reader. They tend to introduce the themes on the basis of hybridity, as opposed to any totalitarian tendency reproduced within "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1991) to the Turkish-reading audience. This occasion significantly remarks the authors' proximity to minor literature. It further conveys and promotes a particular kind of existence of "becoming-minor" under the major discourse and society of the colonizer rule.

The way in which Margosyan and Uzun maintain their relations with the language of the colonizer in order to transform such language as the means of resistance is where the revolutionary pace of minor literature resides: "There is nothing that is major or revolutionary except the minor." (2003, 26) For Deleuze and Guattari, "minor authors are foreigners in their own tongue", which beautifully reflects the way Uzun and Margosyan perceive their existences among the fluid boundaries of languages. Following, Deleuze and Guattari come up with the following formula regarding majority and minority; for them since the majority always assumes a state of domination, the "majoritarian" brings along "a constant and homogeneous system" (2005, 105) whereas they situate minorities as "subsystems", the container of the minoritarian modes of existence "as a potential,

creative and created, becoming." (106) Deleuze and Guattari further formulate that "there is no becoming-majoritarian; majority is never becoming" (106) as opposed to the minoritarian existence in a majoritarian society, which is in our case, the society of the colonizer. Deleuze and Guattari in this regard point out the importance of minoritarian existence, when they suggest the following:

> Minorities are of course objectively definable states, states of language, ethnicity or sex with their own ghetto territorialities, but they must also be thought of as seeds, crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements and deterritorialization of the mean or majority. (2005, 105-106)

The way in which Uzun and Margosyan operate within the language of the colonizer introduces them another power struggle, this time with the majoritarian mode of existence under the colonial oppression in Turkey. Yet the way they already perform deterritorialization and attain to a minoritarian existence, which assumes the hybridity of identities in their late writings, is already a resistance against such power relations. The target reader in this regard, occupies a crucial position in their resistance against majoritarianism. Already managing to invite the reader to participate to the text, Uzun and Margosyan indeed expose the reader of the language of the colonizer with becoming-minor, that is, "to seek to connect with the neglected movements in the social body" concurrently investigating new possibilities, new ways of becoming (May, 2005, 150). For Deleuze, "to become is not to attain a form (identification, imitation, Mimesis) but to find the zone of proximity …" (1997, 225). Only when attaining such proximity, one can make sense of the social experience of the minorities.

Uzun and Margosyan's literature becomes the ground for the new possibilities of becoming. They encourage the reader to empathize with the minorities' plurality of existences. Among such conflicting power relations, Uzun and Margosyan managed to come up with "minor breaks" in virtue of their procedure from the major language. Their minor breaks assume a transformative task since they invite the reader to acquire hybridity. They invite the reader to become-minor so that any colonialist discourse should be resisted. Decolonization is still proceeding; it accelerated with Uzun's and

Margosyan's late writings, which are based on a higher extent of minor breaks. Yet one should expect other conflicting interests resulting from power relations to come, within the newly established field of becoming-minor through postcolonial literature in Turkey.

Chapter IV
Conclusion

4.1. The Double Bind of the Exile Author

Mehmed Uzun died in 2007 from stomach cancer. Margosyan, at the age of 75, currently lives in Istanbul. He frequently visits Aras Publishing House in Istanbul and follows their works. I haven't seen or talked to him since I first met him at Hrant Dink Memorial Workshop at 2010 in Istanbul, presenting a paper on the revolutionary stance of his literature, without mentioning the other side, that is, the way his literature conflicts with the interests of canonicity and his narratives on the basis of nationalism and essentialism. I was fascinated with the ways he managed to manifest multiculturalism through literature as an act of decolonization and his floating identities among markers of Kurdishness, Armeniannes and as a citizen of Turkey. Indeed I didn't prefer to talk to him during the writing process of this thesis since I didn't want to busy him with signaling his position as a postcolonial author between the two opposing poles of attempts for decolonization; he wouldn't be interested in such story at all. Telling his life to himself, wouldn't be interested, neither for me nor for him.

About Uzun on the other hand, I could acquire substantial amount of knowledge from his biographies written by Kaya, Diken and Kızılkaya and his autobiography of course. Writing a thesis on Uzun is much more easier than writing on Margosyan for that reason. Uzun spent a quite amount of time in presenting the rationale of his writings, sharing every single detail of his exile life in Sweden, his relations with the literature circles around Swedish Academy in his essays. Uzun spent his entire life by needing the urge to recreate himself as an exile author. In course of such an ambition, he constantly wrote about it to check out his position. He was an isolated individual, rather than Margosyan who seemed more like a storyteller in the sense of Benjamin.

Yet the fact that the motive of "exile" occupy the basis of their narratives, whether it be their autobiographies or fictional writings. A prolific author of Kurdish literature in Sweden, it is not hard to situate Uzun as an exile author whereas Margosyan's existence in this respect is much more complex. Rather than a radical

displacement from a country to another, Margosyan memories of exile was traumatic when he was almost deported from Diyarbakir to Istanbul for his "mother tongue adventure". Carrying the fluid boundaries of interplaying identities within, Margosyan was out in exile towards a homogeneous identity of Armeniannes. Maybe that's why he insistently wrote on his childhood memories of Diyarbakır in his short stories and novel; a compulsion to repeat in psychoanalytical sense, the text was the means for him to struggle for the mastery of such trauma of exile. Yet it was more than a mere means but a production; it was the very literature that he constituted out of such trauma. The same applies for Uzun as well; repeatedly referring to his experience of violence in his primary school, he produced famous works of Kurdish literature, which are now translated into many languages.

The concern for "place and displacement" has been a major feature of postcolonial writing (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, 8). Among such imaginations of place and displacement, the motive of "exile" figures frequently in the imaginations of the postcolonial writers (28). Such concern with respect to one's identification as an exile individual exposes the ongoing power relations between the colonial divide. What is indeed a signifier of oppression, subjugation, absence, discrimination, torture and violence, the term "exile" dialectically empowers those who identify themselves with it, as it becomes the very basis of resistance against colonization. It is from there, the attempts for decolonization begin: In virtue of the depictions of the colonial past, response to the colonial will, the issues of language highlighting the oppression of the language of the colonized and the issues regarding canon, its formation or re-reading of the canonical texts of colonialism (Gugelberger, 1991, 517).

The exile author primarily focuses on past; by means of conveying of fictionalizing memory, the author aims to introduce what was once forgotten and whose dismissal is continuously reproduced by the colonial will to the contemporary society. On the exile status of the postcolonial writer in this regard, Said propounds the following:

> Many post colonial writers bear their past within them as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending towards a future, as urgently reinterpretable and re-deployable experiences in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory taken back from the colonialist. (1994, 55)

In this writings, Said celebrates the motive of the exile (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001, 40). Though rightfully expressed, what differentiates the postcolonial condition in Turkey from Said's propositions is that Uzun and Margosyan do not operate on "the territories taken back from the colonialist". Those territories bearing the scars of humiliating wounds are still under the occupation by the colonial will in Turkey. At this juncture, what this thesis aimed to interrogate was such a complexity; in a society, which is still under the colonial occupation and rule, the authors engage to complex relations of power throughout their attempts for decolonization.

For Said, colonialism is not an abstraction; rather it refers to "specific experiences and forms of life that have an almost unbearable concreteness' (1976, 36). Such concreteness exposing the colonial dynamics in Turkey are performed through literature by Uzun and Margosyan in virtue of their introduction to the conflicting dynamics of decolonization and against the colonial rule in Turkey. In such an environment of intersecting conflicts, for Said resistance is still possible. Despite his emphasis on the dominance of the colonial power, which engages to a constant process of "truth" reproduction, Said propounds the following:

> No matter how apparently complete the dominance of an ideology or social system, there are always going to be parts of the social experience that it does not cover and control. (1993, 289)

Following Foucault, I insisted on the following formula regarding the relationship between truth and power. It underscores that truth is never excluded from power as Foucault famously declared: "We cannot exercise power except through the production of truth" (1977, 12). Following Foucauldian formula one can suggest that, "the discourse of the post-colonial is therefore grounded on a struggle for power", a struggle which one proceeds within language (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, 165). Foucault in this regard furthers his argument to underscore the crucial role that language plays in such attempt for power, when he says: "Power is invested in the language because it provides the terms in which truth itself is constituted." (165) The struggle for power in some cases "mimics" the dominance of the colonizer, which constitutes the very point that Bhabha

problematizes. According to Bhabha, one can escape such mimicry in the attempts for decolonization with attainment to the following inquiry:

> Only by stressing the way in which the text transforms the societies and institutions within which it functions (its 'transformative work') can such a mimicry be avoided and replaced by a theory and practice which embraces difference and absence as material signs of power rather than negation, of freedom not subjugation, of creativity not limitation. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, 166)

What one should bear in mind regarding the postcolonial condition is that referring to Tiffin, "decolonisation is process, not arrival; it invokes an ongoing dialectic between hegemonic centrist systems and peripheral subversion of them." (1995, 95) Further, the process of decolonization is a complex period in which, "colonized societies participate over a long period, through different phases and modes of engagement with the colonizing power, during and after the actual period of direct colonial rule." (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, 195) In Turkey, we are still experiencing colonization together with the attempts of decolonization through which literature becomes the grounds of resistance. Azade Seyhan (2001) reckons that the writers of exile often "endeavor to reclaim and preserve cultural legacies destroyed and erased in their own countries by oppressive regimes." (28) Within such process, Uzun and Margosyan manifest a resistance through literature. The text becomes the site of resistance, which exposes the relations of power between the colonial divide. The way in which the authors maintain their texts is closely linked to the ways in which they experience such relations of power. In their narratives, their respective communities and the colonizer figure as prominent agents, which struggle for power.

The colonial condition in Turkey in this regard refers to a complexity of relations among agents struggling for power. The authors feel the urge to negotiate between the inclinations of their communities on the one hand. They also deal with the oppressions and the expectations of the colonial rule in order to survive. As a result of such an interaction, the authors come up with intersecting subjectivities. These reflects upon their literature with the themes they handle and their approaches through language. The authors' "exile" statuses maintain a further layer, which makes them exiles to their own communities. Detachment from their communities is manifest in their late writing

careers. Here they no longer mimic the dominant discourse of power by pertaining to cultural nationalism and essentialism. They rather look for the ways in which a text can transform the society in virtue of foregrounding freedom and creativity as Bhabha claims.

In Uzun's and Margosyan's early writings, the process of decolonization becomes "a search for essential cultural purity" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, 40), which is evident in Margosyan's particular short stories and Uzun's novels, *SE* and *Tu* as analyzed in the first chapter. In this regard, the memories of exile or the conditions which result in exile under the colonial rule serve as tools for legitimizing such a quest for cultural purity, as Bhabha carefully observes in the following formula: "Looking to the legitimacy of past generations as supplying cultural autonomy." (1990, 298) After such an attempt, the following stage for decolonization is actualized when the authors realize that they have to conflict with that very cultural autonomy that they seek for. They possess conflicting interests with their respective communities. Therefore, the re-workings on the images of exile once again come up on the stage as a further ground for resistance in Margosyan's letter to Mintzuri and *TT* and Uzun's *HD* and *RG*.

The identification with the image of exile was once rationalized for a declaration for cultural autonomy of Kurdish and Armenian communities against the colonial authority of the Turkish state. Whereas at another point the very theme is utilized for the manifestations of the hybridity of cultures and identities and the critical outlooks against the dominant discourses established by the hegemonic institutions and organizations of these colonized communities. Aras publishing house's claims for canonicity in the case of Margosyan and the way PKK and Kurdish community expects Uzun to write a guerilla novel are the important factors behind the authors' detachment.

Uzun's and Margosyan's postcolonial literature is crucial in the sense that they expose the complex character of the colonized. Rather then solely fetishizing the way Turkish state colonizes, they turn their attention to the newly emerging colonialisms. Margosyan narrates his experiences when he is greeted by the Istanbul-Armenians as a non-modern, illiterate Kurdish individual of Anatolia. Uzun draws attention to the totalitarian basis of PKK and the way Kurds were also perpetrators and the agents of colonization in 19th century and at massacring of Armenians at 1915. Nationalism was once their ambition in order to declare the cultural autonomy of their respective nations.

In their late writings, the authors undertake “counter-narratives”, which criticizes the ideas of nationalism and nationhood, as Bhabha reckons:

> Counter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries — both actual and conceptual — disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities. (1990, 300)

Accordingly, the exile authors of postcolonial literature, Uzun and Margosyan turn their attention to deconstruct the totalizing tendencies inherent in the society of Turkey as a whole and in their communities. In their late writings for this purpose, they experiment with language. They maintain diversity not in order to acclaim cultural autonomy but to manifest their pluralism and coexistence. The themes that they work on transform accordingly.

The motive of “cultural difference” in this regard is reworked by the authors in their late writings for such an attempt of decolonization. Cultural difference for Bhabha should not be understood as “free play of polarities and pluralities in the homogeneous empty time of the national community.” Contrarily for him, cultural difference is a form of intervention, which addresses “the jarring of meanings and values generated in-between the variety and diversity associated with cultural plenitude” as it further represents “the process of cultural interpretation formed in the perplexity of living, in the disjunctive, liminal space of national society.” (1990, 312) In their late writings, Uzun and Margosyan attempt such intervention. Drawing heavily on their exilic status under totalitarian nationalisms under the Turkish state and their respective communities, they come up with a different understanding of cultural difference as an ethical stance. This ethics aims at transformation rather than a mere reaction for the reproduction of cultural autonomy. Cultural autonomy in this regard points at another form of national totalitarianism. Through their struggles among the conflicting power relations, they manage to carve up a space for themselves through literature. Literature doesn’t serve merely to a representational purpose. It refers to a productive activity regarding going beyond the assumed and perceived identities and fetishized colonial divides. For Bhabha in this regard, the aim of cultural difference is “to re-articulate the sum of knowledge

from the perspective of the signifying *singularity* of the 'other' that resists totalization." (1990, 312)

Claiming that the literatures of Uzun and Margosyan transformed into a "minor literature" from a "nationalist" one would be a miscomprehension of the existing complex power dynamics inherent in these authors' lives. Rather than emphasizing a particular kind of progression in terms of decolonization through literature from a national to a minor one, I would like to draw attention to the power struggles that the authors manage to find alternative ways to cope with in their approach to literature. Besides, characterizing their literature to fit them into a particular genre would once again disable one to fully realize the complexities inherent in their postcolonial writings. Rather than a particular form of writing progressing into another in their late writings, the two approaches of decolonization, that is, a nationalist, cultural essentialist and a hybridity-based one coexist.

Such coexistence is the very signifier of the power relations. Due to such relations, the authors cannot complete detach themselves from their communities. Yet they also refuse to fetishize the Turkish state's colonial oppression with imagining clear-cut boundaries between the perpetrator and the oppressed in-between the colonial divide. The totalizing gesture of nationalism is reproduced at the both ends of the colonial divide, as the authors deal to negotiate between the two. In their early writings of exile, Uzun and Margosyan concentrate on the quest for acclaiming cultural autonomies to their communities under the colonial oppression, which pertains to nationalist stances. Whereas their late writings after 1998 rely more on the hybridity of identities, the criticism against any totalitarian senses despite the coexisting nationalist impulses. Uzun, especially in his autobiography, overcomes the communal boundaries of identity dictated to him much better than Margosyan does, because of his relatively more free and isolated life in Sweden. Margosyan, who continues his life among the Armenian community in Istanbul, has to take into account the communal perceptions and expectations about the autonomy of culture that bases itself on the "productivity of loss" even more than Uzun does. Therefore, no matter how radical the themes he handles in *TT*, Margosyan's narrative still includes occasional references to the productivity of loss, which makes the power relations that he has to deal with evident.

Eventually, following Deleuze and Guattari's concept to better comprehend this complexity, Uzun's and Margosyan's late writings include a higher extent of deterritorialization. Their early writings bear the signals of majoritarian modes of literature for their essentialist and cultural nationalist positions. What I aimed to underscore regarding such differentiation was the role of "major" language, that is, the colonial Turkish language. The way in which Margosyan and Uzun manages a higher degree of deterritorialization coincides with their reestablishing and/or developing relations with the colonial language of Turkish. Margosyan eventually distinguished himself from being the representative of an Armenian literature canon with his novel *TT*. The publishing house could not attach any foreword regarding the novel's importance to the canon. Aras was insistently concealing which story is written in what language. It was not taking into consideration Margosyan's stories that he wrote in Turkish in the first place. The forewords they prepared were totalizing Margosyan's position as a contemporary representative of Armenian country literature, who primarily writes in Armenian. His stories were translated into Turkish, yet the name of the translator was unknown. In his books, he wrote "some of his stories" in Turkish, with the exact number unknown. In 2006, Margosyan wrote and published his novel *TT* in Turkish, which prevented any further interpretation by the publishing house. Margosyan's decision to leave Armenian language aside and write his novel in Turkish was provided his autonomy. He was able to concentrate on a criticism of his community. His relations to Turkish signaled his detachment from his community. It was a power struggle, by which Margosyan manifested agency and resistance through utilizing the language of the colonizer. Aras publishing house recently published "*Margosyan in Three Languages*" which was a hybridity-oriented attempt. The complexities of the postcolonial condition is also manifest in Aras' attempts, which travels between nationalism and hybridity concomitantly.

Uzun similarly manifested his agency and resistance through literature by his reestablished relations with Turkish language. Uzun had to deal with different power struggles; PKK and his community expected him to write a novel about the Kurdish revolutionary guerillas in 1998. As a result he wrote *RME*, which was the first occasion for him towards manifesting hybridity. Though *RME* still contains essentialism.

Immediately after he published his novel in Kurdish, he undertook its translation into Turkish himself. Uzun legitimizes his intentions for translation by referring to the cultural capital of Turkish language. He says that reconciles with Turkish after his strong affiliation with his oppressed mother tongue. I argue that the language of the colonizer presented Uzun a chance to detach himself from the totalitarianism inherent in his community. Like Margosyan, Uzun performed deterritorialization with his newly founded relations with Turkish language in 1998.

In 2003 he published *HD* together with its Turkish translation. He and Muhsin Kızılkaya worked together on the translation. The themes he handled in *HD* engage to a critical interrogation of totalitarianism inherent in Kurdish community. It is accompanied with the general narrative of resistance against colonization under the Ottoman Empire. Further, Uzun decided to "say hello to Turkey in Turkish" in 2005 by publishing his autobiography in Turkish. It was his only work of literature written in the language of the colonized. *RG* signals the highest degree of Uzun's deterritorialization. The book is a manifestation of his hybrid identities between Turkish, Swedish and Kurdish languages and cultures. Eventually, Uzun began to define his literature as "exile literature" and "world literature" rather than "Kurdish literature". From 1998 to 2005, Uzun finally manages to come up with an ethics. This ethics tends to expose any kind of colonialist dynamics, inherent both within the power of Turkish state and society and Kurdish community. For Uzun, which was once "the polluted language of the colonizer" was now the grounds for resistance.

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