

T.C. KOCAELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI PROGRAMI

**MADNESS IN LITERATURE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF
MADNESS IN *EQUUS* AND *BEFORE THE ICE BREAKS* IN
THE LIGHT OF HISTORICISM AND NEW HISTORICISM**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

DAMLA ÖZLEM GÖKSU

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KOCAELİ 2019

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To my dear family

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ÖZET.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE	
1. HISTORICISM.....	8
1.1.Hegel, Zeitgeist and Geist	11
1.2.Method of New Historicism and Positivism.....	17
CHAPTER TWO	
2. NEW HISTORICISM.....	21
2.1.Stephen Greenblatt and New Historicism.....	24
2.2.Foucault, Discourse and Madness.....	26
2.3.Historicism versus New Historicism.....	31
CHAPTER THREE	
3. <i>BEFORE THE ICE BREAKS, HISTORICISM AND NEW HISTORICISM IN TERMS OF MADNESS</i>	35
3.1. <i>Before the Ice Breaks</i> and Historicism.....	35
3.2. <i>Before the Ice Breaks</i> and New Historicism.....	44
CHAPTER FOUR	
4. <i>EQUUS, HISTORICISM AND NEW HISTORICISM IN TERMS OF MADNESS</i>	50
4.1. <i>Equus</i> and Historicism.....	50
4.2. <i>Equus</i> and New Historicism.....	59
CONCLUSION.....	67
WORKS CITED	73
ÖZGEÇMİŞ.....	76

ÖZET

Edebiyat özellikle kültür ve tarih başta olmak üzere insan hayatının her yönüne sızmıştır. Yazar farketmese dahi hikaye anlatımı kültür aktarımının en önemli yollarından biri olmaya devam etmektedir. Tarihselcilik, her dönemin ruhunun edebiyat metinlerindeki yansımalarına odaklanan ilk yaklaşımdır. Yeni tarihselcilik bunu bir adım ileri taşıyıp dönemin ruhu yerine baskın gücün insanlara empoze ettiği fikirlerin edebiyat aracılığıyla anlaşılabilirliğini savunmuştur. Tarihin başından beri göreceli olan delilik kavramı 20. yüzyılda da istisna yaratmamıştır. Delilik her daim normalin dışında kalan insanlar için kullanılan bir terimdir, ancak bu normal dönemden döneme değişmektedir. *Küheylan* ve *Buzlar Çözülmeden* eserlerinde, Türkiye’de ve İngiltere’de deliliğe tarihselci ve yeni tarihselci bakış açıları görülebilmektedir ve bu tezin amacı söz konusu eserlerin tarihselcilik ve yeni tarihselcilik aracılığıyla daha kapsamlı anlaşılmasını sağlamaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Peter Shaffer, Cavit Fehmi Başkut, delilik, tarihselcilik, yeni tarihselcilik.

ABSTRACT

Literature seeps into every aspect of human life, especially culture and history. Storytelling remains to be one of the important ways to pass down the culture, even if the author does not do it intentionally. Historicism was the first approach that focused on the way spirit of the era was reflected in the literary works. New historicism took it a step ahead and declared that instead of era's spirit, one could see the ideas dominant power imposed on people through literature. Madness is one of the most subjective topics from the beginning of the time, and the 20th century was no exception. Madness has always been defined as abnormal, but the understanding of normal changes from era to era. With *Equus* and *Before the Ice Breaks* (Buzlar Çözülmeden) one can see both historicist and new historicist viewpoint on madness in England and Turkey, and this thesis aims to provide a further understanding of these texts through historicism and new historicism.

Keywords: Peter Shaffer, Cavit Fehmi Başkut, madness, historicism, new historicism.



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INTRODUCTION

History has always been a significant part of the literature. Throughout history, literature was the first mirror to reflect on the situation of the history and the power relations of time. While different critics had different ideas on how literature and history were related, or how they influenced each other, it is certain that no one could deny their importance on not only culture but also human life. Human life exists of history and art- especially literature and it is not possible to deny their existence in any culture.

Perhaps two of the most important movements within the criticism of the literary field were historicism and its descendant: new historicism. These two movements not only widened the readers' viewpoint but also served the purpose of changing the critics' and authors' way of interpreting and using literature. While both historicism and new historicism studied how literature and author were used and what they reflected, their viewpoints were different. Historicism saw literature as a destination in power and history, but new historicism saw literature as a tool and emphasized the fact that no author was free of their era and its influence. The representatives and the famous names of these movements had many ideas, on which they disagreed with each other, but they had one common idea, literature could not exist without history because, without history, there would be no civilization or humanity, because neither literature nor history could survive without the improvement of civilization and human life.

It could be argued that the very essence of any era is in fact literature. Only through the literature and the literary works, the reader can have an idea about the discourse of the era the literary work is written in, regardless of time. As Dunn and Haddox stated in their works *The Limits of Historical Criticism*, both history and literature are thoroughly entwined within each other and any sort of a literary text can be seen as historical evidence (11).

But in order to understand historicism, one needs to understand the viewpoint of historicism. Historicism believed in and relied on the human conflict

because the key figures of historicism thought that history only started when there were different opinions, therefore if conflict stopped, so would historical development. It can be said that one of the main reasons history exists are humans and their lack of harmony, because according to historicism as soon as the harmony starts, the history ends seeing that disagreement between people and clash of their ideas ensures the development, which leads to the existence of history.

That being said, it must be stated that many philosophers tried to separate fiction from reality. Both Plato and Aristotle had different approaches to history related to fiction; Plato's myths may look like history, but if they could not be proven as such, they stated as fiction. Aristotle, on the other hand, adapted the viewpoint that history was only different from fiction in terms of probability. (Hamilton, 2003: 6) One can assume that fiction is well organized, unlike history. Especially in Aristotle's era, fiction- mostly drama- was much more organized than history itself. Since the approach of modernism did not exist, all the fictional works had to follow a specific chain of events and were mostly resolved at the end of the play. (7)

But what is historicism in relation to fiction? The understanding of historicism can, in fact, be traced back to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. The phenomenal philosopher whose ideas still continue to resonate in the literary world created the solid base that enabled the ideas of historicism to be built upon with his idea of *Zeitgeist*. *Zeitgeist* by its definition was the Spirit of the Age and Hegel argued that one could not be objective –or free of- one's history. As it is stated in *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*:

[...] he is willing to describe Western history as the journey to self-knowledge of a kind of collective, historical subject, which he calls Spirit (Geist). (...) Spirit simply as what a particular form of social life, a particular social practice, takes to be its most important standards of value. These standards of value, of course, have no existence outside the beliefs and intentions of the individuals who are committed to them. But because the individuals who are committed to social norms do not choose them abstractly, outside the context of already existing social practices, we can coherently speak of both norms and practices as having a kind of independent existence, helping to socialize individuals and to orient them in their choices. (Krasnoff, 2008: 68)

As stated above, Geist, which was the spirit, influenced the people and their way of expressing themselves and kept them within the context of the said era.

Whatever was the dominant characteristic of time –pessimism, optimism, etc- any individual of the said era would show that characteristic as Geist. The influence of this spirit according to Hegel, was not conscious, nor did the people- mostly authors choose to fall under its effect, but it was done unconsciously, which made this effect even more significant and inescapable.

It can also be understood that historicism serves as a mirror to reflect the aesthetics of history and culture. Literary texts show the flashes of history and aesthetics of the era, especially culture based. (Jameson, 1979: 51) Lodge states in his work that there are two kinds of historicism; the first one stands up for the idea that everything related to humans must be also related to the historical context in a positive light. This viewpoint –although being valid for years- was opposed by new historicism on the grounds of power and ideology (Lodge, 1979: 548). Earlier historicists did not take the dynamics between people into account in their critiques of literary works and instead took it as a general truth, which created many problems afterward. There is no doubt that historicism adapted many ideas of Hegel, in terms of making sense of the world around the people as well as understanding the literature and author, and how they were related to not only each other but also to the era. Hegel was once again the key figure of literature and author in terms of historicism and helped the historicists along with common people to see literature in a new light while connecting the literature to history and the life itself.

New historicism, on the other hand, did not see history as the objective mirror of the culture like historicism. According to new historicism, power holders of the age could manipulate and abuse the truth and by extension, they could change history and how it was reflected. Seeing that history is heavily influenced by the culture and vice versa, it is safe to assume that culture had a big part in the power dynamics of every era in history.

But whose culture is shown the most in the literary era? According to new historicists such as Foucault and Greenblatt, since the culture was the combined effort and common interest of specific groups, these specific groups had the luxury to reflect their own truth into literature, especially if they were in the

higher scale of cultural hierarchy. While historicism stated that no literary work could be free of its time, new historicism adapted this idea and developed it more, and in new historicism's viewpoint, no literary work could be free of its time and power relations. In fact, the environment of the culture was the highest priority when interpreting a text in terms of literature.

It is also worth mentioning that new historicism adapts a much more pessimistic view of the world. It states that fictional or not, there can be no place for resistance against the culture, seeing that no culture can exist without society which is deeply under the influence of power holders (Brannigan, 1998: 8). Foucault takes it further by saying that we as a society are surrounded by power, and cannot escape from its grasp, nor can our minds or our works (8). Based on this, one can assume that even if new historicism derived from historicism in terms of being a similar approach to the literature, its viewpoint on the cultural hierarchy is more realistic.

As realistic as it could be, new historicism could not exist without Foucault and Greenblatt. They were the two biggest influences in new historical point of view, and their ideas turned this approach into one of the most important theories within the literary world. According to Greenblatt, literary historicism only focused on one point of view,

Historicism, old and new, would replace the originary self of idealism with its prime anti-humanist assumption that all cultural and social phenomena, especially selves, like all natural phenomena, are to be understood as effects produced by of causality (cultural traditions, institutions, race, ethnicity, relations of gender, economic and physical environments, dispositions of power). In its earlier scientific phase, historicism tends to be deterministic in the hard sense-it casts determining forces as abstract, monolithic, and oppressively exterior to human activity and it suffers no guilt that I can discern for doing so. In its newer phases, historicism rejects the metaphysics of determinism while cunningly retaining (not without discomfort) a complicated commitment to the principle of causality, for without causal explanation there is no historicism, old or new. (Veseer, 2013: 231)

As it can be understood culture has always been the dominant part of the literature. The power holders of the time could change and control the culture - regardless of real life- and by doing so, they could also shape the mark of the century through literary works. History has always been committed to power with the reflection of the culture. There is a reason why Post Colonialist Literature entered the scene of literature as late as it did because the white viewpoint was in

control of literature in the earlier ages. Readers had to wait for centuries in order to see a woman protagonist because men were in power, therefore, women could only serve as a plot device rather than the main character within the literature. For centuries, the reader was imposed on machinery in literature and just now managing to get rid of the Industrial Revolution's influence in the name of Ecocriticism. Only when one starts to pay attention, they can see the mark of power reflected through literature since the beginning of the time. It brings the question to mind; was it a conscious effort? historicism claims otherwise, and it can be seen in the earlier theories concerning the movement;

All human societies were perceived as being ruled by the same rationality whereby they had formed themselves to escape the perils of the lawless state of nature. The choice, as represented by Samuel Pufendorf in *On the Duty of Man and Citizen According to Natural Law* (1673), which reveals the aims and logic of any society, is straightforward. 'There [in the state of nature] is the reign of the passions, there is war, fear, poverty, nastiness, solitude, barbarity, ignorance, savagery; here is the reign of reason, here there is peace, security, wealth, splendour, society, taste, knowledge, benevolence' (Pufendorf in Hamilton). Everywhere these evils and these goods are the same for all people (Hamilton 2003: 38)

What historicism failed to notice was that these evils and these goods were in fact not the same, and not for all the people. It was the first thing that new historicism went against when it first surged, nothing was ever the same for all the groups of people. Fear, poverty, and ignorance were the dominant fears of minority groups, and as it can be seen in earlier literature, not many authors managed to reflect it well, due to the being under the influence of the "Spirit of the Age". The overall theme of the century -even during war periods- did not apply to every part of the society, and historicism still took it as the general truth of the age.

Before new historicism put a name to it, the power relationship between literature and the era was an undiscovered territory, but with new historicism, a lot of theories, may they be before or after the emerge of new historicism, were seen under a new light. Althusser's *Ideological State Apparatus*, for example, was another thought that shed clarity on power relations in terms of new historicism. According to Althusser, superstructure and the infrastructure of the society were closely related, and one can see the traces of it in new historicism. Karl Marx's *Das Capital* may be another influential work not only in terms of financial

structure but also in new historicism as well. Marx's understanding of the economy and the gradual change into the ideal can be adapted into society in Hegel's terms, and cultural wise it can be paralleled to new historicism. In addition to these figures, Michel Foucault and Stephen Greenblatt contributed to building and supporting new historicism greatly, and without them, the reader perhaps would not be able to understand the approach as clear as he can now. Their influence and works helped to shape this approach and left a significant trace in the literary world.

Both historicism and new historicism helped to improve both culture and literature and strengthened their relationship with each other. Even if the reader could see the influence of culture, viewpoint of the era or the viewpoint of the author in literary works way before historicism or new historicism, these approaches opened a new path for not only critics but also the ordinary reader. They helped to make the reader think and question the undeniable influence of culture and power relations of the era, and led the reader to the question of "Whose truth" was being reflected and read in the literary works. Literature, contrary to popular belief was never objective, and new historicism gave specific instances along with proof to this.

Madness is one of the instances one can see in the literature that both show the viewpoint of the era and the power structure. Throughout centuries, approach to madness changed, even if at first they were not seen as harmful, but special, in time, society started to feel threatened by them. This led to an understanding of unity in a negative way, because soon sane individuals of the society started to see insane as less than humans and it gave them a sense of superiority. In time, this viewpoint changed again, and the idea of helping "mad" became popular again, with modern medicine. Treatments changed, and psychiatrists and the society tried to turn them into "normal".

Before the Ice Breaks and *Equus*, were written around the same time, but belong to different cultures. Thus, the reader can see the differences in approach to mad people, based on the culture. In Turkey, asylums were more about keeping the insane out of society and less about actually treating them to be a part of the

normal. In *Equus*, the audience sees Dysart's collapsing beliefs when he meets Alan and sees his passionate personality. *Before the Ice Breaks* gives the audience a peek into the viewpoint of the Turkish and British culture when it comes to madness, while one of it tries to keep them away from the society by locking them up, and the other normalized them by stripping them off their passions in order to make them a part of the society.



1. HISTORICISM

In order to understand historicism, one needs to understand the history of historicism first. Even though the term itself made use of many different approaches while forming within the literary era, perhaps the most important methodology in historicism's birth was hermeneutics. Hermeneutics -just like historicism- dealt with the idea of the interpretation of texts. Even if it formed because of the need to interpret religious texts at first, in time it slowly evolved into an approach that was much more different and diverse than its original purpose and form. The approach that was purely based on religious texts such as the Bible, morphed into a method that included all parts of life, and especially literature, just like historicism did. While modern hermeneutics had many important names that changed and enriched the term, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) is one of the most significant names, whose work and understanding of hermeneutics paralleled historicism, in terms of literature.

One of the first things that Dilthey did that created a new approach was his clear division between analyzing natural sciences and human sciences. It is a wide known fact that natural sciences can be objective- and closely related to rules including causes and results, as well as being explanatory. Dilthey also accepted this understanding, but he also stated that any action that came from men could not be explanatory like natural sciences, but instead human sciences should focus on less explaining and more understanding (Toprak 2016: 85).

Another important point that Dilthey focused on was the writer's role. He thought that no literary work could reflect content that was completely alien to the writer. (95) He believed that especially literary works could ensure people re-live specific incidents, and since art contained more than merely the artist or writer's consciousness, it could be interpreted in many ways. In addition to that, he believed art also served as a stabilizer in life, showing the era and its incidents (98).

Appropriating the heritage of modern individualism, Dilthey then insisted that human nature was deeply embedded in society and history. In the *Ethik*, he placed the theoreticians of inner experience side by side with those who believed ethical rules originated in man's social life. In this view men were embedded in, ". . . .Verbande of an ethically productive character. . .", hence ". . . inwardly shaped by a

collective spirit." As a result the ethical process did not unfold in the ". . .isolated individual . . ." but through the mediation of the " . . .social ethical religious whole. . ." (Dilthey1981: 23)

Therefore, according to Dilthey, modern individualism was another derivation of society and history's undeniable link with each other. Ethical rules were a result of both human nature and the society itself, and could not be analyzed correctly while being completely separated from one another. This "collective spirit", as Dilthey defined it, also influenced the literature greatly.

In addition to Dilthey, Hans-Georg Gadamer also proposed new approaches to text and its interpretations in relation to Dilthey's. According to Gadamer, one's understanding of text could only happen through prejudices. Contrary to the popular connotation of today's "prejudice", in Gadamer's viewpoint, this prejudice against prejudice kept people from being able to link the text to a tradition and prevented the human sciences from passing onto the next generations (Toprak, 2016:121). He also supported the idea that any work of art that was being interpreted without a time gap could not reflect its true meaning (130);

Art and history have become obsessed with themselves rather than with their traditional subject matters. The preoccupation in history writing with method may be understood in this way. Similarly, the modern artist has often seen herself as member of a school and as forming part of a tradition with modes of expression specific to it. Revolts against previous art have been frequent in this context. The tendency to reject the past in this way reveals a heightened awareness of the historical situation and also promotes a detachment of art both from its traditional subject matters and from societal needs. Art increasingly comments upon itself and should (or so a frequent argument goes) constantly change its modes of expression so as not to stagnate into lifeless convention. (Odenstedt, 2007: 14).

As it can be observed, art and the era of the product of art were always closely linked with each other. Even if many different philosophers, hermeneutics and literary critics had different ideas of what the requirements of art and literature interpretation were, nearly none of them could argue with the fact that it affected each other. Any kind of a historical situation could be traced back to works of the era, and even if new historicism supported the idea that it was also related to the power struggles, historicism -in its original form- mostly focused on the time itself rather than discourse.

It is safe to assume that historicism made a great impact on the literary world. It not only opened the path for new historicism but also created a new bond between philosophy, culture, and literature. Throughout history, a new approach never stayed within the limits of only one field, not when it could influence multiple areas, and historicism was no exception to that.

Friedrich Schlegel seems to have been first, using the term Historismus in 1797 to describe a mode (Art) of doing philosophy, alongside other such modes as "ethicism," "politicism," "poeticism," and "logicism." Around the same time, Schlegel's close friend Novalis also spoke of Historism in a similar way. Ludwig Feuerbach used it as a term of criticism in the 1830s. Subsequent descriptive usages have been noted, and in 1852 Carl Prantl used it to identify his own philosophical position, speaking of a "true historicism." (Page 1990: 11)

As it can be seen in Schelegel's example, since the first coining of the term, this approach did not have only one focus, ethics and politics and especially literary criticism were heavily involved within it. Even though Schelegel's term has changed in time, one can state that even the root of the term refers to multidisciplinary fields. After Schelegel, many different philosophers and literary critics adapted this term into their own areas, and each of these important figures added their own viewpoint into the approach, enriching it in different ways.

In Karl Popper's words, society has two things, experience, and history. Both of these are connected to each other but a complete change -and learning from history- is, in fact, impossible, because history never repeats itself under same circumstances, with same characters and importance (Popper, 1957: 10). Hence, the historical part of historicism approach is always developing, for better or worse, and even if the incidents are somehow similar in different ages, it is impossible for the same incident to have the same consequences. The moment the active components -may they be characters, a certain group or a certain culture- alter, so does the result of the actions, and it can be stated that nothing is stable within culture and history, not even the 'truth'. Popper continues by saying that Hegel and Marx took the place of Goddess Nature with Goddess History. According to him, with the influence of these two names, laws and powers of history became extremely important to a point that individuals could not be judged by God but instead, they would be judged by history, and accused these two figures -and their followers- with putting history on a pedestal. (Popper qtd in

Page, 1990:18). Through this statement, it can be understood that Popper did not agree with Marx, whose work *Das Capital* ensured historicism's place in economics, nor with Hegel, whose Aesthetics cleared the path for historicism approach within literature and as a way of thought. It is also worth mentioning that Popper saw historicism as an obstacle in free will. He believed in the fact that men could become the masters of their own fate and starting from Plato to Hegel, from Comte to Marx, every historicist depended on an external power in judging individual lives and conditions. (19). He also supported the idea that individual contribution to history was very different than what historicists reflected, in terms of society's improvement.

Even though Popper did not see the historicist approach as suitable in real life, these names still held great value in historicism. Especially Hegel left his mark on historicism through approaching the subject of "being" and "influence of society" as well as "constant change in society and environment" in a philosophical way. Hegel believed there was a "coherence hidden behind phenomenal world" (Iggers, 1995: 4) in an ideal state, through art within the society. According to his understanding, ideal could be reached through different phases, and the reader can see how this idea developed and influenced historicism.

1.1. Hegel, Zeitgeist and Geist

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was an important German philosopher, whose works influenced not only philosophy but also the interpretation of art and literature. The philosophical aspect of his work mostly focused on the metaphysical aspect and the idea of absolute truth. He believed that producing art was a way of the human kind to reach the infinite consciousness, and stated that humankind produced and consumed art in order to understand and remember who they were, along with making a sense of the outside world. (Etter, 2006: 16)

Similar to many philosophers before him, Hegel also believed art was a necessity in human life. In a way, art helped people discover who they were, and their place in the world, as well as reaching a harmonized state of mind (17). This way of thinking especially goes against the understanding of literature in modernism.

Modernism supported the idea that the body and soul could not have any unity or peace between them. The traces of this idea can be seen in many of Virginia Woolf's or James Joyce's novels, in a way, their characters are almost restless, trapped between their own time and minds. Even if they wanted to escape from their era, that feeling of suffocation was a common theme in modernism, which goes against any of Hegel's theories.

One of Hegel's most important bases Hegel built his philosophy on was his understanding of dialect. Dialect referred to the three things; thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. These three terms helped Hegel to create this idea of not only ideal but also the perception of the world around him. According to Hegel, thesis was the idea within itself, and through that idea, antithesis was born. This thesis and antithesis were complete opposites and tried to invalidate -or destroy- each other in order to survive, but in order for either of them to survive, they needed each other. Thus, through their conflict, synthesis was born. This precession also created another thesis, antithesis and synthesis, therefore this conflict was endless and kept creating other conflicts, and that was the only way any idea could develop. (Bozoğlu, 2017: 69)

One can assume that this dialectical thinking is what progressed society. Unlike other philosophers before his era, Hegel did not state that there could only be one true idea within the society or the era, instead he both accepted and encouraged opposing ideas existing within each other. In his viewpoint, opposing ideas always existed and through that coexistence, humanity could make progress, not only in society but also in their own minds. This triadic movement with his thesis, antithesis, and synthesis also helped to flesh out his following theories; Geist and Zeitgeist.

Hegel's understanding of Geist could be translated into spirit. But, the way Hegel used it, it could also be understood as the overall idea. Hegel used this idea in order to characterize each and every era in a person and stated that every era had a man in whom the philosophy and spirit of the era could be found. Jesus and his relation to Christianity can be used as an example to that, along with Plato and his relation to philosophy. Though, these 'heroes' as Hegel put it did not have to

be philosophers or religious people, seeing that he also gave the example of Caesar and Napoleon as great men of their own eras. The reason why these men were the personifications of their era was the same reason that many people were in awe of them because they held the very essence of their eras (70). Even though Hegel made great use of actual people in order to reflect on the era, it was not limited to people, but also art. He believed that it was not only people but also the works that could symbolize their times;

The key to the story is Hegel's view that the kinds of questions raised about artistic meaning are not simply external to art, and therefore limited to the discipline of philosophical aesthetics. He suggests that art itself involves the tendency to become aware of the problems which arise from the gap between intention and interpretation; with this awareness it searches for a solution having the form of an identity of artist's and audience's meaning through the medium of the work. While one-sided theories tend to enshrine the identity or ambiguity detected in a particular artistic phase, Hegel suggests a rational historical analysis which demonstrates their interconnection. (Shapiro, 1976: 24)

According to Hegel, art and literature could only speak for the truth of their own era. In his *Aesthetics*, he supported the idea that a work of art or literature could only be analyzed based on the conditions of its own era. In a way, it can be stated that it's more of an objective viewpoint, and yet, according to New Historicists, Hegel's approach was not enough. It could be argued that Hegel's approach to the era and the literary works were too optimistic, even. While opening the path for many different critics in terms of history and literary connections, Hegel still ignored the power structure of the era, but instead, he focused on the era's spirit itself, which he called *Zeitgeist*.

Hegel viewed "spirit" as the common core of religion, art, language, norms, customs, manners, science, law and philosophy. It is substance; individuals are its accidents. Embodied in objective law, enshrined in religion, the social, collective public, structures of mankind make humans human. That is, "spirit" constitutes the individuals from whose interactions it emerges. (Knapp 1986: 605)

Zeitgeist is translated as "Spirit of the Time" and as it can be understood, it was the fundamental truth of the era. In other words, it's the active culture of the time that exists within every individual. It's the common effort of the society, even if it's not conscious. Hegel believed that every literary work -or work of art- reflected its time, and that was the proof of *Zeitgeist*.

Spirit, being the substance and the universal, self-identical, and abiding essence, is the unmoved solid ground and starting-point for the action of all, and it is their

purpose and goal, the in-itself of every self-consciousness expressed in thought. This substance is equally the universal work produced by the action of all and each as their unity and identity, for it is the being-for-self, the self, action. As substance, Spirit is unshaken righteous self-identity; but as the being-for-self it is a fragmented being, self-sacrificing and benevolent, in which each accomplishes his own work, rends asunder the universal being, and takes from it his own share. This resolving of the essence into individuals is precisely the moment of the action and the self of all; it is the movement and soul of substance and the resultant universal being. (Hegel, 1977: 264)

According to Hegel, this constant essence of the age, this spirit was always valid, regardless of the era. Granted it could change since history was never stable, it always evolved into something else, especially with never-ending conflicts. These conflicts made history what it really was because, without that, there would be no improvement. Hence, even if history and its conditions changed, the spirit stayed the only stable substance within the time. Hegel also stated that aim of art and -by extension literature- was in fact, a reflection of the absolute truth with the help of this spirit. It was not to teach people, but rather create a mindset that is free enough to make sense of identity of one's self and one's place in the environment that surrounded him. (Etter2006: 47)

Hegel's treatment of the relation between art, religion, and philosophy in the Aesthetics appears to lend support to the supersession thesis. All three are concerned with knowledge of the Absolute: they are the means by which the human spirit appropriates and becomes absolute spirit. But art is representation for "sensuous knowing . . . in which the Absolute is presented to contemplation and feeling." (...) This hierarchy of modes of knowledge makes art a preparatory step to the religious, and the religious to the philosophical. (69)

With the idea of *Zeitgeist*, Hegel linked every aspect of life with each other. Everything that was closely related to human life, may it be art, literature, religion or philosophy, it represented the time when it was produced. This way of thinking changed how the literature was seen throughout the centuries. Contrary to earlier, literary critics actually paid attention to what could have influenced the writer as well as looking for the traces of the era within the work. The philosophers that influenced the era, the art form, the religion, and even the society's condition could be seen in a simple work, and this idea derived from Hegel's *Zeitgeist*.

Zeitgeist theory not only changed the literature for critics and audience, but it also changed it for writers as well. Even though the reader can see this in literary works all through history, especially in the modernist era, the impact of this theory is visible. During the modernist era, an overall pessimism along with

hopelessness for future and individualistic viewpoint ruled the literature, and if one looks at it from Hegel's *Zeitgeist* viewpoint, it can be understood it was because of the era's conditions. During the modernist period, since it was after World War 2, the inability to see a future for anybody was a constant theme, along with the feeling of detachment from the present. The war affected everyone, whether they actually enlisted or not, and seeing that many deaths made many people -including writers- to detach themselves from the environment into their own world. Stream of consciousness is another result of this idea because what happened in the writer's minds was another way to pull themselves from what was happening around them. In addition to that, the idea of individualism was also popular, unlike the earlier literary works, writers focused on their own feelings and refused to be a part of a crowd, and that was also another idea that was caused by the era's living conditions. One of the consequences of war was that feeling of loneliness and worry that anyone could lose anyone, therefore it can be seen in any sort of a modernist novel that shows the spirit of their age.

It wasn't just modernism. Even if according to Hegel, one could see *Zeitgeist* in any era, one of the eras that *Zeitgeist* is the most visible part of the literature is the Victorian era. During the Victorian Era, in especially Dickens' books, there are many traces of society's conditions. Everything from the injustice system within courts, degeneracy in the law system to the great economical gap between social classes can be seen in Victorian novels. In fact, even the idea of love and the way Victorian people approached it can be seen in these novels. If the reader looks at the ideal love story of the age, Charlotte and Emily Bronte's novels reflect the desired male character, may it be civilized Mr. Rochester or less civilized Heathcliff. Only Anne Bronte, in her *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* actually mirrored the emotional and physical abuse within Victorian Era marriages -along with the lack of women's rights- but it was not very popular during its own era. Unlike her sisters' novels, the reader in the 21st century can, in fact, see the less romanticized version of marriage in her novels, and it gives a very clear picture to the differences between men's rights and women's rights in Victorian Age.

Another era that showed *Zeitgeist* as it truly was in literature was post-colonial literature. In Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the reader could only see the

colonialist viewpoint and the era's most common viewpoint "White Man's Burden" within the dynamic between Crusoe and Friday. The racism, along with the disillusioned idea of superiority in the novel was widespread among people of the era, but Post-colonial literature changed it for the readers. For instance, in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, even though the reader sees the storyline through the colonialist's viewpoint, the systematic oppression against the colonized, along with never-ending physical and psychological abuse, started making the reader aware of the situation. This 'white savior complex', even though would last for centuries within literature, was slowly being debunked with the help of postcolonial literary works. *Song of Lawino and Ocol* by P'Bitek can be given as another example that showed the spirit of the era within colonized people and the dynamics of the age. In the epic poem, the reader can see the internalized racism in Lawino's husband Ocol, which was a big issue within the colonized countries. The idea of being ashamed by one's own heritage, along with race could be seen within the individuals of different societies, no matter where they were from, and if the reader looks at it from a Hegelian viewpoint, he can see how the conditions and mindset of the era within those societies were included in these literary works.

As it can be seen from these examples, Hegel's idea of *Zeitgeist* not only influenced his own philosophy, but it also changed the literature and the way it was criticized. Just like anything, literature is no exception to the change of times, but while analyzing criticizing the literary works, it is important to understand the situation and the "spirit" of the era. Hegel, while having some misconceptions in his theory that would, later on, be added by new historicism's Foucault and Greenblatt, started this new way of thinking; that the literature would be based on its origination time, rather than its consumption time. This idea also helped to strengthen the bond between the work and its author, seeing that every author was in a way representative of his or her own time and society. Understanding of this representation between the society and the author made literary critics' approach much different than their predecessors and created a new age in literary criticism.

1.2. Method of New Historicism and Positivism

In terms of its approach to people and their relations, historicism and positivism were paralleled in many ways. As it was stated in “Positivism: Its Position, Aim and Ideas”;

The very nature of the Positivist scheme excludes the idea of wholesale conversion to its system, or of any sudden increase of its adherents. No philosophy before, no polity, no religion was ever so weighted and conditioned. Each stood alone on its special merit. Positivism only has sought to blend into coherent unity the three great forces of human life. (Harrison 1901: 456)

Looking at historicism from the critical approach of new historicism, one can understand the relationship between that and positivism. Much like positivism, historicism also believed in the ideal state of everything, may it be circumstances or the human mind. Hegel’s idea was that through progress, -and especially human conflict- the society would evolve and reach the ideal. Similar to that idea, positivism believed that with reason and logic, one could reach the ideal state of human philosophy and understand his own environment he was surrounded by.

Positivism, just like historicism was also anthropocentric (459). Neither historicism nor positivism believed there could be anything other than the human mind and conditions to affect and influence human life. While the society was at the center of historicism, with positivism the philosophy focused less on metaphysical powers and more on science and the human mind. In fact, this shift from abstract understanding to palpable approach happened both in historicism and positivism, in different ways.

Positivism was a huge reaction against the traditional way of theological teachings of the Church. Throughout centuries, the Church taught people that humans had a limited understanding and that they could not understand how the world worked. The human life on this Earth, according to Church, was only to serve and believe in God, and science was either feared or frowned upon. Even if the pressure of Church upon people changed, depending on the ruler and era, the most common belief was that people were first supposed to be faithful, and then

they could focus on some scientific areas, under the condition that it was not used to surpass or challenge religion.

Though, positivism did not only change the understanding of human life. Much like historicism, it focused on the social structure within groups of humans. According to Comte, society was an ever-changing organism, and he supported this idea with his own approach to positivist theory. Similar to Hegel's idea of constant conflict, every aspect of the society had to communicate or interact in one way or another for there to be a society to begin with. It was only with these interactions that the society could both evolve and survive, and in the end reach the ideal state.

Historicism's approach to society resembles the positivist approach. Just like positivism's stripping down the religion from its power in order to change it with human capacity of understanding, historicism also stripped down the untouchable, and abstract mind and inspiration of the writer. Prior to historicism, there were many philosophies that saw the writer and his inspiration as something divine. In fact, Socrates even referred to inspiration as something Godly;

It consists in the thesis that Ion recites (and Homer composes) not from knowledge but from divine inspiration. Neither *knows* what he is saying, but is nonetheless capable of speaking or composing beautifully thanks to the divine. They are like the worshippers of Bacchus, out of their right minds (534b4–6). This creative madness, as we might call it, they share with other Muse-inspired artists as well as prophets and diviners (534b7-d1). This is supposed to explain why Ion can recite only Homer beautifully; he's been divinely inspired only in that area, and that is all he means when he says that Homer is better than his rival poets. Ion has *no argument* to support what looks like a comparative assessment; it is just a report to the effect that he is "possessed" by Homer's magic thanks to the work of a god. A poet, further, is not a knower, but a kind of transmitter of a divine spark; he or she is "an airy thing, winged and holy" (534b3–4). The spark is generated by the god, and is passed down through the poet to the rhapsode and then to the audience (Griswold, 2003: "Plato on Rhetoric and Poetry")

In a way, before historicism, the writer had unlimited power and inspiration. He was seen as the messenger of something divine, something greater than the rest of the world could understand. It was not known how his work was produced but it was assumed that God helped. He was some sort of a prophet of literature, whose mission was to produce divine works of art and poetry. It wasn't anthropocentric, it was not even individual but instead, a holy power was in the picture in the process of producing a literary work.

With historicism, this approach was both challenged and changed. With Hegelian approach, it was not God who gave the writer the power or the influence, it was, in fact, the society itself. The condition of the society and the era the writer belonged to, affected the writer's work, not a divine power. In a way, it was almost as if challenging the earlier beliefs, just like how positivism challenged the religion itself. The center of literary works, just like the social structure and the reason of why humans were here, it was not to be the messenger or a servant to the God, but to focus on their own minds and society. Hence, with both positivism and historicism, producing a literary work became less abstract. With Hegel's approach, both the critics and the readers could understand that instead of a greater power, the writer drew his inspiration from the environment he was surrounded by, along with the people belonging to his own era. As Spiegel states;

For Culler and cultural historians generally, both literature and society are to be construed as systems of signs whose relationship to one another takes the form of commensurability or "homology." In such analyses, the critical foci of interpretation are directed not to the content of social life or literature but rather to the "operations which produce social and cultural objects, the devices which create a world charged with meaning." (Spiegel, 1990: 67)

As it can be understood, from a historical viewpoint, there was constant communication between the society and the literary work. This "homology", while making the author and their work less untouchable and holy, also brought the reader and the work together. Contrary to before, seeing that the work was under the influence of God or another greater power like a muse, the reader could start to criticize the literary work and the reader. Not only the criticism but also the clues of the era were valid themes after historicism, with the understanding of the era, the reader could unveil the hidden meanings and subtext in the literary work itself.

Just like any other philosophical approach, historicism and positivism influenced each other from different aspects of life. While positivism focused more on society, historicism concentrated on the reflection of society and its conditions; literature. Both of these approaches stressed the human conflict along with individualism within the society. Additionally, both historicism and positivism took the power from an abstract power and gave it to people, and the

reader can see the reflections of it in literary works that were written after these theories gained popularity and changed the way critics analyzed fictional texts in order to understand them better.



2. NEW HISTORICISM

New historicism can be regarded as the more developed version of historicism. It cannot be regarded as the complete antithesis of historicism, seeing that they had parallels in both of their approach to the era and the society, but in a way, it came into being when historicism was not enough. Just like Hegel's antithesis theory, new historicism was created as an anti-being to historicism, and yet one can still see their parallels. New historicists were able to further their theories in the literature, art, and even sociology thanks to historicism because historicism was the base they created their anti-thesis from.

In layman's terms, new historicism focused on both era and the writer himself. It was more detailed than historicism, and it included more factors into the critique of a literary work. Also, unlike historicism, it mainly focused on literature and the writer. In addition to that, the critic's era and background played a big part in the analysis of the work, as it should have been in historicism. It can be argued that historicism was not enough for a literary analysis, seeing that even if it focused on the era, it did not exactly focus on the writer and the critic's viewpoint and history. It is also clear that every critic can analyze a text from different viewpoints and can understand or reveal different plot structures, along with character dynamics and motives, therefore new historicism can be seen as a deeper way of understanding the writer, the literary work of the writer and the era the writer belonged in.

Even if historicism was seen as not enough for the newer eras of literature, its influence on the creation of new historicism cannot be denied. In the 1980s, literary critics started thinking that historicism had to be extended because the mere reflection of the era could not be the only simple explanation of the literary works. It is true that Hegel's *Zeitgeist* was -and still is- a very important theory not only in literature but also in social life and other branches of social science, but there was one thing that Hegel and the other historicists involuntarily ignored, and that was the power relations of the era and their influence on not only the literary work but also the writer and the critic of the literary work.

New Historicism is not only related to literature, it is also related to culture. Therefore based on the idea that culture cannot exist without a society or a group of people with similar traditions, one can easily assume that new historicism could not exist without the society's relation to culture. It can also be assumed that in each and every group, there's a hierarchical order from the microcosmic aspect of friendships to a macrocosmic aspect of countries. Thus, culture consists of the hierarchical power struggles not just within one group, but also between different groups of people, and one of the very first things New Historicism did was to reflect on it.

...new historicist and cultural materialist critics are engaged in uncovering the historical contexts in which literary texts first emerged and were received, but it also means that they are busy interpreting the significance of the past for the present, paying particular attention to the forms of power which operated in the past and how they are replicated in the present (...) New historicism and cultural materialism can be seen therefore using the past as an impetus for political struggle in the present, and making it clear that the discipline of literary studies is not removed from the sphere of politics (Brannigan, 1998: 6)

As it can be understood from Brannigan's quotation, the power was a big part of new historicist viewpoint. When it came to critical interpretation, the dominant power of the era played a big part in literature both in the time the literary work was produced, and also afterward the critic of the literary work was being made. (7) In Brannigan's words, even if new historicism did not exist in the Renaissance period, one of the biggest examples of the power struggle could be seen in Renaissance plays, namely Shakespeare's works. Corruption and its influence on the society were reflected on the stage, and in a modernist reading, one could even see the system of the monarchy with its flaws even if it was not Shakespeare's intention. His plays mirror not only the public but also the public's relationship with the ruling class and the monarchy, therefore, even after centuries, the reader can have an idea of the power relations of the era just by reading Shakespeare's plays.

Victorian literature can be shown as another example of this. Just like in historicism, Dickens' works can be inspected in the light of new historicism. While it was true that they reflected on the situation of the era, the hierarchical unfairness between social classes and the ultimate corruption of those who were high in power can be seen in his works. For example, in *Bleak House*, the ongoing

court case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce was used as a way of showing the reader - regardless of his era- the inadequate system of justice in English court of chancery. The struggle to end the case was not only an important plot device but also a mirror that Dickens held over English Court and law, which he saw as incompetent. In the Victorian age, middle class or lower class could not open a court case, not only because of the corruption, but also the way the justice system itself was abused by both the lawyers and the judges.

Thus, one can understand that discourse of the era had a big impact on the said era's literary works. A literary work without discourse, whether fiction or nonfiction, cannot be imagined because discourse is closely related to culture and culture is closely related to literature.

No identities are natural, unchanging or true, in other words, or, at least, as H. Aram Veerer described this point, 'no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths nor expresses inalterable human nature' (Veerer qtd by Brennigan). Discourse, by which is meant all sign systems and generators of meaning, is the only material subject of study, and therefore the only route to the past, to self, to any form of knowledge. Discourse is also, of course, the system through which we describe and read, through which More fashioned himself, and through which we fashion our study of him. This dizzy circularity of representations, literary and non-literary, textual, visual, architectural, and so on, is the object (as well as the medium) of new historicist study. (Brannigan1998: 61-62)

This representation of power was studied by many critics with emerging of new historicism. Especially Foucault and Greenblatt were the two names that could be said to be the fathers of new historicism but many critics after them also helped the reader to understand what new historicism was and what it derived from. For example, Steven Knapp and Walter Ben Michaels disagree with many other critics' understanding of "writer's meaning" and "reader's meaning". According to them, there can be no "one meaning" of a text, nor is it realistic to accept the writer's meaning as the one ultimate truth. (1982: 726). They go on by emphasizing how theory's very essence is the ability to choose between meanings, and that it cannot be accepted to see theoretical meaning as any less than author's meaning when both of them can be combined to deepen the meaning of the literary text (727). The intention of the writer cannot be separated and criticized in a completely different context, and (724) trying to do so was one of the biggest mistakes of the earlier theories.

Hayden White was another name that was important in new historicism theory. His viewpoint about the narrative structure in relation to history in literary texts was very helpful to new historical theory in terms of a critique of the literature.

White argues for the redemption of narrative on the ground that narrative as much as language is a cultural universal whose truthfulness can only be assessed within its specific social context. "Therefore," he concludes, "it is absurd to suppose that, because a historical discourse is cast in the mode of narrative, it must be mythical, fictional, substantially imaginary or otherwise 'unrealistic' in what it tells us about the world."⁴² This dissociation of historical and imaginary discourse, the very combination White used in *The Content of the Form* to characterize the middle style of historical writing, indicates a turning point in his thought (Kansteiner, 1993: 286)

This way of thinking was, in fact, one of the most important points of new historicism. The narrative could not be subjective, and yet it still reflected some part of the era, as White implied. In a way, it was another parallel between historicism and new historicism, while they did not discredit each other, especially new historicism made great use of historicism in its roots. But before White and Knapp and Michaels, Foucault and Greenblatt were the two men who created and evolved new historicism into what it was and left their mark in the theory.

2.1. Stephen Greenblatt and New Historicism

Even though the theory of new historicism is relatively a new concept to literature and criticism, it can still apply to earlier times. Stephen Greenblatt's work on Shakespeare and his parallels between Shakespearean plays and new historicism itself prove that. He is one of the most important names within New Historicism critical theory, and he understood and reflected on the history's value within the literature. He challenged the theory's limits and bound past form of the texts with the present critique of the texts.

In his work *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*, Greenblatt's quotation is perhaps the best way to summarize the idea of new historicism in present times; "I began with the desire to speak with the dead"(Greenblatt 1988: 1). Indeed, the critical approach to the literary text serves the purpose of understanding the era itself.

New historicists investigate the transitions between cultural documents and their transformation into literature; they ask of a text or part of it not what it means, but how it was integrated. In other words, literary texts do not originate above history, transcending it; they are part of the political, religious and social institutions that form, control, the political, religious and social institutions that form, control, and limit them; they do not exist outside of but within the discourses of power (...) Although they (New historicists) stylize their archaeological work in the past as a dialogue with the dead (Greenblatt), it is not clear how this dialogue is possible without reflecting on the hermeneutical dialectic between past and present (Berghahn 1992: 144-145)

Greenblatt's quote about speaking with the dead also reflects on the institutions of the era the literary work was written in. Seeing that these institutions consisted of people, therefore mirrored the dominant viewpoint of the people, it can be stated that speaking with the dead through the text also allows the critic to witness the discourse of the era. Greenblatt was also the first person to coin the term New Historicism, and he made it as a reference to the New Criticism. With this term - and this new theory-, he shifted the focus from other social sciences to literature in terms of different discourses within history. In a way, he linked history and literature together and grounded it within power dynamics of the era. (143)

According to Greenblatt, no literary work could be separated from the dominant power of its own time. Historical representation is limited, therefore taking a literary text as the ultimate mirror of the history as Historicism suggested was not enough for new historicists such as Greenblatt. He believed that historicism needed to be improved, and fixed on literature rather than a general umbrella that a lot of branches fell under, and that was how he developed the new historicism theory. He also made use of Shakespeare's works a lot, during the time he was studying new historicism theory and he gives the example of *Richard II* and the power relations within the play along with political discussions and reconstruction of the history through the text to deepen and enrich the theory better. (Cain et al 2001: 2251- 2252)

Thus, it can be understood that Stephen Greenblatt was one of the most important names within not only the literature field but also New Historical theory. He was the first person to coin the term and draw the lines of the theory as it is now and made it possible for other people, not only critics but also the ordinary reader to understand and link the history with the text. Even if he was

one of the most prominent figures, he was not alone, and there was another man whose theories contributed to new historicism greatly; Foucault.

2.2. Foucault, Discourse and Madness

Without Michel Foucault and his theories, new historicism would not exist the way it does today. With Foucault's remarkable viewpoint and approach to literature, history, and theories, new historicism found its ground to flourish. His ideas concerning literature and new historicism began with the position of the author within the text. He questioned whether the author belonged to the criticism of the text. Yet, he was not the first person to come up with this idea. Roland Barthes came up with the theory of "Death of The Author", which means that any and every kind of text had to be criticized completely independent from its author. Barthes tried to separate text from not only its author, but by extension its history as well, but it was exactly what new historicism went against.

Unlike Barthes, Foucault did not separate the text from the author. Instead, he supported the idea that every author fulfilled their purpose through the text within the discourse. (1616-1617) Therefore, Foucault's view on the author, in fact, parallels with New Historicism theory. New Historicism believed in the author's permanent status within the text but stated that it was within the limits of discourse, just like Foucault. Foucault defined the discourse's relationship with the author as; "Discourse that possesses an author's name is not to be immediately consumed and forgotten (...) Rather, its status and its manner of reception are regulated by the culture in which it circulates." (1617) Thus, as it can be understood from this quotation, discourse and author are closely related, even if he does not realize it. Discourse, while closely related to culture, is more related to the power dynamics of the era. Foucault implied that the author was some sort of a secret agent of the discourse. No text could escape its owner -which was the author- and no author could escape his discourse.

Foucault's work provides, then, not only a historical account but a brilliant example of the founding concept of the New Historicism, "self- fashioning," an ascetic practice that stipulated, for the scholar, a nearly literal exercise of wisdom. For the New Historicism, "history," arising at the conjunction of power and knowledge, is

the focus of such an exercise. A submission to something larger and fundamentally other than oneself—something one can never get right—the study of history is an instrument in the construction of the scholar's subjectivity; it even has a certain display value in that it requires a conspicuous self-immobilization, a nearly visible "discipline." History as ascesis is the foundation of the ethics of knowledge. (Harpham 1991: 373)

According to Foucault, everyone that lived in the society was subjected to the dominant power of the era. Thus, it was impossible to escape from the social aspect of the history the literary text was written in. Unlike his predecessor critics, Foucault did not believe that it was purely objective. Instead, he believed that even if a text could mirror its era, it was subjective and it was limited to the dominant power of the time. A literary text could not avoid the common viewpoint of its historical background, and while the most important part of it was literature, it was also very prominent within the society as well. The first and most remarkable example of it was the term "normal". Normal, according to Foucault, completely depended on its era. One era's understanding of normal could be abnormal for another era, and that also was related to the overall power dynamics of the time.

Therefore, Foucault focuses on the understanding of madness and its relation to normal in his work *Madness and Civilization*. He studies the meaning of madness, in addition to how it could change from time to time. Just like the term normal, the term madness is also very subjective, and Foucault mostly emphasizes the fact that madness does not have only one meaning, and it does not have clear limits. One person's understanding of madness can be different than another's understanding of madness, and one of the many problems is that people in different times throughout the history were always either shut into different institutions for so-called treatments or excluded from the society.

In new historical light, Foucault's viewpoint of madness is actually paralleled to the overall analysis of anything else. As new historicism stated, one could not know the historical events in a completely subjective way. Instead, what he could know -or read about- was merely a reflection of the era's discourse through the writer's work, because the writer was also under the influence of discourse just like his work. This way of thinking extended to every aspect of life, and especially in *Madness and Civilization*, the reader can see how madness is

seen. It is almost seen as unreasonable actions and ways of thinking, but according to Foucault, one of the biggest issues on it was that one could never know whose reason was approved by the dominant power of the era.

According to Foucault, the perspective of madness had its specific phases. In the Renaissance, for example, madness was mostly attributed to the special and mysterious forces of the world. One of the most important parts of Foucault's view on madness was what he called "The Great Confinement". It started with Parliament of Paris deciding to pass a law to arrest beggars in order to force them to work, and it slowly evolved into poor people's getting arrested and confined in specific places (Foucault 1988: 47- 49) because, in a way, they were seen as "disordered" within a working society, and were seen as less than men because they were not following specific rules of the society. (56).

The asylum was substituted for the lazar house, in the geography of haunted places as in the landscape of the moral universe. The old rite of excommunication were revived, but in the world of production and commerce. It was in these places of doomed and despised idleness, in this space invented by a society which had derived an ethical transcendence from the law of work, that madness would appear and soon expand until it had annexed them. A day was to come when it could possess these sterile reaches of idleness by a sort of very old and very dim right of inheritance. (57)

Thus, soon the asylums for what society deemed as "mad" people would be born from the same origin. People who were seen as "idle" would be confined as they used to, but this time, they would not only be stripped off their rights but also their sanity as well, by the society. The confinement that started as a way of dividing the citizens from each other as well as using cheap labor from the people who could not object, would, in fact, turn much worse. Contrary to Renaissance idea of madness, -which was seen as something more mystical, even closer to the spirituality and essentially art-, in this new age, madness would soon be seen as something to be separated from the functional part of the society. Just as how beggars would be confined, soon, mad people would be confined as well, and it would be under the same pretense of caring about their health. As it can be remembered, beggars were confined to make them work and be productive members of the society when in fact the parliament was looking for cheap ways of using people. It was in fact similar to asylums, because contrary to popular belief,

it was less about rehabilitation and more about the fact that dominant power deemed them as useless.

According to Foucault, there was also the shame factor within the confinement of the mad. With asylums built for insane people, while hiding them from the world, the society also drew attention to them with these buildings and facilities (70). It was both an embarrassment to the society, and a scandal. Around the same time, these asylums and treatments for these patients, in fact, got more violent. This is also an important detail because, at that point, one can understand that these patients were no longer sick people in need of treatment, but were seen as less than humans, by doctors and by extension, the society (72). They were chained, they were tortured and experimented upon, and all those so-called treatments could be performed upon them not only because the doctors within that era were given endless power, but also the fact that people were afraid of these sick people. Just because they were seen as dysfunctional in a functional society, or unreasonable within a reasonable civilization, they were stripped off their basic human rights and were subjected mistreatment by not only the doctors but also the society itself.

Foucault also defended the idea that mostly focused on the subjectivity of madness. He believed that mad man's truth was never less than a reasonable man's truth, nor did it invalidate it. In that instance, Foucault draws the similarities between a tragic hero and a mad man. The hero within the story cannot be divided from the plot itself, just like the mad man could not be completely separated by the very same society that deemed it as mad, and yet, nobody could actually decide whether he is mad or not. Unreason, according to Foucault, is only subjective within a society that is seen as civilized, and yet the way these people were treated was anything but civilized. Not only that, but there is also the fact that no one can tell whether someone is truly mad, or decided by the society to be mad, because he's different than the rest.

The madman, conversely, finds in daylight only the inconsistency of the night's figures; he lets the light be darkened by all the illusions of the dream; his day is only the most superficial night of appearance. It is to this degree that tragic man, more than any other, is engaged in being, is the bearer of his truth, since, like Phedre, he flings in the face of the pitiless sun all the secrets of the night; while the madman is

entirely excluded from being. And how could he not be, lending as he does the day's illusory reflection to the night's non-being? (111)

It was not only the notion of the madness that was being misunderstood and misused by society, but also the types of madness. In the past -and most of the modern times-, society saw these patients under one umbrella; insane. There was no questioning it, and there was surely no further effort to understand the types of madness. Foucault changed that in *Madness and Civilization* and gave the reader different types of madness.

The main types he focused on were mania and melancholia. Foucault defined this type as the individuals having delirious ideas about themselves. Sadness and fear usually followed delirium in these cases. One of the most important aspects that separated melancholia from mania was that there was no violence within melancholia, instead, it's "madness at the limits of its powerlessness" (117- 122) Contrary to audacity and fury of mania, melancholia was simply sad and isolated from other people. (125). Thus, it can be stated that melancholia was more personal within oneself, while mania was universal. In addition to that, unlike melancholia, the fear is not there, therefore mania did not push people into isolation, to confinement within themselves and their minds. Instead, mania ended up being more violent, more aggressive, more visible to the outer world and ended up being the generalization of madness especially in certain institutions that were designed to treat this madness. (126-127) In a way, melancholia was more fragile, while mania was something to be feared.

In the melancholic, we remember, the spirits were somber and dim; they cast their shadows over the images of things and formed a kind of dark tide; in the maniac, on the contrary, the spirits seethed in a perpetual ferment; they were carried by an irregular movement, constantly repeated; a movement that eroded and consumed, and even without fever, sent out its heat.(132)

Both of these types were very different than the normalized behavior of the "civilized" society, but in different aspects. While the melancholia could evoke sadness within the outsider to a point of pity, mania was seen as threatening to individuals. This was one of the most important points that shaped the approach to the madness, people were threatened by the insane, and that was why they were outcasted and isolated. Even a harmless type of delirium such as melancholy was

seen as deeply tied to mania, and in the end, the society started thinking that all kinds of madness were harmful to the civilization and its citizens.

The next ones were hysteria and hypochondria. In the beginning, hysteria was mainly seen as an unimportant woman disease and was defined as exaggerated reactions from women that somehow became an epidemic. Hysteria was so widely believed to be a female illness was that it was also believed that it was caused due to spontaneous movements of the womb through the body. Hypochondria, on the other hand, was seen as a male illness of both the brain and the body;

It is called a hypochondriacal disease when it attacks men "in whom nature makes an effort to be rid of excess blood by vomiting or hemorrhoids"; it is called a hysterical affection when it attacks women "the course of whose periods is not as it should be. However, there is no essential difference between these two affections."
(145)

Unlike melancholia and mania, these diseases were believed to have actual effects on the human body and had a variety of symptoms such as vomiting, pain in stomach and the whole body. It was a physical reaction to these illnesses and was differentiated from earlier mental illnesses, even the ones included under the spectrum of madness.

With *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault explained madness in a different way than other theorists and philosophers did. Prior to this work, madness was either a taboo or seen as something objective, but Foucault stated that madness was equated to being unreasonable and thus, being unreasonable could never be entirely objective. He defended the idea that throughout history, different characteristics were seen as related to madness, and these changed with the dominant power structure, as well as the viewpoint of the era. Therefore, one cannot exactly say an individual is completely mad or not because as much as there are types of it, there are also different approaches to the issue.

2.3. Historicism versus New Historicism

When it comes to the comparison between these two very closely related literary movements, there are many things that can be stated. The first difference is that their eras basically created these movements, and made them remarkable.

In a way, historicism and its reflections existed throughout history, yet, it was not named. Way before historicism was a literary movement, readers could see the literature as the mirror of the era.

Understanding literature as a way to understand history has been a valid attempt since Ancient Greece. Through literary works, no matter how much time had passed, the reader could see the important events that influenced the era, because the common belief when approaching literature was that it was objective, and was under no influence -unlike new historical viewpoint-. Yet, as a starting point, it was a good foundation. The first common ground both historicism and new historicism agreed on was that literature could never be completely separated from its time and circumstances. Under this light, both historicism and new historicism were completely against presentism, which stated that only present things existed (Ingram, 2018 “Presentism”). It’s no surprise that both of these movements were against presentism, because presentism as its definition goes against literature in its core. Any permanent mark through the history would inevitably reflect something rather than being relevant only its own time, and this was exactly what presentism meant. Even oral tradition reflected its era, and something much more permanent such as written tradition would make its influence even heavier. A written work, just like any physical structure, is a proof of its time and is profoundly under the influence of the said time. Just like how one can understand the society’s condition -even though it’s mostly a part of the society under an economical scope-, a literary work serves a similar purpose, at least from historical view.

But with New Historicism, this generalization started to change. Historicism still had its different ideas under the term, such as Dilthey’s approach to the issue of the cultural context within literary works, and the representation of culture and individuals. Dilthey stated that people’s approach to history was in fact based on their own reflections and what they could or could not find from themselves in said work, which was a complete opposite of generalized, objective meaning of literary criticism. Thus, in historical context, each and every work contained traces of autobiography, and it also meant that autobiography could be seen as the witness of the era, no matter whose autobiography it was. In addition to that,

Dilthey defended the idea that no individual could be seen outside the cultural context they put themselves in. This cultural context was exactly the antithesis of the objective mind when it came to history and the critical approach of literary work. As it can be concluded, the literary works along with historical works were produced by people, and the same people within these cultural borders analyzed these texts. Therefore, a completely objective view was impossible within a cultural context, neither with production nor the critic of it. (Hamilton, 2003: 66)

New historicism evolved from historicism, and improved this otherwise underdeveloped movement. Historicism did not take power relations of the era into account, but as new historicism would later on state, it was the biggest influence on literature. Culture did not exist in a bubble, therefore one could not expect the dominant culture to be passive in literary works. Discourse, which was the acknowledgment of social structure within literature was constantly visible in the works. (Veese1989: 216) Thus, history or any kind of work that was written could never be objective. These works always bore the mark of the dominant power and dominant discourse within themselves, because the author could not escape from the said discourse. As long as there was the human factor in literature, it would always be in the clutches of power dynamics of the era.

The political context was also a big influence on literature. All practices of writing were under political power, and one could only see the political discourse of the era in the work it was written in. Most of the time, the reader was subjected to the discourse without even realizing it, and critics had to be careful while analyzing the text. This limitation worked in two ways, it both served as a purpose for the critic to understand the power dynamic, and it also gave the idea of what the normative standard was. The highest power within the society had the right to impose what normal was, and either oppressed or ignored the minorities. This ended in a greatly subjective narrative in literary works, and it also proved that literature could not be taken as the one and only truth as historical evidence.

Both historicism and new historicism focused on different parts of literature. Originally, historicism's focus was not literature, but in new historicism, critics concentrated on historical aspects and power structure that was being shown in

literary texts, and both focused on the author of the text. In the historicism viewpoint, writers could be objective as far as the spirit of the era allowed them, but new historicism questioned the authors and their motives. New historicism, unlike historicism, defended the idea that even the author could not be objective, regardless of his attempts to be so. Thus, it can be stated that while every kind of fictional work can show the era it was written in, it rarely showed the one and only truth, seeing that there was no such thing in literature. The human factor kept any and every kind of work from being objective, and literature was heavily influenced by the culture and the discourse, both of which were imposed on the society by the dominant power of the era.

To sum up, new historicism derived from historicism but soon became its more improved and objective version in criticizing literature. If one takes Hegel's thesis-antithesis and synthesis example as a way of improvement and making way to something better, historicism and new historicism's relationship could be shown as exactly that. They both influenced each other but created a new path for literary criticism, and that is how many critics of literature could analyze the texts in the present as opposed to how they were analyzed in the past. With these movements, the literary world became more accessible, and critical viewpoint got deeper in terms of studying literature. Neither historicism nor new historicism could exist without each other, and while they have similarities and differences in terms of approaching literary texts and authors, it can be stated that together they offered a more correct analysis of the fictional works.

3. BEFORE THE ICE BREAKS, HISTORICISM AND NEW HISTORICISM IN TERMS OF MADNESS

3.1. Before The Ice Breaks and Historicism

In order to understand *Before the Ice Breaks* in the light of historicism, one must look at the situation of Turkey around the times it was written, 1965. Not only the time, but also the place is important in analyzing the text, and it can be seen throughout the text that both of these factors played a big part in the work from the beginning until the end.

The first thing one might focus on Turkey in the 1960s is the situation of villages and the way they were ruled. Even though Turkey was never ruled with feudalism, the way villages and small towns were ruled in the 20th century was sort of similar to the feudalistic rule. Small villages and towns were all dependent on one person, -or a group of people called “Ağa” which meant landowner in Turkish- and that one person was sometimes even above the law. Most of the time, these people even abused the law, or the workers and the workers were not given any rights.

In addition to that, but people in rural areas were overall poor. Most of the time, they did not know how to read or write and were taken advantage of by people that were seen as “wiser”, even if it were not the case. In rural areas, the only source of income was agriculture, and one can see the reflections of it in many literary works, including *Before the Ice Breaks*. Whoever had the most land was seen as the most powerful, even if it was not an official power. Among the community, it was the sign of wealth, and whoever had the wealth could rule the people, even if the government had already assigned officials to rule and keep these areas in check. The officials - sometimes young, sometimes old- were sent to these villages but most of the time, they had to work together with these landowners in order to communicate with most of the people.

Thus, even if it was not an official feudal structure, the reader can see how these rural areas were not very democratic places. Most of the time, the landowners inherited those lands from their families and did not work for the money or the power they had. In addition to that, they sometimes even manipulated and controlled the officials. Therefore, not only the people but sometimes also the officials were under the control of landowners, with the exception of few. This whole system was based on an unhealthy control mechanism and as always, poor people were taken advantage of, whether it was their labor, or lands, or money.

It's also worth mentioning that most of the time, people from rural areas could not get any education. It was the root of their problems, they lacked education and most of the time, it was normalized, therefore not many people tried to overcome this issue. People from these areas were raised to believe that they could only do something "functional" with their lives, which was most of the time agriculture, a profession that did not need academic knowledge or training. Plowing the fields and working on the fields was what they could make money out of as fast as possible, regardless of their age or education. Sen states that an individual's capability is paralleled to low income, and the education and income are closely related to one another, which can be seen throughout the history of Turkey. (Sen qtd in Gürses, 2009: 342) Quality of life, especially in rural areas, was limited to money, and working class had no access to an abundance of it, they could only earn enough not to starve.

With a lack of money and education, it was no wonder why these people could not improve themselves. They were not in a position that they could broaden their viewpoint, nor were they given enough resources to do so. Especially in the 1960s, the lack of education would affect every member of the society in these rural areas. While it did not seem like it would create such a big problem, in the literary works written around these times, one could see how much it affected the people, and how it created its own hierarchical structure.

Though, it was not the same in urban areas. In urban areas, the education was better than rural areas, and society overall was more open to improvement

than country folk. For example, it was around the 20th century that a lot of doctors were sent abroad in order to learn more and push the limits of their profession, as well as gaining wisdom and technique in their profession and come back to help the country develop more. In fact, modern psychology started playing a big part in Turkish environment (İkiz 2011: 500). Especially the approach to mental illnesses changed during the 20th century, but that does not mean mental illness was every ignored in Turkish culture.

Contrary to European understanding of “madness”, Turkish doctors saw madness in a completely different way. These mad people were in fact marginalized people in need of help, rather than people who symbolized anything evil within society. Even before Turkey, in Ottoman Empire mad people were believed to be the messengers from a world normal people could not see, and since they had access to other worlds, they were seen as holy, the biggest example being Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatname*, where he talks about mad people and refers to them as “saints”. (498) This kind of holy approach is not that different from the early Renaissance period where people believed mad people were “geniuses” and held powers beyond the physical world. And yet, that viewpoint changed as the time passed and medicine developed.

If one takes a look at Turkish works that include mentally ill people, most of the time before the 21st century, it was either used as a way of criticizing the system through that certain character, or it was used to add comical relief into the plotline. Whether it was on the silver screen or actual stage, these two approaches left their mark in Turkish culture along with the society. Deniz draws a parallel between Bergson’s work *Laughter* and the depiction of madness in Turkish works. She states that just as Bergson states, laughter is a signal of the ceasing of sympathy. In its essence, it is in a way social pressure and it has a meaning of patronizing as well as fixing the situation from outside. Thus, Deniz says when one laughs at “mad man”, he also clarifies his own sanity, since the factors that make us laugh are, by extension, incompatible with the society we belong in. (2014: 47) From a different viewpoint, one can state that laughter at “mad” creates an impassable wall between the sane and insane members of the society. In addition to that, sane members of the society have the luxury to look down on,

criticize, and even feel pity for the insane members of the same society, which gives them a rush of power over them. This sick understanding of power was also one of the main things Foucault criticized, and more detailed analysis of this issue will be provided in further parts of this thesis.

The understanding of madness, as it has been stated before, is very subjective, especially within the literature. Since literature is one of the most important areas in reflecting the society *Before the Ice Breaks* gives the reader an idea about how Turkish society saw madness. There are not many works that especially deal with madness within the plot, therefore in this play, Cevat Fehmi Başkut giving the Turkish reader an actual “mad” character, is not very familiar to the reader, and it is certainly not a common theme in other plays. Most of the time, mad characters were either used as a parody device like a comic relief within the plot, or two-dimensional characters that audience could not witness the mindset of. Thus, these mad characters lacked any kind of sympathy from the audience, perhaps they were pitied or laughed at, but either way, they were not taken seriously by the audience. This led to numbness against mad characters in Turkish drama, their actions were not questioned but simply brushed off because they were mentally unstable. The audience could not bond with them, because it could not relate to them.

Most of the time until *Before the Ice Breaks* was written, these mad characters were also objectively mad. No one in the work or the author questioned their madness, and it was accepted without any kind of doubt from the author and the reader. In fact, in the very first pages of the play, Başkut makes sure to overcome this common mistake when the characters talk about Mad Sergeant;

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER. There's a mental asylum of the government right outside the town. I don't know if you could see while you were coming here?

GOVERNOR. No I haven't.

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER. We sent him there sometime in the past.

GOVERNOR. We...sent him? What does *we* mean? Who sent him there?

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER. I mean, governorship sent him there sir. They put him under psychiatric observation, and in the end gave him a bill of health that stated him to have his complete sanity.

MAD SERGEANT. But the whole country calls me mad.

GOVERNOR. Oh, the same country calls many others, which are undoubtedly mad, sane. It does not prove anything. (Başkut 2017: 14-15)

This conversation between the characters may, in fact, be one of the first examples of the questioning of madness, and its subjectivity. This was a new approach, because Turkish culture -as a tradition- in literature, does not approach the subjects such as health with suspicion. Instead, especially in the east of the country back in the late 20th century when the play took place, authority figures such as doctors, or government officials, or even landowners were rarely questioned. Their word was law, and could not be gone against. One of the many reasons for that approach was because they were thought to be wiser than the rest of the public. Thus, in a way, they were not only respected to a ridiculous degree but were also put on a pedestal. The playwright tries to get rid of that way of thinking at a very early part of the play, and it is the first sign that it is not such a traditional play within Turkish literature.

In addition to that, the subject that is being questioned is also controversial and very new. By giving the characters the courage to question who can decide who is sane or not, Başkut makes the audience think about it without any kind of prejudice. Before this work, the systematic oppression of insane was not questioned or doubted, it was accepted without any critical thinking. In fact, questioning it was avoided on purpose, with the fear of being thought as one of “them”. This way of thinking can be witnessed throughout the ages, and not necessarily about sanity and madness. From the beginning of civilization, there was a sense of “us” vs “them”, and it only got heavier with the evolution of society. Especially during the war times, this paranoia of being thought as the part of the “other” got worse. In a way, it can be assumed that one of the main reasons why this state of madness in literature was never questioned, was the fear of being thought as one of the mad. It’s also the proof of literature reflecting on the society, since Turkish society -especially in the countryside- tended not to question the reasons of one’s madness, but instead tried to assert their own sanity through opposing this state of mind and being with like-minded people. It was asserting one’s own identity through opposing another identity, without getting into depths of the said identity and simplifying individuals into their mental states.

One could also understand the real definition of madness during the late 20th century in Turkey. True madness, as Başkut shows in his play, is to expect the whole system to be changed, which was the case in most of Turkey's political environment during the late 20th century. Throughout the play, starting from the very first lines, the audience is given some clues that they most likely brush off as the eccentric behavior. With this logic, Başkut depends on the audience's lack of attention when they do not suspect of anything. If these characters were given to the audience as mad from the beginning, or if the audience was given more clues, they would not take the main character seriously. That was the condition of Turkish readers as a result of the lack of representation of mental illness within the literature. Lack of representation made mentally ill characters to be seen as exceptions or even stock characters, which detached the audience's sympathy or empathy for these characters. Knowing this, Başkut gives the audience an unsuspecting character, one that has more different ideas than other district governors, and waits until the audience can relate to him to reveal his madness.

MAD SERGEANT. Gladden your heart, officer, don't get upset, if you die, nobody will care. You would merely be dead, and not come back. It is better to be loved by the people, not to scare them off, brother. Look at the Governor, everybody adores him. Believe me, I would die for him.

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER I know, everyone always says so.

MAD SERGEANT How could I possibly make you believe me, brother? You cannot rehearse for such a thing, after all. He turned me from town's joker, Mad Sergeant into renowned Sergeant Mehmet.... I would lay down my life for him. (41)

It is not only his actions but also Governor's words that make the characters and audience root for him. Especially in terms of Turkish culture, it is safe to assume that most of the time, audience related to the everyday man. Taking the status of the working class into account, and the way they lived, it was expected for the normal people to understand and root for the Governor without suspecting anything about his intentions and his sanity. Throughout the play, Başkut tries to free the audience from the spirit of the era, through getting rid of prejudices against the madness. One of the biggest examples for this is when Governor stands up for his people -unlike his predecessors- and tries to make the working class' lives better by bringing them better water, which has always been the sign of civilization;

GOVERNOR. The public drinks stream water. In the same stream, they wash their clothes, swim, give their animals water and they relieve nature by the same streamside. Call them here and tell them this, from me. It is time to differentiate the people of this town from animals. If they do not consent, tell them it will end badly for them. (16)

His attempts to bring the civilization does not end there, he also tries to change the balance of income which was unfairly distributed. He offers to gather all the unemployed people and give them money in return of fixing the streets of the village by replacing dirt with stone. In addition to that, he tells them to do it before the ice on the road to the village melts, therefore, the audience can understand by the end of the play that Governor was never planning to do it for any kind of personal gain, but merely for the public. Governor tries to make the public's life better with his limited time because he knows that the minute they figure out he escaped from a mental asylum, the same public whose life he's trying to make better will repress him and lock him away. That also serves as a reminder of the viewpoint mad people fell under in Turkish culture, the minute they were accused of not having sanity as the society required, they were stripped away from any sort of identity. As Foucault states in *Madness and Civilization*, in the late 20th century, asylums and field of medicine concerning mad people was less about hiding the shame of the society and more about rehabilitating these people -however abusing it could get (1988: 70). Yet, if one looks at Turkish literature, it can be understood that Turkey followed Foucault's examples from behind, which means seeing mad people as geniuses happened after European Renaissance, and similar to that, locking up the mad also happened later on. From the beginning until the end of the play, Başkut does not give the audience any proof about the patients in mental hospitals getting any decent treatment to "normalize" them, or at least to rehabilitate them.

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER. Your claims are so strange that it's impossible to believe them. First of all, their madness was not obvious at all. They did such good work, they made the public love them so much....

GOVERNOR DEPUTY. Oh so you also think they were such normal men? We have heard about it from other people a lot of times, but go ahead, tell us. They were very sane and well behaved, you obviously didn't suspect of anything.

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER. No sir, we can't say they were completely normal. Let's take Sir Governor for example.

GOVERNOR DEPUTY. You still call him Sir Governor.

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER. Forgive me sir, perhaps I will keep calling him that for a while. Until I get used to it. The things he did, decisions he made, although they turned our habits upside down and were opposed to what we were used to, they were still very reasonable, appropriate and good for the country. When he and his friends came here, to be honest, I didn't think of them as such. If it were someone else, they wouldn't be able to make decisions like that. But that's not to say I didn't find some of his behavior abnormal. He was very fiery. Very temporal. And sometimes, right after his reasonable acts, he'd be in such a mood, be very childish.... Even if that didn't make me doubt his sanity, it still surprised me. (69-70)

The exchange between the Governor Deputy and Correspondence Officer after Governor's insanity becomes known, is a great example of the time's approach to insane people. First of all, the understanding of "normal" and "abnormal" is very important in this exchange, because it gives the audience an idea about how the viewpoint towards mad people was. In the late 20th century in Turkey, it was very black and white, people could either fall under "normal" or "abnormal" within the spectrum of sanity. It was "us" vs "them", which one could argue that reflected on everything that had happened in Turkey so far. Grouping of similar minds, even if it may be seen as natural, was actually very dangerous in late 20th century Turkey, because it was very destructive within itself. Instead of trying to see it from a mad man's perspective, one of the first things sane characters do in the play after learning about the Governor's madness is to either blame each other or defend themselves. Deputy's stress on "normal", however innocent it may look, actually has a veiled threat, it has the implication of making the Correspondence Officer fall under the same "abnormal" category just because he did not suspect of the Governor's sanity. By seeing them as normal people, Correspondence Officer is automatically presumed that he may be mad as well.

As Foucault stated, "in order to know madness, it first had to be excluded". (Huffer 2013: 21) and this looming threat of being excluded with "other", is actually what all of the characters except the mad ones are scared of. That is why their very first reaction is to either judge the Governor or defend themselves for not realizing it sooner. This is the same reaction as to being caught in war times, understanding the opposite side was seen as a threat to the society one was in because it meant that person could change sides very easily, instead of blind faith. Any sympathy towards mad could put one in the same situation as mad in Turkey, with a small exception; pity.

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER. (...) Before his every sentence, he would say “before the ice melts”. He was in a hurry. He wanted to finish everything before the road closure ended. Because he knew what would happen once it ended. Poor thing.

GOVERNOR DEPUTY. You pity him?

CORRESPONDENCE OFFICER. Would you not, sir? (Başkut, 2017:70)

Pity, in its core, draws a very clear line between the person who feels it and the target. As it is stated in *Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies*, “Pity is a hierarchizing emotion in which superiority is at work in those who feel it and inferiority the projected status of those who are its target”. (Hughes, 2013. 81-91.) In that case, Correspondence Officer is safe from any judgment because the fact that he feels pity for the Governor, in Deputy’s eyes, is a safe zone. In any society, it is safe to assume that even if one can feel pity for those who are at disadvantage, he would not want to be nor choose to be one of them if he feels pity for them. Feeling pity, in that sense, especially with marginalized groups such as mad within society, actually gives the persona false sense of confidence and superiority, the idea that he is different than the said group as well as seeing himself above them, because he is in a situation to judge them from a safe distance under the mask of pity.

Overall, the situation Turkey was in, and the approach towards mad people can be seen clearly within the play. Until the very end of the play, the audience is not given any proof of the Governor’s madness, which Başkut uses in order not to cause any suspicions. With that approach, he gets rid of any kind of prejudice that the Turkish audience might have against madness and instead ensures the audience to root for the Governor. In fact, Başkut gets the audience to root for the madness for the first time, within the land of sane. When the audience -and the characters- learn of Governor’s madness, it is too late not to support his actions because, throughout the play, it is constantly repeated that Governor, however eccentric he may be, is, in fact, better than any other ruler the town has ever had so far. Even if Turkish audience in the late 20th century was not used to relate to a mad character in fear of being thought as mad as well, Başkut manages to lead the audience to question what madness is, and whether it is, in fact, abnormal as the era claimed.

3.2. *Before the Ice Breaks* and New Historicism

One of the most important points one should focus on while analyzing literary works in the late 20th century, especially around the time when *Before the Ice Breaks* was written, is the discourse. It is impossible to look at any kind of literary work completely independent of discourse, and Başkut both criticizes the discourse of the time but also does it in a way to give him free space to deny such a thing. In Başkut's play, the voice of reason is ironically the mad character and all the sane characters show a different side of the discourse imposed on workers in rural areas of Turkey. By doing so, he analyses the situation, shows the wrong sides of the discourse -and traditions- that are not questioned especially by country people. Questioning the discourse usually came with education, and as it has already been stated, people in rural areas of Turkey lacked education, thus were more devoted to the traditions that carried discourse within themselves. It was not questioned, nor criticized without being labeled as "mad", especially in Turkey.

The very first thing *Before the Ice Breaks* focuses on-and criticizes- is the matter of respect. Especially in uneducated parts of Turkey, in the late 20th century, most of the time, respect was only for either officials or the rich people. Working class did not get much of respect, especially within each other, and that is seen throughout the play, how everyone -even if they are of the same social and economic class- tries to rip apart one another. One of the first things the Governor does is to criticize that idea;

GOVERNOR. [Yelling] Be quiet! Your reasons are no greater than your excuse. Even if you were not a veteran, even if you did not have medals, you are still a person. You are a human being, just like other human beings. You were born naked just like the rest of them, you will be buried in shrouds just like the rest of them. Then, between that beginning and the ending, why is it that they get to be honorable and dignified and you without any honor and dignity? Hm, why? Are you actually, sincerely mad, is that it? (14)

Even if the Governor is the highest person in the social hierarchy within that society, it is not him who looks down on the Mad Sergeant, but the rest of the public instead. The mere suspicion that Mad Sergeant is insane is more than

enough for other members of the society to see themselves as superior to him. Just like in the Middle Ages, where madmen were seen as the equivalent of a leper; outcasts.(Felman 1975: 211). In a way, Turkey's discourse concerning madman followed Foucault's theory from a couple of centuries behind. What Foucault stated had happened in the Middle Ages, Turkey went through that in the 20th century, and it is very clear in *Before the Ice Breaks'* Mad Sergeant. The attitude towards him is almost too strange, even if he is not even officially mad, but is presumed to be thought so. He is out-casted, ridiculed and not taken seriously just because of a single doubt within the society, even if the doctors gave him a health report, stating him to be completely sane. In this case, Başkut gives the audience an idea about how this kind of approach works in rural areas, especially back then, people in rural areas did not need any kind of proof in order to believe something, a small gossip to differentiate one from the rest of the society was more than enough for a person to be out-casted, due to the lack of education and the discourse against mad people.

That being said, Başkut cannot be seen as the pioneer of this approach against discourse within his works, when he himself could not go against the discourse with a sane character that people could take seriously. Instead, he criticized the systematic injustice of the era through Governor, a mad character, and in doing so, he kept himself safe and away from any backlash from both the government, but also the intelligentsia. While it is true that he acknowledged what was wrong within the working class, he still did it from a safe distance and barely posed a threat to the discourse. Much like the educated part of the society at the time, he preferred to reflect his thoughts on his own characters in a way that he couldn't be held responsible for their thoughts and actions. Instead of actively fighting the discourse, he preferred to show the flaws within the system without being a part of the rebellion against the system, and that is clear throughout the play. At the very beginning, he idolizes the actions of the Governor and makes him fight the battle he can't fight;

GOVERNOR. No, do not break the rules. Dishes with meat are eaten first. I wonder what old donkey's, what diseased cow's, what lame horse's meat you used for this dish. Come on, do not make me lose time, start it, with a prayer.

HADJI MURAT. Fesuphanallah, sir Governor, my son, why this cruelty and suffering? Do you not pity me?

GOVERNOR. Did you not pity the people? (Başkut, 2017:26)

In here, the audience sees one of the very first surprises alongside the characters. Governor's approach to one of the most powerful people is, in fact, a complete opposition to discourse. Especially the way Governor stands up for his people in the face of the landowners and other abusers of the working class, makes the audience favor him, since, throughout the history, it can be seen that Turkish audience loves underdogs. It can also be seen in old Turkish movies, the audience favors the sad stories of poor people, who are protected from evil, wealthy, and powerful people. They want a hero or a heroine that they can root for, and Başkut gives it to them twice, once the Governor as their savior, and the second time, Governor as the marginalized, oppressed, pitied. At first, he shows him as this blunt character who is not afraid of the powerful people that looks down on poor working class, then shocks the audience by depicting him as the thing they try to stay away from; an insane man.

Throughout the play, one can also see the critic of laws and the government. Başkut gives the audience a courageous hero, but he does it in such a way that the said hero stands up for what the writer also believes in, and yet cannot be held in any relation to him. It is true that in the late 20th century, the Turkish government closely monitored any opposing activity, and questioning the system could also be included in the opposing activity. Questioning the system was a dangerous thing, but Başkut found the way of criticizing the discourse; making the mad man talk.

ŞEREF HAKARAR. But trading is one of the forms of absolute freedom, sir.

GOVERNOR. Is playing dirty tricks, or doing evil deeds in the name of serving people, or theft or deceit is a form of freedom? (yelling) Tell me, is it?

ŞEREF HAKARAR. But Mr. Governor, there are laws....

GOVERNOR. If there are, I revoke them.

ŞEREF HAKARAR. There are courts.

GOVERNOR. I revoke the courts as well. It's revoked. There is nothing I wouldn't do to ease the people's pain. (32-33)

On one hand, of course it is not ideal for a governor to get rid of laws and courts, but on the other hand, Başkut depicts it in such a way that the audience

cannot even comprehend the wrong side of this within the play. By showing it in such a way to make the audience think it is for the poor people's rights, but he does not show how it might go bad. Absolute power, the very power that Başkut tries to criticize can be seen through the play, no matter how much of a good light it is depicted under. This, in fact, proves Foucault's point, no author is free of the discourse he writes under, no matter how much he tries. Especially in the late 20th century, absolute power was a big problem in Turkey, and the fact that the righteous main character, however well-intentioned he may be, is given the power to revoke the laws and courts, even if it is played for laughs or against abusers, is in its core the main idea Başkut criticizes about the era.

Throughout the play, the audience may not see the discourse they fall under, but it is still there, in its small clues and hints. As it has been stated, endless power is one of it, and discourse against mad people is another. Even if the playwright tries to make the character sound original, he actually reflects on his own ideas which are affected by the discourse through him, thus, he uses his character's madness like a shield in order not to be judged by the dominant power while being accepted by the working class and still belong to intelligentsia. In any case, he gets the best of both worlds and does not get hurt by the power structure, because just like his character, he cannot be held actively responsible for his thoughts, seeing that he reflects them under the mask of madness. Even his character is aware of his own shortcomings, and is a victim to the era and acknowledges it.

GOVERNOR. Are you all mad? Look at that, you made a mad person ask you whether you're mad or not. It's strange. Honey, sir Governor is telling the truth. We cannot be compared to sane. We do not know anyone, nor does anyone know us. We have no credit, no social position or prestige. Why go there, we do not even have names, *names*. They just call us mad and are done with it. I guess our only privilege is having a short address. When you give the location as some city; asylum, the letter instantly finds us. They don't ask any district name, or street name, they don't even need any sort of residence number. Yeah, it is surprising, even if that's the case, we don't really get any letters or wire. (80)

This approach is one of the most dangerous sides of the discourse against mad because mad is, in fact, a part of this discourse that looks down on them. The moment the marginalized group takes the side of the oppressor is when discourse wins. One can also see this in other marginalized groups, even in colonized

societies, while a group fights back, some part of the group turns against their own people because they have been brainwashed by the oppressor to take their words as the absolute truth. In here, Başkut gives the audience a character that is aware of his surroundings, aware of his own victimization and most importantly, aware of the fact that he cannot fight against it. The scene where the Governor talks about himself as a mad person, takes away the earlier humorous aspects of the play, because it is sincere, it is raw, and it is sad, unlike the beginning of the play. Contrary to the other scenes, this evokes sadness and pity in the audience, because just like the character, the audience also realizes that discourse is inescapable, no matter how it is reflected or who it is reflected on.

And yet, as an element of surprise, other characters go against this discourse. Even if the Governor accepts his place in the society as a marginalized person and makes his peace with it, his people, the same working class who is normally very devoted to their traditions and discourse, the same working class who has been abused and taken advantage of economically, socially and even physically by the same discourse, stands up for their leader. This may be one of the prime examples of the author's trying to get out of the influence of the discourse he criticizes because, throughout the play, the audience sees a constant pushback from the people whose lives Governor tries to make better. This is also very idealistic of the playwright, seeing that except for one character, other characters do not play an active role in supporting the Governor and his actions until that point in the play. There is no foreshadowing, there is no proof that it could in fact happen, therefore playwright shows his favoritism of his character that managed to stand against the power structure of the society, and yet still makes sure to remind the reader he is mad;

HATİCE. Was it any better to be ruled by the sane, sir? Let the mad rule us a little. We will not forget his good deeds for us. We have never seen such a courageous man, such a nice man, such a protector of the poor. Let him be a little insane. Who among us isn't a little mad anyway? (To Governor) Apple of my eye, you may be mad or you may be sane. We accepted you. Don't you leave us. We'd die for you. (Başkut, 2017: 79)

Hatice's question of madness, and who amongst them isn't a little mad, in fact, refer back to Pascal's theory of madness, where he states "Men are so necessarily mad that not to be mad would be another form of madness (Pascal

qtdinFelman, 1975: 207). By making Hatice, a working-class woman who is possibly around the same level of oppressed as a mad man, the spokesperson of the people, the writer equalizes them in the eyes of powerful. They are both suffering at the hands of the discourse, but unlike the mad character, Hatice, along with the working class, rise against the imposition of the discourse, which requires them to outcast the Governor. Başkut uses yet another oppressed character against the powerful, passively, but still with strength.

In conclusion, in Başkut's play, the audience can see the discourse against mad quite clearly, but even if he tries to fight it, the playwright himself falls a victim to the discourse, much like his own character. While his character has his moments to fix the injustice of the discourse, Başkut uses the safety of the discourse in order to criticize it, and makes sure that he cannot be held responsible from the same criticism. As a matter of fact, through the power structure and his position as an educated man in the society who is not a part of the working class, he gets the best of both worlds, he can function within the discourse without worrying about his position while taking jabs at the same discourse. By using madness as his safety net, he, in fact, reflects on the oppressor's viewpoint and fights his fight against the power quite passively. While he adapts a new approach to mad people, he still does not abandon the teachings of his upbringing, and in a way, proves New Historicism's idea; no literary work is free of its era's power structure and discourse, no matter how much freedom the writer shows in his characters.

4. *EQUUS*, HISTORICISM AND NEW HISTORICISM IN TERMS OF MADNESS

4.1. *Equus* and Historicism

It is important for the reader to understand the situation England was in, when Peter Shaffer wrote *Equus* in 1973. The European approach to the madness has changed throughout centuries, and England was no exception to that. Before the institutional treatment of madness in the late 20th century, English literature was full of mad characters which were not necessarily tried to be treated for their madness. Shakespearean works and Elizabethan era was one of the best examples of madness' depiction and how the society saw madness in that age. It can be said that England, much like the rest of Europe did not try to change the mad, because they did not see it as dangerous or absurd, rather than a state of mind that falls in the spectrum of normalcy. In fact, if one looks at the times before the asylums, he can see that the society did not even think of madness as something threatening before it was imposed on them.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a great depiction of the viewpoint on madness in the Elizabethan Era. As far as the Shakespearean audience was concerned, the depiction of madness was not to be dangerous or threatening, but instead in two ways, Hamlet's madness and Ophelia's madness, both of which were far from a threat to society. In Hamlet's madness, one could see the questioning of the system, his infamous soliloquy of "to be or not to be" and his overall character reflects on the courage of questioning one's existence, rather than posing a threat to anyone around him. Questioning, even if it's a sign of intelligence in the 21st century, was not very common in the Elizabethan era, and it can be stated that it was seen as a sign of madness. In fact, Hamlet makes sure to use that fact to his advantage, and his pretense madness helps him throughout the plot of the play. Through madness, he is set free, and that is one of the most important approaches to madness in earlier times. Unlike the 20th and 21st century, where madness is nothing but limitations and doom to be institutionalized, to be forced to be treated,

or isolated, Hamlet's madness functions as the complete opposite, it gives him the freedom to do and say as he wishes. It is through his madness -genuine or not- he reaches the truth, just as the medieval understanding of madness. Mad people were thought to have wisdom beyond the physical world, beyond the reach of "sane" people, and in a way, Shakespeare uses it. Hamlet, with his mad state, reaches knowledge that would be hidden from him if he were sane. It is not threatening, it is, in fact, functional, and there is no attempt to institutionalize him, or lock him away in the same way society would treat his character if he were written in the 21st century.

Ophelia's madness, on the other hand, leans more towards 20th centuries approach in a way; it is sad. Even if it does not possess the threatening aspect of madness that society expected in the 20th century, it still evokes pity, rather than fear. As the audience, we feel sorry for Ophelia, because unlike Hamlet's aggressive madness and demanding of questions, Ophelia is merely melancholic and sad, which eventually causes her death. And yet, Ophelia meets a sympathy from the other sane characters that might be common in Elizabethan times, but would not be possible in modern times. Even if other characters question her sanity, they still approach her with mercy and pity, and while it shows their understanding of the superiority of sanity over insanity, none of them try to treat her by locking her up and giving her different sorts of remedies. She is accepted despite her madness, just like Hamlet, and people around them do not see them as a malice to society, nor do they try to assert their superiority in contrast to their state of minds.

Historically they have quite literally fallen out of the framework of society, and this not all too long ago. This fall has its origins in the advent of reason, or rather in the scientific arrogance with which reason differentiated itself from madness. Michel Foucault in his *History of Insanity* traces this process from the Middle Ages when the man of reason and the man of madness still maintained a dialogue that enacted the mutual dependence and challenge of reason and madness. Since then, they started to move apart, and reason began to abandon the meaning of un-reason, triumphing today unchallenged over madness, its banished, silenced counterpart. (Lorenz, 1981: 10)

Thus, the approach of earlier eras changed as time passed. Even if in earlier times mad people were not locked up or judged harshly, around the time first asylums were opened in England during the Victorian era, these people were

slowly beginning to be stripped away from their individuality, their identity, even their rights of humanity just because they were abnormal and different from the rest of the society. It was quite fast for the society to turn their backs on insane, and stop seeing them as holy, or even human, but instead see them as outcasts. One of the most important contributing factors to the modernized approach to madness was the legislation of County Asylums in 1845. Before 1845, only specific houses and hospitals could treat the insane, but in 1845, Lunacy Commission made new regulations along with new houses possible. Poor Law, which allowed specific houses to be used for the poor people and yet ended up abusing them and making them work under terrible conditions was related to the housing of mad people as well. Especially in 1862, houses under Poor Law could send some of their inmates to these asylums, and even of some of these asylums tried to treat them, some abuse was still taking place. (Melling and Forsythe 2006: 13- 15)

That is not to say all of the asylums in England were completely useless. In fact, the late 20th century in England was a great era for psychiatry, with the new developments in psychiatric evaluations and the abundance of opportunities for new research that came into being with the new asylums, now psychiatrists could focus on the patients individually, instead of seeing them as a part of some sort of an unstable group. This approach also helped the way society perceived the mentally ill people, even if it did not change it completely. Instead of a laughing stock, or something to be feared, in the late 20th century, most of the society saw them as individuals in need of help, but there was one small detail, this approach also gave them a superiority complex against mad people. Just because sane people were the majority, the understanding of “normal” turned into “sane”, thus gave the most of the society -along with psychiatrists- the right to expect the mad people to act the way they did.

This idea of normalization period created the very base of psychiatric treatment in the late 20th century. One of the most used ways of reaching the normalization of these patients was drug treatment. With the help of medicine, madness tried to be taken under control, and by taking it under control, psychiatrists and the society asserted their dominance over it, because normalizing

these people meant making them a part of the same society, without their strict individualist qualities. In *Equus*, Peter Shaffer gives the audience that viewpoint and more. Through the mental reflections of Dysart, the psychiatrist, one can see the clash of logic and passion, the logic being characterized by Dysart and Alan being the personification of passion. Throughout the play, even if Dysart tries to be very professional -and succeeds most of the time- there are flashes of the understanding of madness during the late 20th century in England. The normalization attempts of the mad stripped them of their uniqueness, which was a double-edged sword. On one hand, mad people were not as out-casted as before, even though they were still being treated to be more “normal”. And yet, with these attempts of normal, they are seen as even less special than before. Dysart reflects on this idea of the society which influences his in the first pages of the play, after Hesther asks him to accept Alan as his patient, and Dysart tells the audience; “What did I expect of him? Very little, I promise you. One more dented little face. One more adolescent freak. The usual unusual. One great thing about being in the adjustment business: you're never short of customers. (Shaffer, 2006: 21)

The fact that mad people are seen as “freak” and “unusual” is a mere reflection of society. Even if Dysart is a psychiatrist, he cannot escape society’s common misconception of the mad, and his training does not protect him from that idea. Another important statement in Dysart’s confession to the audience is his comment about adjustment business. As a psychiatrist, he was expected to adjust these people to society, to train them as the society expected so that they could fix their behavior. This expectation of the society, in fact, directed their actions along with their viewpoint, instead of approaching Alan as a unique individual, Dysart is already prejudiced against him and thinks he is just one of the many. Granted, this changes when they start talking to each other and influencing each other’s train of thoughts, but it does not change the fact that before meeting Alan, Dysart already decides how to perceive him, as one of the many freaks he had to normalize. Even if Alan proves otherwise, Dysart’s viewpoint is an important reflection of the society at the beginning. These customers as he called them, even if they were in need of help; normalizing them

barely helped them, which the audience can see in Dysart's monologues throughout the play.

The treatment of madness -and normalization process of the unusual- was not a secret that was kept by the psychiatrists. By the end of the 20th century, using drugs in order to treat these illnesses was a common practice, this chemical revolution also changed the way people approached mental illnesses, and the treatment of it. With the help of this medicine, mad people who were doomed to stay in asylums in the past could now leave and continue their lives on the outside. These patients could now be a part of the "normal" people, instead of being numbered with other patients in an isolated facility. (Porter, 2002: 205-206). With the new wave of this medicine, psychiatrists could even claim that all the mental illnesses would disappear by 2000. Around the 1960s, Valium and Prozac were the most used medicine and now people could choose to be treated the way they wanted to. These meds also helped to reduce the number of people who were kept in the institutions and instead, things that were seen as less dangerous in the madness spectrum such as melancholia and depression that led people to be locked up in the asylums in the past could now be treated without isolating them. (206-207)

ALAN. It'll be the drug next. I know.

Dysart turns, sharply.

DYSART. What drug?

ALAN. I've heard. I'm not ignorant. I know what you get up to in here. Shove needles in people, pump them full of truth drug, so they can't help saying things. That's next, isn't it?

Pause.

DYSART. Alan, do you know why you're here?

ALAN. So you can give me truth drugs. (Shaffer 2006:79)

As it can be understood, even if Alan was raised as an isolated child, even he knew about the medicine that was used to treat the patients in the late 20th century. The reader can see how common this practice was, and how widespread these meds were that even an isolated person could hear of them. Even if Alan calls them truth drugs, which do not exist, it is clear that he heard of this chemical

treatment. This also proves the fact that drug treatment was seen as normal, and also infinite, open to any kind of interpretation and possibilities. "Truth drugs" while sounding like a drug out of a science fiction work, were still seen as something believable, which shows the new wonderland which was science, in people's eyes.

In the 20th century, the way madness was seen, was a combination of the old viewpoint and new viewpoint. On one hand, most of the mad people were still seen as humans to be pitied, sometimes dangerous, sometimes intimidating, but with the spread of new antidepressants and chemical treatments, madness became less special. The mere insanity was not enough to divide a line between normal and abnormal now, thus, the understanding of desire was born;

DYSART. His pain. His own. He made it.

Pause.

(earnestly) Look... to go through life and call it yours - your life - you first have to get your own pain. Pain that's unique to you. You can't just dip into the common bin and say 'That's enough!'... He's done that. All right, he's sick. He's full of misery and fear. He was dangerous, and could be again, though I doubt it. But that boy has known a passion more ferocious than I have felt in any second of my life. And let me tell you something: I envy it.

HESTHER. You can't.

DYSART. (vehemently) Don't you see? That's the Accusation! That's what his stare has been saying to me all this time. 'At least I galloped! When did you?'... (simply) I'm jealous, Hesther. Jealous of Alan Strang. (82)

As it can be seen in Dysart and Hesther's dialogue, with the normalization of the madness, came a different problem; the formerly clear lines started to get blurred between sane and insane. Throughout the centuries, this abnormality was also a source of fascination, even when people were seen as less than humans, there was a curiosity for them among the society, some kind of a freak show as one could call it, and yet, when the antidepressants and psychoanalysis became widespread through the society, and people could reach psychiatrists without fearing to be locked up or being outcasted by the society, mad people became more equals, and by extension less interesting in people's eyes. The people needed another limitation to separate them from the mad, and Shaffer reflects it in his work through Dysart's misery; lack of passion.

Passion, in a way, fit perfectly into the insane label. In Dysart's words, even if it's painful, even if it's ferocious, it is still a more intense feeling than just normal. It also fits into the calm, collected and controlled state of mind of the sane, versus spontaneous outbursts of the insane. Passion, after a point is dangerous, and it is very similar to the Victorian understanding of madness. It is paralleled to the viewpoint of the individuals being out of control is equal to insanity, and the more one could control his emotions, the saner he would be. It is also similar to Plato's just man which was a philosopher. According to Plato, a just had to be able to control his passions and not be ruled by them, he had to be logical and only use his desires for his own improvement when the time and situation allowed him. In contrast to that, an unjust man is either ruled or divided by his passions, he can be spontaneous, and opposed to the calm and collected of the just, logic and reason are not priorities for him, nor does he try to change this. (Frede, 2017, "Plato's Ethics") Thus, even in the late 20th century in Europe -and especially England- the audience can see the traces of Plato's viewpoint. His idea of just and unjust was transformed into sane and sane, but the idea was still the same, an insane person, much like an unjust person could not be trusted and could never be on the same mental wavelength as a sane, or just person.

The play is, at least in part, about the conflict between pure passion, represented by a young boy, and dispassion, represented by a psychiatrist. The conflict arises when, in the process of analyzing his patient's behavior, the doctor comes to recognize and then regret his own lack of passion. (...)The doctor envies his patient, if not for his horrifying act of blinding horses, then for his intimate relationship with, and single-minded devotion to the object of his passion. Not only does the doctor feel envious, but also guilty; his "mission," as he perceives it, is to exorcise passion, to alter the behavior of his patients, through analysis, to a more culturally acceptable form. But the doctor comes to believe that what he is in fact doing is reducing his patients to the same level of emotional- intellectual sterility at which he finds himself. (Posner, 1977: 123-124)

With passion, comes a type of freedom. Through acknowledging and embracing the passion out of the boundaries of sanity, the human can be free and liberated. This liberation, even though it may be scorned and outcasted by the society is exactly what makes them different than the sane. Dysart's question to Alan refers to this idea, "You felt sort of free, didn't you? I mean, free to do anything?" (Shaffer, 2006: 97) is less of a question between a psychiatrist and his patient, it is more of a question from sane to an insane person. This freedom proves to be one of the most important walls standing between the normalization

progress and treatment of insanity, since the moment Alan is “cured”, he will not be free as he used to. It eventually comes down to the Dysart’s choice of treating him and make him a sane, functional member of the society, one that can exist within the society only by their rules.

DYSART. Hopefully, he'll feel nothing at his fork but Approved Flesh. I doubt, however, with much passion!... Passion, you see, can be destroyed by a doctor. It cannot be created.

He addresses Alan directly, in farewell.

You won't gallop anymore, Alan. Horses will be quite safe. You'll save your pennies every week, till you can change that scooter in for a car, and put the odd 50p on the gee-gees, quite forgetting that they were ever anything more to you than bearers of little profits and little losses. You will, however, be without pain. More or less completely without pain. (Shaffer, 2006:108).

Another important topic that keeps being tackled throughout the play is the treatment of passion under the mask of sanity. The doctors, instead of actually helping their patients, only cover up their patients’ true selves, passions, and desires. The mere existence of this passion is a threat to society’s system where everybody is expected to be logical and reasonable, and it is the psychiatrist’s duty to make their patients fit into the norm of the society. As Dysart states, it does not matter if he does not “gallop” or “be passionate” again, since it is what the late 20th century therapy did with most of the patients, and in *Equus*, we can see how in order to live without the pain, the mad character has to exchange his passion to live a normal life accepted by the society. And yet, contrary to the overall approach of the 20th century, Dysart has his problems with this fact. Throughout the play, the audience can see how he longs for passion, how envious he is of Alan, who is completely different from him. Even if it makes no sense from a sane viewpoint of 20th century England, it is clear that Dysart longs for what Alan has; passion. Even if his upbringing, his environment, even his field of work claims otherwise, Dysart feels the attraction for passion and wants to believe in something and desire something the same way Alan does. The approach to madness, even if it is intimidating and scary, especially in earlier times also contained something unreachable especially by the sane and calm individuals of the society. These individuals always had to control themselves, and their actions in order to be accepted and respected by society. Mad people, on the other hand, received neither respect nor acceptance from the society, but the one thing they

had that was different from the rest of the people was their passion, which led to the curiosity of the sane.

DYSART (crying out) All right! I'll take it away! He'll be delivered from madness. What then? He'll feel himself acceptable! What then? Do you think feelings like his can be simply re-attached, like plasters? Stuck on to other objects we select? Look at him!... My desire might be to make this boy an ardent husband - a caring citizen - a worshipper of abstract and unifying God. My achievement, however, is more likely to make a ghost!...(107)

It's also a sign of the power of the sane - especially Dysart's dialogues with Hesther, two psychiatrists that are the keys to decisions about Alan. This shows the viewpoint of the 20th century, and how the sane could make decisions for the insane because it does not just stop at two professionals who were trained for this, but also Alan's mother and father. Even if Alan's mother does not believe he is evil, both of them, along with his psychiatrists and former psychiatrists, Hesther's bench who wants to send Alan to prison, they are all seen as people in position that can decide about Alan's state of mind, but the audience never sees any character asking Alan about what it means to be insane, or what he feels about this label. As Hesther states, even doctors would be disgusted by the whole thing, let alone actual public (19) and the said public is also in the position of judging Alan and his sanity or lack thereof. Not only that, his psychiatrist has the power to decide whether to give him a chance at "normal" life as the society defines it, and whether he's worth to be accepted or not.

Whether an individual was worth to be accepted and respected by society heavily depended on other people's thoughts in the 20th century, even in the 21st century. It was not only the psychiatrists that diagnosed people but the public. Even Mr. Dalton, a man who has no relation to Alan other than work comments on Alan's state of mind with "It was only when I realized I'd been hiring a loony, I came to wonder if he hadn't been riding all the time behind our backs." (47) . Calling mad people names was not a new thing for the public, it was one of the ways how they draw a line between them and the insane, to differentiate them from the rest. By calling them names, laughing at them, or outcasting them from the society, they were reduced to less than individuals in public's eyes, but rather a community with issues that had to know their place in the society. They were

outcasts, they were loonies, they were abominable people, and they could still exist, but not within society.

This is one of the most important points in terms of the late 20th century, with the development of new treatments, they were seen as almost recyclable. Contrary to earlier times in Europe, or the 20th century in Turkey, patients in England were not locked away and forgotten, no matter how badly crimes they had committed. While it is true that doctors tried to turn them into functional members of society, this approach still had its issues, because it also gave the doctors and the public the power to take away these patients' beliefs and passion. By taking away their passion and stripping them off their individual qualities, they emotionally lobotomized them. Becoming normal came with the price of sacrificing one's sharp emotions and everything that made them feel on edge, or alive, seeing Alan's passion for the horses. With this play, Shaffer leads the audience into questioning whether being normal is worth the sacrifice of beliefs and emotions and sparks the doubt on the normal audience on whether it is better to be insane and full of passion, or normal and without any real emotions.

4.2. *Equus* and New Historicism

20th century in England came with many developments. Contrary to before, it was the era of scientific development like no other, and the power structure of the era had completely shifted. Especially in Europe, the earlier eras had only one dominant power; religion. Whether it was the middle ages, or Elizabethan Era, or even Victorian Era, religion and religious figures -especially the pope, priests- were always seen as the most important people, the pope was even above kings and queens because it was believed that he had the authority of God over the people. God and his rules could not be questioned or gone against, by anybody. With the development of science, that changed. Especially in the late 20th century, religion was on decline in Europe and England, and one of the biggest contributing factors of it was science. Of course World War I and World War II led the people into questioning their existence and their place in God's eyes, and with the loss of many people, along with the Industrial Revolution, the mystery of the religion started to lose its importance among the people. There was also the

psychology of the people which lost their relatives, saw the war, or went through difficult times because of the war because even if they didn't actively take part in the war, they still went through the poverty. Thus the 20th century was a hard time in terms of the economic and also psychological state of the people. In addition to that, people started to witness more and more scientific developments and saw how it changed their lives. There was new medication, new areas in medicine, new approaches, and all of that helped people to see science in a different way.

In other words, science became the savior that religion failed to be. It slowly became the answer to all the questions people may have, especially about themselves. That is not to say that religious people stopped existing all of a sudden, but rather that the overall public's obsession with religion declined with each generation in 20th century Europe. There are two reasons that can be given as the reason for the religious decline in Britain; cohort effects which are closely related to a group of people growing into less religious adults than the previous ones, the period effects, which is closely related to World War II and 1960s and the age effects, which is related to the aging people and their tendency to turn to religion (Crockett and Voas, 2006: 568). Newer generations became less interested in religion. With each generation, this decline in religion continued rapidly, and one of the main consequences of this was believing without belonging theory. Even if newer generations believed in God, they were less enthusiastic than their parents to join the religious community, and the fanaticism of the earlier generations may have helped that, along with the times (580).

Thus, science started gaining power over religion. It was also better at giving answers to human conditions rather than blind belief, and the generation who grew up in science at the beginning of the 20th century made sure to adapt that into their lifestyle. More medical explanations came with more research, and soon, the definition of madness changed. In the previous centuries, there were specific approaches to mad people, the first one was to put them on a pedestal and believe that their madness was a sign of a holy power talking to them, and through that communication with the holy power, mad people gained knowledge that sane people could not. This was the positive approach and did not harm mad people

and their state of living as much as the negative approach from the society. The negative approach to the mad people was mostly based on religion, and since men of religion such as the pope and priests acquired the right to communicate with the holy power, there was no need for mad people anymore. In addition to that, most of the public looked up to men of religion and accepted their claims as the absolute truth, and it led to the demonization of the mad. Especially in medieval ages, most of the priests and religious leaders made a connection between the devil and an individual's madness. Especially mental illnesses such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and others that changed the behavior of the sick person were seen as the possession of the devil. Most of the time, these patients were subjected to inhumane treatments under the false claims of the priests for making them better, and they were either outcasted or killed in the hands of religion due to the lack of scientific explanations. The so-called treatment of the church most of the time did more harm than good, and people who were accused of being possessed by the devil were either killed or traumatized for life.

With the developments in the medicine field, the madness began to be understood better than before. Rather than demonizing them, society began to look for the ways to treat them and tried to set them free of the clutches of religious thinking, all the while still controlling them. Religion's bad influence on people and the faults in it began to be criticized especially in the 20th century, due to the new freedom from the religion. In the past, when an individual criticized the religion in England -or anywhere in Europe- his well-being would get in danger, both by the power structure and its supporters. Church had the most power in earlier ages, and people supported that, and yet, the power structure shifted in the 20th century. Instead of religion, now science was in the upfront of the society and its explanations about health. This new generation was more faithful to science than religion and made sure to adapt the ideas accordingly, which Peter Shaffer made sure to reflect on his work.

It is safe to say that much like any other era, the 20th century also was affected by a dominant power. According to Foucault -and New Historicism-, no era is free of the dominant structure, and no work in any era is free of the influence of this power, thus the reader can see the most popular struggle of the

era in *Equus*; religion vs science. Especially the power struggle between Alan's upbringing with his religious mother and his dynamic that leaves a mark on him with Dysart is an ongoing battle in Alan's mind, and also in Dysart's mind. Even if religion and science didn't get along well in earlier ages, the line between them was very clear in the 20th century and it affected society.

Even at the beginning of the play, the audience is dragged into the argument of which one was right for the people with Alan's question to Dysart, "Who said religion is the opium of the people?" (Shaffer, 2006: 29) To an ordinary reader who doesn't know it was Karl Marx, the question becomes more about the existence of religion than the person who said it. Religion, as Shaffer states through Marx, is what numbs the people, especially in a clash with Dysart and his symbolism of science. By using that quote, Shaffer gives the audience what the real struggle will be about throughout the play, between passion and lack thereof, but also between religion and logic. In Alan's case, the destructive nature of religion and its relation to madness. Throughout *Equus*, religion is the base of Alan's issues, much like the dominant power, Shaffer also stood against it.

FRANK. I'm an atheist, and I don't mind admitting it. If you want my opinion, it's the Bible that's responsible for all this.

DYSART. Why?

FRANK. Well, look at it yourself. A boy spends night after night having this stuff read into him: an innocent man tortured to death - thorns driven into his head - nails into his hands - a spear jammed through his ribs. It can mark anyone for life, that kind of thing. I'm not joking. The boy was absolutely fascinated by all that. He was always mooning over religious pictures. I mean real kinky ones, if you receive my meaning. I had to put a stop to it once or twice!... (pause) Bloody religion - it's our only real problem in this house, but it's insuperable: I don't mind admitting it. (34)

One can see the traumatizing aspect of religion in Dora and Frank's clash, Dora tries to raise Alan in a way that's faithful to her religion, yet she does not understand how it harms Alan. Frank, on the other hand, sees how much it is a bad influence on Alan, but he tries to deal with it in such an overwhelming and oppressive way that it only leaves Alan even more scarred. Instead of letting him choose by leaving him alone, this constant struggle between his parents when it comes to beliefs gets so heavy on his subconscious that Alan is traumatized. Pressure from both sides in a way suffocates him and the Bible's gory imagery does not help his condition. It not only makes Alan traumatized, but his trauma

through religion also pushes Dysart to question his own stance, and as Ebner states, “It is a severe crisis for Dysart, this substituting of a painless, secular normalcy for the ecstasy of worship, however strange and dangerous that worship might be.(...), and evidently for Shaffer human beings risk less with a perverted worship or a self- made god than with no worship at all” .(Ebner 1982: 44).

Question of worship is a constant theme in *Equus*. Especially the idea of being watched by God - and by extension, Alan’s *Equus*- all the time is a burden on Alan’s mind. The reader can see how it affects him and the pressure of being watched when Alan talks to Dysart mimicking his mother; “God sees you, Alan. God’s got eyes everywhere.” (49) Constant surveillance by God reminds the reader of Panopticon Prison. It is Jeremy Bentham’s system that made it possible to control the people without watching them but instead making them believe they were being watched. An annular prison building with a tower in the middle, and in the tower there were big windows, and from the tower, everything could be seen. Thus, even if the inmates were not being watched, they could never be sure because they were always visible. (Foucault 1991: 200).

Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the in a stale of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. To achieve this, it is at once too much and too little that the prisoner should be constantly observed by an inspector: too little, for what matters is that he knows himself to be observed; too much, he has no need in fact of being so. (201)

The threat of constantly being watched and judged is one of the main reasons for Alan’s breakdown, and it’s rooted in the judging aspect of religion. In the late 20th century England, science, which was personified by Dysart in the play, was not judging people whether they were evil or not, nor did it pressure them into anything based on the ground of being punished. Yet, religion does the exact opposite. Especially prior to the 20th century, when people were not enlightened by the science, everything was under the threat of being judged by a higher power, and Alan’s mother is a symbol of those earlier times. The way she treats Alan, even though she means well is in fact abuse to a point, because she makes Alan think he’s constantly being watched as if he’s a criminal. Alan’s

breakdown makes more sense when the audience remembers even the subject of sex is treated as a matter of religion. The way Alan's mother depicts sex to Alan is along the lines of his love being God's will and then it would be "the most important happening of his life" (Shaffer 2006: 35). Making Alan see the act of sex as the most important thing and a way to a higher love after that traumatizes Alan when he tries to have sex with Jill, because the meaning he puts on it is so great and he feels as if God through horses, his holy animal, judges him, that's why instead of feeling Jill, he feels the horses.

But of course, no religion-based trauma is complete without evil in the picture, the devil. While the devil does not play an active part in the play, the audience can see the traces of the boogeyman aspect of it through Dora once again. She does not hold Alan completely responsible for what he has done, nor does she understand the seriousness of the situation. She is so focused on protecting herself and her husband as parents and Alan as his little son, she finds the one figure she can hold responsible without hurting anyone in the process; the devil. In here, Shaffer criticizes the escapist aspect of religion, instead of looking for ways to treat people and make them better, religion sets them free of responsibility by devil being the root of every evil in the world. In fact, Dora clearly states that in her dialogue with Dysart;

DORA. You've got your words, and I've got mine. You call it a complex, I suppose. But if you knew God, Doctor, you would know about the Devil. You'd know the Devil isn't made by what mummy says and daddy says. The Devil's there. It's an old fashioned word, but a true thing... I'll go. What I did in there was inexcusable. I only know he was my little Alan, and then the Devil came. (78)

Unlike believing in God, which creates a pressure of being watched, believing in the devil creates a loophole in one's actions. It is easy to put the blame on the devil because that implies that no individual is responsible for one's actions if the devil is involved. While every good deed is done by the individual in God's name, every bad deed can be stated to have been done because of the devil's influence on man. It is in a way liberating from a religious perspective, seeing that it is less about one's personality but more about an outside influence that cannot be proven. Spirituality should not be used to excuse one's actions, which was one of the most important messages of 20th century with the

development of medicine, it was not a solution, but rather an aspect in life for the individuals, and it was never supposed to be a getaway from the bad things one had committed.

But perhaps, what is more tragic about the characters is that Dysart is depicted as being in a worse situation than Alan. As much as Alan is made up of emotions and passion, even if it's closely related to the distorted idea of religion, Dysart is the complete opposite. Dysart stands up for the cold and sterile side of science, with nothing to believe. Even if Alan is not in an ideal state of mind, neither is Dysart. He is supposed to be the healthier character at least mentally, but he is also traumatized by passion -or lack thereof. If Alan is in metaphorical hell, Dysart is in purgatory, with no clarity, nothing to look forward to, to make him feel something. At least Alan has feelings to turn to, but Dysart has only emptiness in his life. His relationship with his wife has no love or passion, he is not satisfied with his job, he does not know how to fill the emptiness that is caused by him rejecting religion. The main idea of the play can be seen through Dysart's struggle, every human being needs something to believe in, even if it's not religion. It is impossible to exist and be happy with oneself without relying on something for relief. While abandoning his beliefs - just like 20th century told him to- Dysart misses one vital point, there is nothing else for him, not even science. It leads to the emptiness he feels, which is the base ground of age-old science versus religion debate and the reflections of it in the 20th century.

DYSART (quietly) Can you think of anything worse one can do to anybody than take away their worship?

HESTHER Worship?

DYSART Yes, that word again!

HESTHER Aren't you being a little extreme?

DYSART Extremity's the point.

HESTHER Worship isn't destructive, Martin. I know that.

DYSART I don't. I only know it's the core of his life. What else has he got? Think about him. He can hardly read. He knows no physics or engineering to make the world real for him. No paintings to show him how others have enjoyed it. No music except television jingles. No history except tales from a desperate mother. No friends. Not one kid to give him a joke, or make him know himself more moderately. He's a modern citizen for whom society doesn't exist. He lives one hour every three weeks - howling in a mist. And after the service kneels to a slave who

stands over him obviously and unthrowably his master. With my body I thee worship!... Many men have less vital relationships with their wives. (80-81)

“Modern citizen for whom society doesn’t exist,” is an important line from Dysart, because even though he has lived his whole life avoiding extremities, now he wants to embrace it. The society is actually what kept him in line, which is one of the many differences between Dysart and Alan, while one of them is completely free from society, the other one completely relies on the society to exist. Everything Dysart has done with his life, with his career, even his marriage fits perfectly into society’s expectations of him, and now he is not even sure he wants any of that. For a man who safely stayed away from any kind of extremities, such as love, passion, even worship, he is envious of Alan for feeling what he tried so hard to avoid his whole life. While science is a more reliable source than religion, Shaffer leads the audience to the question of whether one can replace another when it comes to emotions of humankind, instead of explanations and solutions of everything else.

The reader can see that Shaffer weaves a web of controversies in *Equus*. While he manages to reflect the dominant idea structure of the era, he still depicts two different characters that are both victims of the said power structure. Even if one of them defied ever rule of the society while the other followed it faithfully, they are both harmed by society. Alan, even if he never cared about being a normal individual is under pressure due to the religion and science struggle of the era, while Dysart feels the emotional hole of not loving anything enough, including his science. Instead of balancing, the 20th century tended to take sides, may it be complete lack of passion or feeling passion to the extremes, believing in religion completely or believing in science completely, and Shaffer manages to use his work as a mirror to society and its struggles between two extremes, along with how destructive it can be on the individuals. Both characters long for something they cannot reach, but society takes only Dysart’s side while turning blind eye to Alan’s suffering while he’s forced to be normal.

CONCLUSION

History and literature have always completed each other, no matter the time, the place or the culture. At first, stories lived through oral tradition, and one could see the culture through these stories. Even if sometimes they changed, since there was no written record and one had to rely on storytellers to hear these stories, the gist of the story always reflected on the culture, even in mythology. In Norse Mythology, the figure and the threat of frost giants exist, but if one looks at warmer climates and cultures, frost giants do not exist in any kind of story. There is always a clue about the culture in stories, and this aspect only improved and became so much bigger when the written literature replaced oral tradition. Now, people could actually see how history and literature were interwoven.

In a way, fictional or not, every literary work carries the trace of its time. One can see the viewpoint of the era through the viewpoint of the characters, because most of the time, characters fit into their time, even if they are depicted as outsiders by the writer. No character can be criticized without taking the era it was in into account, and literature is full of specific characters that are both revolutionary for their time, and still a product of their time. In addition to that, each and every character in a story consists of the combined mind state of the individuals from the said era. No critic could reach a correct analysis without analyzing the era the work was written in, because even fictional works can show the reader the situation people were in, the politics and political views that were popular, the incidents that marked the era and the culture of the nation. Only through the characters and the plot, the reader can touch the past.

It is this connection between history and literature that created the base for historicism. Historicism in the simplest words supports the idea that every work carries the era's soul within itself. This viewpoint parallels Hegel's *Zeitgeist*, which he calls the spirit of the era. According to Hegel, the spirit of the era was

closely related to the culture, and by extension, the people. Hegel also supported the idea that in every era, there would be a man who was very important for the era and the culture, such as Napoleon. This great man heavily influenced the culture and the spirit of the era, because he was the ideal figure of the time and a hero. He also set up an example, as well as carrying the essence of the era. Hegel did not only focus on literature though, but his absolute ideal also contained every part of life that was important for mankind. Religion, art, culture, everything that made people 'human', that made them different from the rest of the beings while giving them a sense of unity was included in *Zeitgeist*. It included each and every aspect of humanity, and it was what made it so important for the era.

Historicism also concentrated on contrasting ideas in a different way than before. Prior to this approach, contrasting theories were mostly seen as black and white, with only one outcome; for either theory to prove the other one wrong, therefore, invalidate it. With historicism, the contrasting theories were not encouraged to refute each other but instead were put together for development. According to the historical point of view, it was only through contrasting ideas one could reach a new idea, a great depiction of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Opposing ideas did not have to make each other's credibility less, but instead, they were seen as steps to get to the absolute idea, a combination of different ideas.

Through historicism, new historicism was born. It was not the complete opposite of historicism, but it led the way for its improvement. While historicism was about every aspect of mankind, new historicism mainly focused on literature and its mirroring function of society. In new historicism viewpoint, instead of literary works showing the spirit of the era, they actually showed the dominant power of the era. According to this theory, power always influenced the writer, and it was not possible to analyze and understand a literary work without its writer. Discourse, as Foucault called the power structure of the era, always found a way to leave its mark in literature.

Foucault was one of the biggest names in new historicism approach. With his theories, this approach flourished and found its way and became as big as it is

today. Nothing, including literature, could be subjective, because the human factor was always in every piece of literature, it was always written by people, and people were constantly subjected to the dominant power of the era. This dominant power could reach anyone and anywhere, thus the idea of freedom in art and literature could not be achieved, even if the author thought otherwise. The author, just like everyone else in the society, was limited to discourse's boundaries, he could only be as creative or as nonconformist as the current power holder let him. That was not to say no literary work was original on its own, but rather that it was not as infinite as the earlier eras thought. Through this idea, the writer's previously claimed 'sacredness' was challenged, seeing that he was not a tool for greater power, but a person who had to follow the era's rules just like any other. This was a new approach to the author and the text because, in the earlier times, the author's function was less about the higher power in the society, but more about his creativity and the way he could influence the mass crowds. But through this idea, the author became an instrument of the power among people and a mirror to the top of the social hierarchy.

The dominant power of the era could decide what was right, what was wrong and what was normal. Especially the understanding of normal was abused by this power throughout the ages. Whatever fit into the current society was deemed as normal, which excluded a lot of people, especially people who didn't follow the conventional behavioral pattern due to certain mental illnesses. These "mad people" as society called them were not always excluded from society. Instead, madness was the collapse of the limited mind that could only comprehend so little about the greater power and talent. Madness in the earlier times meant they could see and understand things the rest of the people could not understand, and it was in a positive way. It was not used to discriminate against mentally ill people. In time, society stopped seeing madness as a mark of something great but instead saw it as a part of normal life. The biggest examples the reader may see the clues of this viewpoint are Shakespeare's plays. In Shakespeare's plays, the audience witnesses a lot of changes mad people go through, but they are not depicted as a danger to society or the individuals. Ophelia and Hamlet are not treated badly by the other characters, even if they are seen as mad. In fact, Ophelia

even gains the sympathy of other characters and the audience itself after her descend into madness. If one considers the idea of literature reflecting on the society's viewpoint, this proves that mad people were not seen that different than what society accepted as normal, thus they were not subjected to unfairness by the people around them.

Yet, this approach changed in time. Eventually, the society started seeing madness as a threat to the wellbeing of the individuals, and this created fear and prejudice among people. Mad people were outcasted from society and were subjected to abuse of power in most of the first asylums. The minute they were seen as less than humans, they were stripped off their human rights, and faced mistreatment in the hands of government and some doctors. Even if the definition of madness was subjective, if the dominant power deemed a person abnormal or mad, that person could hardly fight against it, and it kept going for a while until the modern psychology was born. With the hope of actual treatment and widespread use of antidepressants, mad people were accepted back into society, but with certain limitations. Asylums still existed, but unlike before the abuse of patients were not common, and sometimes they could even be discharged after their treatment.

Different countries had different approaches to the madness, and one can see that in the said country's literary works. In the late 20th century, Turkey adapted an approach that followed a precedent treatment when it came to mad people. They were locked away from society, just like in the Victorian Era. It was not fit for such a modern time, but it influenced the literature and one can see that in *Before the Ice Breaks*. At the end of the play, the mad Governor is taken back to the mental hospital even if his people do not want him to. Başkut, deflects the audience's prejudice against madness by not telling the audience the main character is mad, but making them wait until the last minute, where they already relate to the character. One of the main reasons Başkut uses madness in his work is to criticize the system which was against the middle class and lower class in Turkey. Thus, the audience starts seeing mad Governor as a revolutionary before it learns about his madness. With this approach, while showing how the system is, Başkut avoids any kind of judgment or punishment under the guard of madness.

England had a more improved treatment when it came to madness. Doctors in England tried to reintegrate these mad individuals into the society, so rather than locking them away and trying to keep them there as the reader may see in *Before The Ice Breaks*, they actually tried to treat them, which Peter Shaffer shows the audience in his play *Equus*. Throughout the play, the audience sees the dynamic between Dysart, who is a psychiatrist and Alan, his patient. While it is true that the audience watches the play through Dysart's viewpoint, but as the play progresses, the question of whether to treat Alan to make him a part of the normal society, which does not allow such passions, or leave him be and let him be excluded from the society, where he might be alone but still can feel remains. The audience can also see the struggle between being rational and use silence as a shield against any irrationality, and succumbing into one's passions however sharp they may be. In the end, the audience faces the same dilemma as Dysart and that is what makes the play so special.

These two plays, even if they were written around the same era, are completely different from each other. Geography plays an important part in this, because different countries go through different eras regardless of the time, *Equus* and *Before the Ice Breaks* prove that. *Equus* was written in 1973 and *Before the Ice Breaks* was written in 1965, yet they could not be more different than each other. Both of these plays belong to different and unique cultures, and the audience can see how these cultures influenced these plays. Historicism and new historicism are especially important in that sense, seeing that only through these approaches one can reach the reality of England and Turkey in the 20th century. As it has been stated before, no fictional work can be claimed to possess the absolute truth of the era, but at the same time, every fictional work possesses some traces of the situation and the power structure of the era.

Equus gives the reader an insight into England in the 20th century through historicism and new historicism. With historicism, one can understand the spirit of the era, which mainly focused on the one accepted form of normal. The main character of the play, Alan, is by no means anything close to what could be accepted as normal in 21st century England. His blinding the horses serves as an act of disobedience, a kind of disturbing the peace of otherwise normal society.

Alan is everything the society frowns upon, he's mentally unstable, he's dangerous to the creatures around him and most threatening of all, he's passionate. Especially in the light of scientific developments within the society, and the great divide between religion and science, passion soon fell out of favor, because science was more powerful. This is exactly why a text should be analyzed through both historicism and new historicism perspective, these two approaches ensure that the critic takes different aspects of the era into account.

The same can be said for *Before the Ice Breaks*. Historicism and new historicism's usage in analyzing the text are important because these two theories give the reader a more accurate depiction of the era in 21st century Turkey. Historicism offers to give the understanding of the spirit of the era, and new historicism gives the critic the power structure of the era. By doing so, Başkut held a mirror on Turkish society and its approach to madness. He also used the main character's insanity to criticize the system in a way that would keep him safe, since the mad characters could not be held responsible, and neither could their writers.

Historicism and new historicism in this study created a synthesis in analyzing these texts. While they are very close in terms of meaning, and in that sense, it can be difficult to make certain themes fall under the scope of historicism and new historicism seeing that they're not distinctively different, they still have certain characteristics. The same text can have non-identical meanings under historicism and new historicism, and it can be seen especially in fictional works that focus on madness and mental health. It can be understood that new historicism is a better way of analyzing any kind of literary text, especially in the 20th and 21st century. Power dynamics is the *Zeitgeist* of these eras, thus new historicism focuses on its relations with madness.

As it can be seen throughout history, madness has never been an objective matter, regardless of how developed the society is. One era's mad may be one era's genius, and that as long as the society has its limits to normality, it will keep changing. Literature serves as a reminder of the one truth that could not be altered for centuries; it is never the individual himself that gets to decide whether he is

normal or not, that privilege belongs to the dominant power of the era, and just like the literature is permanent in the culture, madness' existence is permanent in the literature regardless of time, place and circumstances.



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