

**KURDISH WRITERS IN TURKISH: A CASE OF
MINOR LITERATURE**

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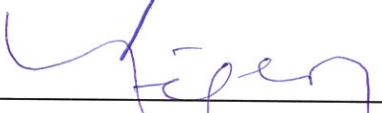
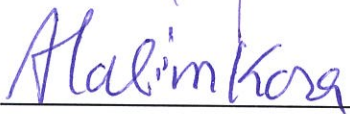

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Cultural Studies

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'I. Kaplan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ABSTRACT

KURDISH WRITERS IN TURKISH: A CASE OF MINOR LITERATURE

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In this research, stories and novels of three Kurdish authors namely Seyit Alp, Suzan Samancı, and Yavuz Ekinci will be examined. These authors write in Turkish but actually are stuck between Turkish and Kurdish Literature, another main point of this study. This study aims to discuss these texts employing “minor literature” concept by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and French psychoanalyst Félix Guattari, who describe its principles in their book *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. After giving brief information about writing periods of these authors, the writing process and principals of minor literature; deterritorialization of the language, political and collective enunciation of the language will be discussed.

Keywords: minor literature, deterritorialization, Kurdish, Seyit Alp, Suzan Samancı, Yavuz Ekinci.

ÖZ

TÜRKÇE İÇERİSİNDEKİ KÜRT YAZARLAR: MİNOR BİR EDEBİYAT ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu araştırmada, Kürt kimlikleri ile Türkçe yazan ve Türk Edebiyatı ile Kürt Edebiyatı arasına sıkışmış olan yazarlar arasından seçilen üç yazar Seyit Alp, Suzan Samancı ve Yavuz Ekinci'nin hikaye ve roman türündeki eserleri incelenerek, eserler Fransız filozof Gilles Deleuze ile Fransız psikanalist Fêlix Guattari'nin *Kafka: Minör Bir Edebiyat İçin* eserinde belirtilen "minör edebiyat" kavramı üzerinden anlaşılmasına çalışılacaktır. Bu inceleme sırasında, ilgili yazarların dönemine ait siyasal ve edebi ortam ile ilgili bilgi verilerek, dönemseller gelişmeler bağlamında da yazma süreci ele alınacaktır. Bu açıdan, her üç yazarın da dil özellikleri ve değişimleri ele alınarak, dilin yersizyurtsuzlaşması ile kolektif ve politik bir değer taşıması üzerinden bir değerlendirme ve karşılaştırma yapılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: minör edebiyat, yersizyurtsuzlaşma, Kürt Edebiyatı, Seyit Alp, Suzan Samancı, Yavuz Ekinci.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

After the collapse of the empires, which led to establishment of the nation-states in the 19th century, the notion “the national literature(s)” emerged. National literature(s) is enmeshed with national language denying all other languages and literary classifications. İstanbul, the capital city of Ottoman Empire, was the center of printing and publishing in the 19th century and not centered on Turkish language. İstanbul was a cultural center for Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, Sefarads, and Arabs (Strauss, 2014, p. 5). In his article “Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th-20th centuries)?”, Strauss points to the literary field and literary communities in the nineteenth century’s Ottoman Empire. According to this article, there was a considerable amount of literary texts from various languages at that time of İstanbul, whose literary field was multilingual. After the decline of Ottoman Empire, new Turkish Republic restricted the existing literary production and only allowed books to be published in Turkish. The literature(s) created by other ethnic groups was not included in canonical Turkish Literature¹ and thus the multicultural atmosphere of İstanbul was lost. Writing and publishing in any language other than Turkish became impossible.

Literary research is also limited to Turkish national literature. Modern literature is associated with the rise of the novel as a new genre. Modern literature is also considered as a consequence of the nationalism and nation-states. A novel written in German by a Turkish- German author can not be accepted as a piece of Turkish Literature because language is the determining factor. The dilemma emerges at this very point: Which national language do the authors with more than one literary language belong to?

Throughout my Turkish Language and Literature bachelor program at Boğaziçi University, we studied Turkish novels and stories that weigh in Turkish literary canon.

¹“Canon” is defined “The list of good writers that any authority or authorities have blessed, and the permission or approval given to the names to be added to it” (Parla, 2004, p. 51).

However, the canonical Turkish literature does not represent the Kurdish, Armenian, Greek or any other ethnicities. Having Ottoman Armenian Literature classes with Asst. Prof. Mehmet Fatih Uslu, I could see the samples of non-canonical texts like *Akabi Hikayesi* written in Turkish by Armenian letters by Vartan Pasha. These texts aroused my curiosity for non-canonical texts in Turkish. During my search for non-canonical texts, I found out that there was a gap in the literary texts of Kurdish authors writing in Turkish. Although there are many Kurdish authors writing in Turkish, a few research about them exists.

Kurdish authors in Turkish Literature are enigmatic figures since their language structure and thematic aspects are not parallel with Turkish literature even if they write in Turkish. They are on the edge of Turkish and Kurdish literatures and cannot be categorized within modern Kurdish literature since the texts are not in Kurdish. On the other hand, some Kurdish authors are underestimated in Turkish language studies because of their different ethnic identity. The problem of classification is also reflected in academic studies; traditional research methods are not appropriate to categorize these authors and their works. In this sense, the post-structuralist approach paves the way for analyzing this unclassified field. Post-structuralist understanding eases to remove the borders of the national literature(s) that reduces literary criteria to the national language itself. French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari came up with a new understanding of language and literature grounding on post-structuralist approach. They invented the concept of “minor literature”, which allows us to consider the authors and literary texts without any formal or contextual categorization. They objected to homogenous understanding of language and brought a heterogeneous, variable language concept opposed to acceptance of a constant language.

Pascale Casanova discusses “world literary space” in her book *The World Republic of Letters* (Casanova, 2010) and she argues that the authors on the periphery of world literary space must struggle to come to the center and thus gain literary legitimacy. Power relations play an important role in representing a literature type and gain literary legitimacy. The authors who stay out of literary center and are repressed

under another literary domination invent new methods – be they intentional or unintentional- in order to be visible in world literary space. Improving a national language or writing in the language of a “great literature” is not an independent decision (Casanova, 2010, p. 196). An author has to choose either to be “assimilated” into dominant literature or be “different” and head for searching her/his own national identity (p. 197). There emerges a dilemma: These authors can write in their own “small” language and exhibit their differences this way but experience what national authors have been living through or else they can betray their roots, reject their differences and adapt to the values of great literatures (p. 198). Similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas, Casanova thinks that the nationalist politization is one of the structural aspects of “small literatures”. Irish literature may function as an exemplary of political aspect of small literature.

She borrows “small literatures” term from Kafka and emphasizes that writing in the language of small literature or great literature is not a choice. “Small literature” does necessarily reflect national historical points. Main issues within are nation, community, and language of that nation. For the sovereign nations or dominated ones, literature turns into a national weapon for the resistance (Casanova, 2010, p. 210). After second half of 19th century, the authors from small literatures had to prove that they exist both politically and literally. They achieved their political freedom so that they could exist and be visible within world literary space. Efforts for gaining literary autonomy is associated with political freedom. In Kurdish context, due to the political restrictions, the authors have to write with a political attitude and many of them could not achieve literary autonomy either in Turkish or Kurdish. That is why, even if some Kurdish authors write and show presence in Turkish, they choose themes about Kurdish political issues and position their literature against the state rather than picking some individualistic topics. We will discuss this in the next chapters.

Due to the political and regional divisions of Kurdish population as an ethnic group existing within four states in the Middle East, Kurdish population lives in Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq with multiple dialects of Kurdish like Zazakî, Soranî, and Kurmanjî in

Latin, Arabic or Cyrillic alphabets. Since political division within Kurds affected their cultural sphere, they could not constitute a standardized written language and a common alphabet for a long period. And we should keep in mind that Kurdish was under the influence of official languages such as Turkish, Arabic, or Persian (Ahmadzade, 2004, p. 157). That Kurdish language and literature studies were always associated to political development of Kurdish identity has been a powerful idea (Ahmadzade, 2004, p. 158; Uzun, 2006, p. 17). The modern Kurdish literature emerged and grew independent and unaware of each other in different regions as a result of the denial and oppression from other governments towards Kurds (Uzun, 2006, p. 51). As a consequence of political developments and linguistic barriers, many Kurdish authors in Turkey tended to write in Turkish. Even though the language of their works is Turkish, the content is close to Kurdish oral tradition and Kurdish cultural elements.

In this thesis, I will examine the notion of “minor literature” by Deleuze and Guattari and try to understand if it is beneficial to seize the texts of Kurdish authors writing in Turkish and could explain the literary style of these authors. How do Kurdish identity and Kurdish culture differ from each other in the texts? Deleuze and Guattari have formulated minor literature with three main aspects: deterritorialization and political and collective enunciation. The novels and stories of three Kurdish authors -Seyit Alp, Suzan Samancı and Yavuz Ekinci- will help us better comprehend the political and collective characteristics of minor literature and deterritorialization. Despite the fact that their native language is Kurdish, these writers write their novels and stories in Turkish.² Having Kurdish identity, these authors are also political figures and also problematize the trauma created by the migrations and Kurdish language ban in Turkey. Alp, Samancı, and Ekinci have a place in major language, Turkish, instead of their ethnic language, Kurdish; however, they change usage of Turkish language in their texts and tries new kind of syntax. Moreover, they bring Kurdish cultural themes and oral tradition elements along with the historical and the political developments of Kurdish society.

² Suzan Samancı published one of her Kurdish book *Ew Jin û Mêrên bi Maske* in 2015.

Analysis of Kurdish authors based on minor literature was previously conducted in limited studies and researches. One of these studies is the master thesis of Alpaslan Nas called “Between National and Minor Literature in Turkey: Modes of Resistance in the Works of Mehmed Uzun and Mıgırdiç Margosyan” (Nas, 2011). In his thesis, Nas compares Mıgırdiç Margosyan as an Armenian author writing in Turkish language and Mehmed Uzun as a Kurdish author by means of post-colonial approach and minor literature concept. While early the novels of Margosyan and Uzun resist the existing order with decolonization discourse, their texts after 1998 reveal the characteristics of minor literature. As an Armenian author in major language (Turkish) and rule-breaker with his hybrid uses of Armenian Turkish phrases, Margosyan is regarded to have a place in the borders of minor literature. Although Mehmed Uzun writes in Kurdish, he has made a new relationship with major language, Turkish, and built a connection between three languages -Kurdish, Sweden and Turkish- and become “deterritorialized”.

In her article “Emergence and Equivocal Autonomization of Kurdish Literary Field in Turkey” (Scalbert- Yücel, 2012), Clémence Scalbert-Yücel indicates that Turkish literature has many Kurdish authors writing in Turkish like Suzan Samancı, Cemal Süreya, Ahmed Arif, Bejan Matur, Yılmaz Odabaşı, Metin Kaygalak. Her article is one of the few essays dealing with Kurdish authors writing in Turkish. She argues that their works include plurality, a multicultural belongingness and hybridity associated with their identity. Yücel represents Suzan Samancı as a female Kurdish author in Turkish literary field, who is accepted and approved by both Turkish audience and publishers and Kurdish cultural sphere. She has also book *Kürt Edebiyatının Anatomisi* (The Anatomy of Kurdish Literature) (Scalbert- Yücel, 2018) about the development of Kurdish literature (in Kurmanjî) on the basis of the historical and political changes in Turkey.

After 2000s, Kurdish literature has found a place in Turkish literary journal (*Notos*, 2008; Issue 11; *Varlık*, September 2011; *Birikim* 2014, Issue: 307) The articles in these journals generally focus on the awareness about Kurdish literature and underestimate Kurdish authors writing in Turkish literature. Nazan Aksoy in *Birikim*

mentioned Suzan Samancı as an author who could not write in her native language. There are some interviews and short essays about contemporary writers -Suzan Samancı and Yavuz Ekinçi- which generally concentrate on their identity and writing adventure, a point to be mentioned in relevant chapters. Also, Mehmed Uzun emphasizes Kurdish authors and intellectuals writing in Turkish and introduces Seyit Alp in his book *Kürt Edebiyatına Giriş* (Introduction to Kurdish Literature) (Uzun, 2006) as a Turkish-writing author. Throughout this study, we have benefitted from Turkish and English sources.

As mentioned before, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari came up with a new literary understanding called “minor literature”. French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and French psychoanalyst Felix Guattari define their minor literature concept in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. They met and began working in 1969. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Volume 1) was published in 1972, while the second volume *A Thousand Plateaus* was published in 1980. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Deleuze&Guattari, 1986) puts forward the idea of abandoning holistic ideas and promotes not to be Marxist, semiotic or linguistic (Akay, 2015, p. 199). Minor politics destroys the nation-state idea in this post-colonial era of globalization, whose reflections can be found in literature, art, and culture. Deleuze and Guattari reject scientific language as it is “homogenized, centralized, standardized” leading to “a language of power, a major and dominant language” in contrast with Chomsky’s tree structure since it interprets power variables as something permanent (Deleuze&Guattari, 2009, p. 101).

Deleuze and Guattari read Kafka’s stories, novels and diaries from the perspective of “minor literature”. They emphasize the characteristics of the expression and content and divide languages into two groups as major and minor languages. The former is defined by “the power (*pouvoir*) of constants” whereas the latter is defined by “the power (*puissance*) of variation.” Like a dialect and lingual possibility, minor language is the variation of the major one. The primary element of minor literature is that “it does not come from a minor language; it is rather something that a minority constructs within a major language”. Major and minor languages are not linked

linguistically. Major languages are constitutional ones in which various authors from different languages produce works.

Creating grammatically correct sentences is a requirement for social rules; however, this “unity of language is fundamentally political. There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language that at times advances along a broad front, and at times swoops down on diverse centers simultaneously.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 101) As understood from the quote, major language is not equal to mother tongue; it is the language of power holder, it is the language of dominant, which is primarily political. Moreover, “major” does not symbolize a crowded population but the group of the power holder. The term “minor” and “major” is not something quantitative for Deleuze and Guattari; the majority is a “constant, of expression or content, serving as a standard measure by which to evaluate it.” This standard measure is accepted as “average adult-white-heterosexual- European- male-speaking a standard language” subject (p. 105). Despite the fact that the number of men is less than “children, women, blacks, peasants, homosexuals”, men hold the major language standards. The language of women, children, blacks is likely to be minor language because they have to speak or write in the language of adult-white-heterosexual- European-male.

Minor languages do not exist by themselves, they can only exist within major languages. The authors of minor languages are like foreigners in their own tongue. They are “the bastards” of this language, because of the “subtraction and variation of their own language achieved by stretching tensors through it”. (p. 105) That is to say, minor language is the variation of a major language with different modes of expressions.

The major and the minor mode are two different treatments of language, one of which consists in extracting constants from it, the other is placing in continuous variation. The order-word is the variable of enunciation that effectuates the condition of possibility of language and defines the usage of its element. (p.106)

Even though major and minor languages are in one single language, the variations in enunciation lead to emergence of two separate languages. The power relation in the language is associated with the order-words in the language. The order-word is the fundamental element of language creating grammar rules and subordination system. Language is constituted like people to obey. As to Deleuze and Guattari's persistent arguments, language is a tool for command and carries a judgment rather than transferring information and making people communicate. As a result of obedience expectation, "a rule of grammar is a power marker before it is syntactical power" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 76). Thus, be it intentional or not, any change in grammar creates a revolutionary resistance.

Minor literature has three characteristics: First one is that: "Language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 16). Deterritorialization is "the movement by which 'one' leaves the territory. It is the operation of line of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 508). Deterritorialization does not mean leaving one's territory; instead it is a way of escape. Deterritorialization is "complex movement or process by which something escapes or departs from a given territory, where a territory can be a system of any kind, conceptual, linguistic, social, or affective." Deterritorialization is followed by reterritorialization. And it does not mean returning but coming up with a new assemblage or transforming the old in the new situation (Patton, 2010). Deterritorialization is not only physical but also mental or psychological process that creates new forms of expression and brings reterritorialization. It is "impossible to distinguish deterritorialization from reterritorialization since they are mutually enmeshed or like opposite faces of one and the same process" (Deleuze & Guattari., 1977, p. 296).

Kafka explains why Jews of Prague faced with some serious obstacles while writing and categorizes these obstacles in three groups: "The impossibility of not writing, impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility writing otherwise." However, the must write, since national consciousness that existed and was preserved with the help of literature was included in "literary struggle".

As for a second point, Jews of Prague were far from their lands, Czechoslovakia, and it was not possible to write in Yiddish due to distance from their own territory. Lastly, they could not write with German grammar rules since German was a deterritorialized language as a “paper language” distinguished from large groups. Within this language, Prague German broke the rules of major language and became open to different uses of German. “Blacks” in American Literature and Uzbakians in Russian Literature are such examples of minor language. Gaelic and Irish English are within English major but different from it while ghetto languages can be categorized under standard English. “Blacks” have created a new variation of language within American English and Irish authors such as Samuel Beckett and James Joyce paved the way for another possibility of language in English. This is about the struggle of deterritorialization of their native language and reterritorialization in major language.

The second characteristic of minor literature is that: “Everything in minor literature is political.” In contrast to major language, individual issues are also associated with politics within minor literature. Family and social issues are not individual anymore; they cause a collective action. The father-son relationship in Kafka is also related to politics. The details in great literature(s) could be some essential developments in minor literature. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that minor literature is political but not ideological.

Third characteristic is that everything in minor literature has a collective value. “There is not a subject, there are only collective *assemblage of enunciation*” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 80). Whatever the author says is directly political. The character K. in *The Trial* novel is not a subject but a machine-like assemblage, a collective agent. Literary pieces are shaped with the role of revolutionary and collective enunciation. Individual enunciation is not possible. No one can deny the social character of enunciation, which implies collective assemblages. (p. 80)

When the author is in between the major and minor group and looks for the opportunity to establish another conscious and imagined community, minor literature gives a chance for it: “It is literature that produces an active solidarity... if

the writer is in the margins or completely outside of his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and sensibility” (p. 17).

To sum, Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that minor literature does not refer to a kind of specific literature but comes from the core of established language. In this sense, the machine of expression is revolutionary since it is associated with deterritorialization. Kafka preferred writing in Prague German and thus he vibrates the language with an intense density and reached the unformed, intense expression. Not just Kafka but also James Joyce and Samuel Beckett are notable names of minor literature. Deleuze and Guattari put forward that minor language is common among bilingual authors.

After these three characteristics of minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari explain linguistic aspects of minor language as such:

[...] Making language stammer rather than stammering in speech. To be a foreigner, but in one’s own tongue, not only when speaking when speaking a language other than one’s own. To be bilingual, multilingual, but in one and the same language, without even a dialect or patois. To be bastard, a half-breed, but through a purification of race (p. 98).

Since they do not belong to major language, they are the “bastards” of major language. As a kind of foreigner, their speech turns to stammering that breaks the lexical cycle. Minor language has ability to change linguistic patterns such as phonemes, morphemes or “intonation on syntax”:

[...] Constructing a continuum of variation, negotiating all of the variables both to constrict the constants, and to expand the variables: make language stammer, or make it wail, stretch tensors through all of language, even written language, and draw from it cries, shouts, pitches, durations, timbres, accents, intensities. Two conjoined tendencies in so called minor languages have often been noted: an impoverishment, a shedding of syntactical and lexical forms; but simultaneously a strange proliferation of shifting effects, a taste for overload and paraphrase (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, 104).

Minor literature does not mean reterritorializing a dialect or patois but deterritorializing the major language itself. For deterritorialization, new variation of language should stammer the language, there should be durations and accents which will change lexical forms and sentences. Deleuze and Guattari ask such a question:

How many people today do reside in a language that is not their own? no longer, or not yet, even their own language know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve? This is the problem of immigrants, and especially of their children, the problem of minorities, the problem of minor literature, but also a problem for all of us: how to tear a minor literature away from its own language, allowing it to challenge the language and making it follow a sober revolutionary path? How to become a nomad and an immigrant and a Gypsy in their relation to one's own language? Kafka answers: steel the baby from its crib and, walk the tightrope. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 19)

Following the question of Deleuze and Guattari, we can argue that Kurdish people in Turkey were far from their language and they were “the nomad, the immigrant, and Gypsy” of their own language. There were political and legislative restrictions for Kurdish people to speak and write their own languages in Turkey until 1990s. Speaking and writing in the major language, Turkish, was obligatory and there was no other option for their native language. Moreover, due to the migration to city centers and deportations of Kurdish villages ended up in deterritorialization of Kurdish language and culture. Within this framework, we will trace the effect of these developments on three Kurdish authors: Seyit Alp, Suzan Samancı, and Yavuz Ekinci.

Kafka scholars criticize Deleuze and Guattari since they misinterpret Kafka as minor writer. Stanley Corngold objects to this “misinterpretation” in his article “Kafka and the Dialect of Minor Literature” and argues that the reading Kafka's literature as minor is “hyperbolic” since Kafka's language is not a different than standard German. (Corngold, 1994) In his essay “Kafka on Minor Literature”, Lowell Edmunds points out that Kafka scholars criticize Deleuze and Guattari for their “misappropriation of Kafka's thoughts on minor literature and their misinterpretation of Kafka himself as a minor writer” (Edmunds, 2010, 351). Edmunds utters that even though Kafka does not touch upon “politics” very much, these scholars concentrate on political aspect of his “minor literature” rather than deterritorialization. According to his ideas, the

main point is “politics of the hypothetical nation” (p. 354). Referring to what Kafka wrote on December 25 about minor literature –“of the national consciousness within a small people”- Edmunds believes that Kafka does not regard the literature of a small nation as revolutionary and he just considers this literature as defensive (p. 355). Another criticism is related to the Casanova’s literary critique of the term “minor”. Pascale Casanova also criticizes Deleuze and Guattari for their anachronism about Kafka. Even though Deleuze and Guattari build their theory on being political, she argues that Kafka did not write with a political motive and thus reading Kafka this way is not appropriate. As Edmunds indicates, German word “klein” for literature is adapted as “minor” by Deleuze and Guattari while Casanova translates this term as “small” and thus transforms it into “small literature”. However, semantics of the term is lost this way (Edmunds, 2010, p. 356). Although these critics oppose to Deleuze and Guattari’s Kafka reading, we need that kind of Kafka reading since his identity and writing style distinguish him from other literary texts in German. In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari’s Kafka reading has brought a new understanding to the perception of Kafka’s literature and so to other authors between a major language and their native language.

First chapter of this thesis gives a brief information about the historical and political history of Turkey and mainstream developments in the cultural field. The years of 1960, 1980 and 2000 are the milestones of Turkey’s history and ended up in certain transformations in political and cultural atmosphere. Seyit Alp had published books from the end of 1970s to the beginning of 1990s, while Suzan Samancı and Yavuz Ekinçi has written from 1990s to this day. The difference between authors’ time is an indicator of reflections of political developments on printing and thematic developments of the texts. First chapter also includes the analysis of four novels written by Seyit Alp. These novels are *Welat: Bir İsyân Türkücüsü*, *Devran*, *Dino ile Ceren*, and *Şawk*. He writes his novels in major Turkish language but never avoids his Kurdish identity. There are ruptures in his novels due to his hybrid use of Turkish and Kurdish and also a collective and political representation of Kurdish identity. Turks are portrayed as colonizer power for Kurdish people while Kurdish society are written to have social and political unity against Ottoman or Turkish powers. There is also

critique toward feudal powers within Kurdish society. Kurdish oral tradition and Kurdish language have a powerful influence on the language of his novels, which has caused the creation of a new language variation in Turkish by Seyit Alp.

The second chapter examines novels and stories of Suzan Samancı. She is placed as a Kurdish female author, who has brought new expressions to Turkish language. Due to the fearful atmosphere in the military coup years (1980s) and the martial law years (1990s) in her novels, her characters generally lose their language. Words and voices replace with silence, coughing, and growling; there is an intense language use that forms Kurdish phrases in Turkish language. The language is constructed with more adjectives creating another linguistic form in Turkish. On the other hand, Samancı's novels are fictionalized in between 1980s and 1990s, the years when modernization and political movement of women rose. Her novels and stories focus on collective and political reflections of Kurdish women's existence. She problematizes different womanhood experiences like being a Kurdish intellectual woman, being a woman in PKK or being mother of a martyr, and being a mother of a PKK militant. Her characters have collective and political voice of women. The modernization of Kurdish people living in capital cities and European diaspora has been the main issue in her texts.

In the last chapter, I concentrate on the novels and stories of contemporary Kurdish author Yavuz Ekinci. Having a writing career that began after 2000s, Yavuz Ekinci focuses on witnessing torture towards Kurds and Armenians. In this sense, he gains a collective voice on behalf of the witnesses and this is a political positioning. As an author writing in a major language, he comes closer to the standard use of Turkish and the number of Kurdish phrases is lesser in his novels; but the political and collective voice in Ekinci's texts is more powerful. The narrators in his novels mainly underline that they have a mission to tell the grief of oppressed people to the audience.

Briefly, in this research, Seyit Alp, Suzan Samancı and Yavuz Ekinci as the authors on the edge of the Turkish language are examined as they belong to neither Turkish literature nor Kurdish one. The political atmosphere did not allow them to write in

Kurdish and they wrote in Turkish, the major language. Although they write in a major language, they break the rules and create new variations of expression. While they make ruptures and stammer Turkish with their variation of expression such as using Kurdish phrases and idioms, Kurdish poems, silence, breaking syntax, they create lines of flight from the political oppression. In their plot, they keep Kurdish oral traditional elements and political discourse emphasizing their identity and language crisis, which comes closer to the collective enunciation and political aspect of minor literature criteria. I will scrutinize the details in the following chapters. In the first chapter, I will draw a map of the historical and political developments in Turkey around the Kurdish issue and give brief information about publication adventure of Kurdish literary texts, and concentrate on Seyit Alp novels.

CHAPTER 2

A PIONEERING KURDISH AUTHOR IN TURKISH LANGUAGE: SEYİT ALP

2.1. The Political Developments and Language Policies (1923- 1960)

The analysis of Kurdish authors producing minor literature in Turkish starts with the question of why they write in major language instead of Kurdish. In his book *Kürt Edebiyatı'na Giriş (The Introduction to Kurdish Literature)*, Mehmet Uzun states that everything in the Kurdish geography is related to politics, even the relevant literature. In this sense, the lack of union in Kurdish society brings a political and linguistic fragmentation. In four different countries, with many dialects and various alphabets, Kurdish does not have a standardized alphabet and a standardized language. Kurdish literature went along with oral tradition; modern Kurdish Literature and culture consisting of short story and novel, has not emerged until 1960s in Turkey. Lastly, the education language allows Turkish speaking and writing abilities to improve, while writing and reading ability in Kurdish language could not be enhanced.

While writing in Kurdish developed to some extent in Iraq and Iran, the language was not allowed in Turkey and Syria for a long period. In Turkey, Kurdish could be introduced into literary field after 1960s. The period between 1923- 1960 were when strict policies toward Kurds and Kurdish language ruled (Uzun, 2006,p. 83). In the late Ottoman period, Kurdish nationalism and the construction of identity were awakening; the first Kurdish newspaper was published in Kurmanjî dialect in Cairo in 1898, which can be accepted as the beginning of Kurdish prose writing. Another journal *Jîn* started publishing classical Kurdish literary texts (Bora, 2018,p. 824). Celadet Bedir Khan started cultural and linguistic movement around *Hawar* journal. *Hawar* was printed in Latin letters but Kurdish in 1932 in Damascus, whose main aim was to introduce Kurdish language, grammar and the alphabet along with preserving the oral tradition and folkloric elements (p. 832).

After Turkish Republic was settled, the status of inhabitants other than Turks, especially Kurds, were exposed to discriminatory practices and Turkification. One of

these practices was displacement and compulsory settlement and the language was the other instrument for Turkification. The new legislation banned instruction of any other language than Turkish (Yeğen, 2009, p. 605). The abolishment of the *madrasas*, which kept giving religious education in Kurdish, restricted the use of Kurdish. *Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu* (The "Law for the Maintenance of Public Order) and *Şark Islahat Planı* (Reform Plan for the East) banned Kurdish in some regions. Consisting of local rules, the legislation does not mention "Kurdish" language restriction as a term. The prohibitions continued by means of local rules until 1960s (Yücel, 2018,30-34). The language ban was implemented in two ways: Ban on speaking in public space and ban on publications. Publication could only be possible in certain periods [1967-71 and 1975-80] when liberal policies were adopted (Hassanpour, 1997,p. 232; 334). Kurdish political movement was in great silence until 1950s, so did Kurdish linguistic and literary developments (Bora, 2018, p. 834). Welat Zeydanlıoğlu discusses political developments and restrictions imposed upon Kurdish language in his article "Turkey's Kurdish Language Policy" Kemalism in the early Republican period followed an ethno-centric discourse. To modernize the country, Kemalist elite made radical reforms in such fields as politics, literature, education and music. The linguistic shift was a direct result of building a new nation, main principle of Kemalism. Acceptance of Latin letters was a chief transformation happened in 1928. After Latinization, Turkish citizens were expected to unite around a common language: Turkish. In this process, identity of Kurdish citizens was denied and Kurdish language was banned. Turkification process towards Kurds in social and linguistic fields went on under single party rule (1923-1950) and military coup rules (1960, 1971, 1980) (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012).

Even though Kurdish language was not recognized by Turkish Government until 1990s officially, it then became visible in Kurdish journals after 1960. Kurdish intellectuals started publishing political and literary journals in Turkish. In these journals, Kurdish identity was problematized, Kurdish grammar books of Kurdish were studied; but the number of these printings are very limited since Kurdish was still banned in the second half of 1960s (Bora, 2016,p. 836). During that period, Kurds and Kurdish became visible in political and cultural sphere.

Between 1959 and 1971, a new kind of consciousness started to rise (Bozarslan, 2002). The political mobilization of Barzani gave courage to Kurds in Turkey, and 1960 legislation gave freedom to different groups. Leftist, Socialist ideas were developed, and Kurdish intellectuals came close to socialist movements and ideas; they were against Turkish state's oppressive policies and feudalism. Although Kurdish groups were close to Turkish Worker's Party, they continued to be a part of Socialist movement by organizing around new political groups such as *Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları*, which shed light on Kurdish identity during 1970s. Political mobilization and cultural developments among Kurdish groups continued until 1980s. The effect of 1980 military coup and establishment of PKK (Kurdish Worker's Party) will be discussed in the following chapter. Seyit Alp wrote under such an oppressive political atmosphere where ethnic identity of Kurds and Kurdish language were systematically denied. In this sense, he is a pioneering author in Turkish with his Kurdish identity since he problematizes linguistic and ethnic issues in his novels.

2.2. From Oral Literary Tradition to Borders of Minor Language

Seyit Alp was born in 1945 (Ankara) and got his bachelor degree in Turkology program of İstanbul University in 1970. He continued his career as a teacher of Turkish literature. (Özyalçın, 1981) Mehmed Uzun groups him under the category of authors writing in Turkish. He is from a Kurdish migrant family, who migrated to Central Anatolia. He was from 68 generations and passed away in 2000 (Ankara). The 1968 generation symbolizes political student movements all around the world, which led to political uprisings. In Turkey, the generation of 68 organized in the universities and defended anti-imperialism. The student movements were against wars and for freedom all around the world. As a member of 68 generations, Seyit Alp seems close to Leftist and Marxist movements as the novels represent a Marxist discourse.

His first novel is *Welat: Bir İsyân Türkücüsü* and was published in 1977 by Komal Publishing House³. His second novel is *Devran* (1979, Aydınlık Publishing House). With

³ Rizgarî Kurdish movement establishes Komal publishing house in order to publish books about Kurdish history, politics, and culture.

his third book *Dino ile Ceren*, he was given YAZKO (The Cooperation of the Authors) Novel Incentive Award and the book was also published by YAZKO Publisher in 1981. First volume of his last novel *Şawk* was published in 1993 by Zagros Publisher, whereas the second volume was printed by Doz Publishing House in 2000.(Alp, 2000a) His novel *Devran*⁴ was translated to Kurdish in 2006 by his student Receb Dildar (Alp, 2000b, p. 6).

Firstly, Feridun Andaç mentioned his name in his essay “Gerçek okuyucu yazarın devamıdır” [The real reader is the continuation of the author] and praised the language of Seyit Alp. He understood Seyit Alp as a Kurdish author with an obvious literary style. He had the tone of Kurdish oral storytelling (Gazete Duvar, 2018). Cemal Süreya wrote in *Milliyet Sanat* for Seyit Alp; he emphasized that the author liked the narration language, and the novel was like an epic tale, a historical narration or myth. After he received the award, an interview was made with him by Adnan Özyalçiner in YAZKO journal under the name “Dino ile Ceren Üstüne Seyit Alp ile Bir Konuşma” [An Interview with Seyit Alp on Dino and Ceren]. (Aranyosi, 2012) Ezgi Ulusoy Aranyosi prepared a thesis about Seyit Alp with the name “Reflections of Collective Memory in Turkish Literature”, where she explains how the narrative can function as an instrument of collective memory and compares his book *Şawk* (The Reflection) with *Istanbul Was a Fairy Tale* (Mario Levi), and *The Encounter* (Markar Esayan) to reveal how these texts have different aspects of collective memory. Dr. Joanna Bochenska from Poland also made a research on him.

He has four novels respectively *Welat: İskancının Türküsü* (The Homeland: The Son of the Settler, 1977), *Devran* (The Fate, 1979), *Dino ile Ceren* (Dino and Ceren, 1981), and *Şawk* (The Reflection, 1993); he started writing in 1960s, awakening years of Kurdish political consciousness. One of his books, *Komal*, were published in Kurdish.

⁴ The novel titles of *Şawk* and *Devran* shows difference in the headline and text. While cover page of *Devran* is written with “v”; the preface and the inner pages includes “w” letter as *Dewran*. As opposed to it, in *Şawk*, the cover page is keeping “w” letter as *Şawk* and in the preface Word transforms to *Şavk*. This could stem from the typo, however the political factors may also influence the use of the letter “w” which has a political meaning.

Kurdish intellectuals sympathized with left-wing political movements and followed leftist political and cultural movements. They were influenced by socialism due to socialist equality discourse against the feudalism that regarded as the reason of “belatedness” in Kurdish society.

The language of Seyit Alp has already been classified under a different category even for Turkish literature. In the preface of *Dino ile Ceren*, his language is described “Turkish of a Kurd should be in this manner like a Kurdified Turkish”⁵ (Alp, 1993, p. 7). There are different lexical uses in minor language and the language in the novels of Seyit Alp reveal different lexical and syntactical patterns. It is a hybrid language consisting of Kurdish idioms, words, and some verses from traditional Kurdish songs and poems (*dengbej*⁶).

Seyit Alp must have written because Kurds began awakening politically after 1965 and only a literary struggle could support these political developments. Writing in Turkish was also not possible for those authors, who were excluded from this language. Deleuze and Guattari define this type of writing something outside of author’s mother tongue but inside a major language. “Great literatures” is like “a dog digging a hole” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 18). This process ends up in the creation of a minor use from major language.

2.3. Construction of a Hybrid Language

Alp comes up with a deviation in Turkish expression; the language he creates is full of ruptures and variations. He protects the syntactic parts of Turkish but also includes the linguistic, syntactical, and cultural aspects of Kurdish tradition in his expressions. He does not follow verb usage rules and some of the Kurdish idioms are turned to verbs by means of adding a helping verb. Since helping verbs in Turkish such as

⁵ “Böylesi bir eserin Türkçe yazılması belki birçok Kürt okuyucuyu hafif üzer ama, bence Türkçe’yi hakkıyla Seyit yazıyor. Nasıl bir ifade kullanacağımı bilemiyorum, ancak Kürdün Türkçesi böyle olmalı diyorum. Kürtleştirilmiş Türkçe gibi birşey!”

⁶ Dengbej: The performer of traditional Kurdish Folk song, they are also called as “storytellers”.

“olmak” (to be), “etmek” (to make), yapmak (to do)” are useful to change any noun to verb, the expressions are constructed mostly with these words for the hybrid version of Kurdish. To illustrate, “töreyi puçlamak”, “murız yağmak” are some examples for the hybrid use of Kurdish and - Turkish; on the other hand, “meyil akıtmak”, “utanca batmak” are Turkish phrases with helping verbs and in the daily language, they have verb forms as “meyletmek” and “utanmak”.

The first thing that breaks the major use is the naming of the characters with Kurdish names and nicknames such as Keje, Kerimo, Silo, Miran, Apo Haydar, Fato, Kerimo, Kejê, Qado (Alp, 1977); Şeho, Oso , Cumo, Omu , Memdız, Zin, Kevok (Alp, Şawk, 2000a); Kolık Haso, Dul Zero, Kolık , Hivi (Alp, 2000b); Dino, Malhaş, Şiran, Begin (Alp, 1993). Apart from character names, there are also *Kurmanji* words in sentences, many of which are explained with synonyms in Turkish in parentheses or footnotes throughout the novels. *Bilûrvan* (flutist), *serşivan* (master shepherd), *herîr* (silk), *dayê* (mother), *bajar* (city) are some of the Kurdish words in *Şawk*; *abur* (partridge), *hesnanî* (blacksmith), *taun* (plague), *muruz* (to lour), *dengbêj* (storyteller) are those in *Devran*, while *zozan* (highland), *cahş* (colt), *kenger* (a kind of plant) and *kofi* (woman hat) were seen in *Welat*.

As a second point, the letters that cannot be found in Turkish alphabet but in Kurdish Latin alphabet such as q, x,w, ê appear through the texts in some words like *Qelun* (pipe), *xulam* (servant), *welat* (homeland). In this case, the publication rules of Turkish government may have affected the attitudes of Kurdish authors and publishing houses. The novels *Welat* and *Şawk* both have “w” letter in their titles, which can be seen as a revolutionary act in Turkey’s publishing field.

As the third aspect, the language itself reveals hybrid use of Kurdish oral tradition and Turkish; the novels include the pieces of songs, poems, and rhymes. Some of them are translated to Turkish⁷ (Alp, 1977, p. 49), but rhymes are located in the original

⁷ “dolavê darê merhê, darê merhê / Deng tê dengê dolavê / Dırêsim hêriye berxê, hêriye berxê / Dırphin û girpınha dolavê” (çıkırğım kara ağaçtandır, kara ağaçtan / Sesi gelir çıkırğın sesi / Eğirdiğim kuzu yünüdür, kuzu yünü / Tıkirtısı, gıcirtısıyla çıkırğın)

language without translation⁸ (Alp, 2000a, p.137) Local Turkish phrases are frequently uttered, which brings his language closer to Yaşar Kemal literature, which may stem from the fact that Alp lived in central Anatolia and learned archaic Turkish language. Old usage of Turkish words can also be witnessed more than once. For example; instead of saying Ankara and Konya, the author prefers saying “Engürü”, “Haymana”. This can be attributed to narrative’s time as everything happens in Ottoman times in *Şawk*. Some words like “alaz” (fire), “yalım” (fire), “remilci” (fortuneteller), “taun” (the illness of plague), “kunnar” (to give birth) as local Turkish words are also seen in the novel.

2.4. The Political Criticism toward “Colonial Power” and Feudal Structure with the Help of Collective Voice

The second dimension is that everything has a political meaning in minor literature (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 17). And as a third one, developments have collective values since everything is related to politics. After rules of expression and form are broken, reconstruction of content is compulsory. In this sense, political and collective enunciation are dominant and collaborative in the texts.

Related question of second part of this chapter is how colonial encounters and colonial discourse within political and social context can be understood. The rupture in the language finds its place in the novel both creating colonial encounters and making Kurds and Turks confront. Alp constructs two binary poles of Ottoman power: “Colonizer” and “colonized” Kurdish migrants and other ethnic-religious groups. The characters speak on behalf of “colonized” groups with collective voice. The novels also reveal the power struggle against Ottoman power and feudal powers, which makes this process a political resistance.

The encounters are associated with the work of Edward Said, *Orientalism*, which can be summarized as the attempt of Europe to describe East (Parla, 1985, p. 11) and a

⁸ “ro veket / mizgin daket/ hace bezi/ cortan dizi/ lawê pirê / Kete birê / bir mırçıqi/ çav pelçıqi”

kind of “epistemological and ontological division between east and west” The main concern for Orientalism is the binary opposition between East and West, which is reconstructed in the novels of Alp as the binary opposition of Ottoman State and Kurdish society. Creating orientalist opposition in the novels of Kurds is not a new phenomenon. Remezan Alan argues that in Kurdish literature there is the colonial discourse based on historical developments of Kurds and Turks starting from Ottoman period to the Turkish Republic. The “other” of Kurds in Kurdish novels are generally Turks, and he claims that from the time of *Hawar Ecolé* until 1990s including diasporic and Soviet Union Kurdish literature there was not any novel and story representing Kurds and Turks in equally social positions. The encounters generally take place between Kurds and Turks in time of crisis, or war, and the representative characters in the novels written in both Turkish and Kurdish are police and other security staff symbolizing the power of the state. In Turkish novels, the officials generally come from outside, and these outsiders realize the “Şark” (The East) as “uncivilized” image and try to “civilize” this land. Thus, the image of an “inferior” community with “bizarre” language must be changed and this power is responsible with starting the desired change. Alan reads this process as colonialization process. Kurdish texts with their self-orientalist attitude has appropriated the colonial discourse in the novels grounding on binary powers of Turks and Kurds (Alan, 2015). Alp’s novels reveal the colonial understanding as a contingent theme of Kurdish novels.

First of all, the main theme of Alp’s novels is the exile and migration as opposed to outsider characters. Kurdish communities migrate to the West, the land of “colonial power.” The colonized power in *Şark* is symbolized with an Ottoman Pasha, and in *Devran* it is one of the Ottoman officials and historical figure Melek Ahmed Pasha as a novel character, and in *Welat* the colonial power is given by the social pressure of the villagers and the village headman. Especially the idea of Ottoman imperial power is significant in order to explain the novels of Seyit Alp (Alan, 2015). Ussama Makdisi states that “every nation creates its own Orient” and he suggests the idea of *Ottoman Orientalism* started in the nineteenth century with the beginning of the modernization period. There are two opposite poles of Ottoman Orientalism:

Although Ottoman reformers recognized the progressiveness of West as opposed to “backwardness” of East, they resisted “its political and colonialist implications.” Arabs, Kurds, Bulgarians, Armenians were ruled by Ottomans and under the influence of modernization after Tanzimat era:

Ottoman reformers identified with these subjects as potential fellow citizens with whom they should be united in a newly defined common modern ottoman patriotism. They also saw them as fellow victims of European intrigue and imperialism. Yet at the same time, they regarded these subjects as backward and not-yet-ottoman, as hindrances to as well as objects of imperial reform (Makdisi, 2002, p. 770).

In addition to the fact that Ottoman State created ethnic groups that were “backward” and “not-yet-Ottoman”, Kurdish intellectuals were open to adopt the discourse of “colonization” as they were under the influence of socialist ideology. The discourse was like this: Kurdish society was backward due to the feudal system and Kurdish regions were colonized by the state power, a discourse nourished until 1980s. In his novels, Alp also keeps making use of this discourse and creates a struggle between Ottoman State and Kurdish society locating them as “colonizer” power and “colonized” society. Ottoman orientalism is the intention to civilize these “backward and not -yet Ottoman groups”, one of which is Kurdish society. In the aforementioned novels, the idea of Ottoman Orientalism is represented, however it is reproduced in various forms: First, these representations can be seen in the brotherhood of many “colonized” ethnic and religious groups under the rule of Turks, positioned against Ottoman-Turks in the novels. Secondly, novels also include a reaction to this dominant perspective and reverse the colonial discourse by using a moderate discourse. The latter layer is seen in the critiques toward Kurdish society about the feudal social system and adaptation of Kurds to colonial power’s conditions.

Ottoman State is represented as an imperial power that can especially be reflected in the making of characters, plot and the attributions of Turks throughout the novels. Three novels of Seyit Alp namely *Welat*, *Şawk*, and *Devran* focus on the encounter of two different groups, Ottomans and Kurds, in the social sphere, whereas *Dino ile*

Ceren includes an encounter between a Kurdish landlord and villagers within a Kurdish community.

Welat, first novel of Alp, is about the story of an immigrant Kurdish group from “Dersim” to a western village. Around a child and a love story, the Turkish Muslim society of the village is criticized as an oppressive power. To summarize, the novel represents cultural struggle in social life between villagers and immigrant Kurds after arriving the village. In the beginning, local people try to adapt the newcomers into social life through a marriage ceremony and a problem occurs between two groups. Instead, a lenient atmosphere is present. After a love story between a Kurdish man Silo and Turkish girl Mercan emerges, the conflict come to the surface leading to the power struggle of groups and results in the murder of Silo. Throughout this process, two groups keep going rival in the space of language, gender, and politics.

The language is the first colonial encounter space between immigrants and the villagers. Turkish as the language of homeland is seen as a discouraging communication pattern. The oppressive power of the language on newcomers is demonstrated in various positions of characters, which is sometimes funny but sometimes tragic. Inability to speak Turkish is an obstacle for newcomers, so they usually avoid speaking in front of local people. The little boy Kerimo feels anxious when he meets someone local for his weak language ability. His father motivates him to learn “their language”, because they are also “human as we are” (Alp, 1977, p. 14) Kerimo also experiences a tragic event related to his fear and his lack of ability to speak Turkish. The children of local people are deceived that newcomers have tails and the children want to prove for this lie by analyzing the body of Kerimo. Since he cannot understand what they are talking about, he runs away (Alp, 1977, p. 19).

Another space of encounter is social life that creates a compelling tension. After certain developments, the immigrants decide to answer and resist to villagers using arms. At this point, the colonial process is reversed by the narrator. While the colonial power goes to the homeland of colonized country; in the land of colonizer, the other group starts resisting. The word resistance “direnış” (p. 111) and colonialism

“sömürgecilik” (p. 148) are referred in the novel. The preferred discourse can reveal that the author tends to explain the process in the narration grounding on post-colonial terms. He also makes reference to Dersim uprising. “... dinlediler Himmet Çavuşu: ‘Bunlar da onlardan, bunlar da Dersim’in kanlı Kürdü. Bunlar da isyancı’” (Alp, 1977, p. 10). According to villagers’ discourse, the migrants, bloody Kurds of Dersim, are rebels.

Although the time and place seem ambiguous in the novel, some of the references are parallel to historical developments of Turkey’s recent history, which can be inferred from usage of “Dersim” word. In the novel, the immigrant group comes from Dersim to the host land. When they arrive, the villagers feel anxious and unsafe. The wise villager defends immigrants by stating that not all Kurds are from Dersim and rebel. The majority of villagers obeys the state discourse while treating the immigrant group. They force the immigrants to leave for another land after taking their properties for the purpose of civilizing them.

In the East, landlords used to feed bandits to destroy our state. They used to feed and clothe them and then send to mountains. They used to attack our policemen and block the roads. They used to spill the blood of our Muslim brothers, who were the apple of our state’s eyes... Nowadays, the powerful policy of our state is as follows: Seizing their goods and sending them to interior parts of Anatolia just to make them see some civilization⁹ (p. 198-199).

As opposed to these ideas, in the novel, we can come across Turkish characters with tolerant ideas about Kurds. *Cebrail* is one of these characters and according to Cebrail’s ideas, *Dersim* is described in the following quotation:

These people have rebelled. Revolted against our state. You swarmed around them like hawks. You drained blood instead of water in the valleys. You made the caves full of dead Kurds be them young, old or child. ... These people were

⁹“...Doğuda ağalar, devletimizi yıkmak için beslemiş eşkiyayı. Yedirip, giydirip yollarmış dağa. Karakollarımızı basıp, yol keserlermiş. Nice müslüman kardaşımızın, devletimizin göz bebeği askerimizin kanını dökmüşler.... Devletimizin şimdilerde yaman siyaseti: Böylelerinin malını mülkünü alıp yolluyor iççerlere. Biraz medeniyet görsünler diye.”

impossible to be rebels or anything. We should not give them harm. The state has done it already¹⁰ (p. 29).

There is an attitude to make Turks recognize/confess and blame themselves as the subjects of torture towards Kurds.

Lastly, socialist ideas and emphasis on the labor and equality are significant that they recommend villagers to work, and the properties should be distributed among people equally¹¹ (p. 143). Colonial discourse is supported by Marxist discourse; the head of the village is condemned as a man sponging on the villagers without labor¹² (p. 147) and there is an emphasis on exploitation¹³ (p. 148)

Devran has the plot consisting of military expedition of Melik Ahmed Paşa from Ottoman State to the Kurdish city Bitlis under the rule of Abdal Han¹⁴ and the novel develops around this tension. It is significant the main characters, Melik Ahmed Pasha and Abdal Han, are historical figures and the plot includes some of the historical events that took place in the 17th century told by Evliya Çelebi in his travel book¹⁵ (Çelebi, 2013) By means of historical frame in the plot, Kurdish group and Melik Ahmed Pasha (representative of Ottoman state) confront. *Devran* can also be followed in four pathways as constructing colonial hierarchy built around socio-cultural environment, gender and language bases.

¹⁰“... bunlar isyan etti. Devletimize baş kaldırdı. Siz de varıp tepesine atmaca gibi üşüştünüz. Derelerde su yerine kan akıttınız. Mağaraları ağzınaca çoluk çocuk, genç yaşlı isyancı kürdün ölüleriyle sıvadınız... Bunlar isyancı-misyancı olamaz. Devletin vurduğuna bir de biz vurmayalım.”

¹¹ “eşitçe üleştirmek”

¹² “emek vermeden sırtımızdan geçinenler”

¹³ “sömürücülük”

¹⁴ For further information, Dankoff, R. *Evliya Çelebi In Bitlis*, “The Relevant Section of The Seyahatname Edited With Translation, Commentary and Introduction”, (Brill, Leiden. 1990).

¹⁵ Further information Evliya Çelebi, *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, v. 4, ed. Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı, (İstanbul : Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2013).

The first appearance of colonial power is seen in the report saying that Melik Ahmed Pasha is coming to Bitlis for the purpose of expedition. In the novel the expedition is explained as follows:

Melik Ahmed Pasha is coming to Bitlis... it is said that: 'Melik Ahmed Pasha comes to warn the khan of Bitlis and Kurdish khans, who do not make compromises... Because the Khan of Bitlis did not host Ottoman sultan while turning back from Egypt and did not celebrate him because of the conquest, which means Khan of Bitlis despised him¹⁶ (Alp, 2000b, p. 94- 95).

He is drawn as "Dehhak", a Persian mythological character famous for his tyranny and evil.¹⁷ According to the legend, *Dehhak* is the emperor of Iran. After he is caught up by an illness, he started killing two people every day and taking their brains and putting his scar. After many years and lots of people are killed, the head of the society "*Demirci Kawa*" rebels and overwhelms *Dehhak* on 21st March, "Newroz" day. The situation about the pasha is described as in the following passage:

The people are angry at Melik Ahmed Pasha, who leads them to rely on *Newroz* closely. Labor and hope come together, a power that can overwhelm *Dehhak*. *Newroz* is the feast of Kurds. Beside, Jacobites, Georgians, Persian, Armenian, Cherkeses, nomad Turks, briefly all the people own it, and they are trying to celebrate it as much as possible. *Newroz* belongs to all oppressed people¹⁸ (p. 106- 107).

The passage carries some symbolic meanings; the myth of Kawa gained a political meaning in 1970s by Kurdish socialist groups. According to the myth, the King of Assyria "Dehak" was defeated by a civil rebellion which was pioneered by the Blacksmith Kawa in BC 612 year on March 21st. Kawa was the leader of the Medes

¹⁶ "Melik Ahmed Paşa kalkmış da Bitlis üstüne gelir... denir ki: 'Melik Ahmet Paşa, Bitlis han'ından ve taviz vermez kürdistan hanlarından hesap sormaya gelir. ... Çünkü Bitlis hanı, Osmanlı hükümdarını Mısır dönüşünde karşılayıp gazasını kutlamamıştır. Yani küçümsemiştir."

¹⁷ For the information: <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info/dia/ayrmetin.php?idno=080408>

¹⁸ "Ahali Melik Ahmed Paşa'ya hınçlanıp daha da umut bağıladı Newroz'a. Emek, umut birleşip nice Dehhak'ın saltanatını yerle bir edecek güçteydi. ...Newroz Kürtlerin bayramıydı. Böyleyse de Yakubi, Gürcü, Acem, Ermeni, Çerkez, göçebe Türkmen... hasılı bütün ahali sahip çıkıyor, bütün gücüyle kutlamaya çalışıyorlardı. Newroz ezilen herkesindi."

people during the uprising, they defeated Assyrians and gained their freedom. After the victory, he lit a fire to announce the freedom which is also a symbol of Newroz. Blacksmith Kawa was admitted as founding myth of Kurdishness and beside this, Kurdish socialist groups created the myth of “newroz” as a myth of origin. This myth brought the origin of Kurds to ancient Medes people and the notion of ethnic-based Kurdish identity was constructed. Although “Newroz” has been considered as the beginning of the new year and a forerunner of the spring since ancient times, it took a new political meaning; the symbol of the victory of Medes was re-constructed by the Kurdish movement and built as a sample of “Kurdish union”. PKK in 1980s and 1990s awakened the myth of Newroz again for the resistance. On every 21st March, it is celebrated. The movements began with the suicide of Mazlum Doğan in Diyarbakır Prison as a resistance against the torture and oppression in 1982. Self-immolations of PKK members continued through the 1980s and the 1990s and these suicides were represented as resistance and gained a political attribution against the authority of the state. PKK started making attacks and suicide cases on specifically newroz days, which reinforced the resistance aspect (Bora, 2018).

The aspects of the novel characters are also notable; Kolik is a tricky character at the beginning of the novel, whereas he is trained by Yekçeşim in order to work for the sake of the public. Yekçeşim gives advice to Kolik that he should train themselves physically; also spends his power for the sake people (Alp, 2000b, p. 84). “The people” refers to Kurdish society as a collective element and Yekçeşim as a symbol of Kurdish intellectuals who guides a Kurdish young man to please the community. Another significant point on the public lies in the discussion about Sufism; which stems from the story of *Şem u Pervane*. Mele Şemo (Mollah) interprets this story in an Islamic way and states *şem* (candle) symbolizes God, *pervane* (moth) symbolizes believers. Yekçeşim brings another interpretation for it. He argues that the candle symbolizes the community, and the moth as the individual in this community. If the individual sacrifices him/herself for the sake of community, s/he will live until the end of the world even if his/her name is forgotten.¹⁹ (p. 100) Yekçeşim also objects to the

¹⁹ “Yekçeşim’se Melê’nin dediklerini ciddiye almaz. ‘Lo, deli olma... yanmakla, yakmak ayrı haller değildir. Yakan, yanar da... Yanan, yakmamış neye yarar! Meleklerin dedikleri Tanrıyı korkun, insanı

religious ideas of Molla Musa, and defends the superiority of human being. This quotation is important to understand the ideas of Yekçeşim about the people and the state:

You are repeating the words what Dervishes believe. They assume the person who is the master of the universe as someone useless, which brings them to fault. They are acting as the occupant ruler wishes, because the aim of the rulers is to make people lazy, and seclude themselves, which eases to invade their lands²⁰ (p. 100).

Yekçeşim brings a socialist explanation to this story. In the text, the villagers attribute Sheikh Bedrettin “rebellious” and “heretic”, however Yekçeşim admits him as a scholar, the fellow of public and the God” (p. 103).

According to his ideas, religion makes people passive, because the occupant leaders want citizens to be faithful in order to make them passive and occupy their lands easily. This idea reminds the idea of Karl Marx. Marxist ideas, especially in between 1960 - 1980 the leftist movement and the prior Kurdish movements cooperate. These ideas may also signify the metaphorical meanings of political ideas of Kurdish movement. Although the events in the novels take place in the time of Ottoman, the ideas may reflect the contemporary understanding. The references about Sheikh *Bedrettin* is another important element for the representation of Kurdish movement. He is famous with an uprising in the Ottoman State, and he was executed in 1420. The importance of his name comes from being a famous rebellion against Ottoman state and there is a parallel between two facts. There is also another belief that regards him as saint-like person. In terms of Yekçeşim’s ideas, Sheikh *Bedrettin* is not a “hero” but a “scholar” who takes his knowledge from the public and gives it to them, which leads to execution (p. 104). In this context, rather than believing he is a

miskince hallere davettir. Mum, ahalidir... Yani halk. Pervane de insanın ta kendisidir. Kendini feda eden insan, o halkta kıyamete kadar yaşar. Adı unutulsa da yaşar. Nasıl yaşar? İşte bu derin bir meseledir.’ der.”

²⁰ “Horasanlı dervişlerin dediklerini tekrar edersin. Onlar ki kainatın efendisi olan insanı işe yaramaz bir nesne kabul edip büyük hata işlerler. İşgalci hükümdarın arzu ettikleri gibi hareket ederler. Çünkü o hükümdarların amacı, halkı miskinleştirip dünyadan el etek çektirerek yurtlarına kolayca konabilmektedir.”

rebel, he is praised as a hero and a wise man, which is the result of a political positioning. When Kolik asks Yekçeşim what “halk” means, he replies, “... All poor people in the world. They are those who are oppressed, despised, whose rights are violated... [it is said] and the community, and the right, and homeland”²¹ (p. 105).

Another point to mention is that: All other ethnic groups mentioned in the quote such as Jacobites, Georgians, Persians, Armenians, Circassians, nomad Turkmens are assumed in a unity against Ottoman power. Pasha is defeated by Kolik exploding the armory of Ottoman powers, and it is celebrated by the local people, however, the head of Kurds Abdal Han asks for mercy and surrenders to Melik Ahmed Paşa, and he also gives away Kolik for the execution as a rebellion. Kolik is gained a name from the public as “*Biraê Koleti*” - friend of community - and “*Biraê gêda*” - the slave of the community. After Kolik was executed, Yekçeşim who guides Kolik became a hero. According to Yekçeşim, Kolik is brave, and there are so many young brave people like him. And this looks like a discourse of a political and military gathering. Although the novel was published in 1979 and no PKK was around in these years, there were still some Kurdish political movements.

Consequently, the Kurdish collective sound started in *Welat* rose and became more powerful in *Devran*. The time Kurdish political awareness is parallel with the publishing years of *Devran*, powerful political references were possible to create in this period. *Dino ile Ceren* is the third novel of Seyit Alp and is about the problems between the landlords and the peasants in Kurdish community. In the interview, Seyit Alp points out that the novel covers the shift of the relation of products, which creates a conflict between those protecting the status quo and the insisting for development (Özyalçiner, 1981). *Dino ile Ceren* differentiates from the other narrations of Alp, because it discusses colonial discourse as a problem within the Kurdish community; but other novels are established upon the binary opposition of Ottomans-Turkish groups and Kurds.

²¹ “...alemdaki bütün yoksul halktır. Ezilen, horlanan, hakları gaspedilen her kim varsa, işte onlardır... ve halk, ve hak, ve yurt vatan desin!”

Dino ile Ceren is the novel of Alp published in 1981, right after 1980 military coup. During this period there was pressure and violence, which had also influence on Kurdish movement and publishing. The historical and political circumstances seemed to oblige Alp to prefer theme and language. The effect of these developments may be realized in the interview with Seyit Alp. He took the prize of YAZKO with *Dino ile Ceren*, and YAZKO prepared an interview about this novel. In the interview such questions were asked: “In your narration, local expressions, as syntactical markers, are frequently seen. What do you think about this attitude if it is feasible for the essence of the Turkish syntax system?”²² (p. 109). The problem in this question is that the question does not have the word “Kurdish” but “local expression” was preferred, which might be regarded as another indication of that era’s political atmosphere. Alp answers that this type of use in the language would enrich Turkish rather than keeping alive in a closed structure.

The novel is about the love affair between a *Turkmen* girl Ceren and a Kurdish man Dino. Two layers of colonialism are seen as a local authority and the Turkmen identity in the Kurdish community. Turkmen girl Ceren marries to the older landlord of a Kurdish village. The negative features of Ottoman-Turk pashas and villagers in other novels are attributed to the landlord in *Dino ile Ceren*. The tension is the rivalry between the ruler landlord and master shepherd Dino, ruled for the love of Ceren. Dino falls in love with Ceren although she is married to “*bey*” and this rivalry turns to a power struggle in which Dino became symbol of all villagers and had a collective identity. The main critique in this story is against the social class differences (p. 109).

Rather than post-colonial discourse, Marxist ideas are dominant in this story. For Seyit Alp the term “*halk*” (the community) gains a mystical value, since the novel *Dino ile Ceren* starts with an expression “in the name of people, the most gracious, the most merciful”²³ (Alp, 1993, p. 12) which is a transformation of *Besmele*, which means

²² “Anlatımınızda yöresel ağız, sözdizimi olarak, çok sık kullanılıyor. Bu tutumun Türkçe’nin asıl sözdizimine aykırı düşüp düşmediği konusunda ne düşünüyorsunuz?”

²³ “Bağışlayan, yargılayan halkın adıyla”

“in the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful”. In classical literary works, the texts start with the name of the God, specifically with *besmele*, the term “God” is replaced with the term “halk” (people), in this sense the community for the author has a holy meaning. The literature should serve the sake of people. The interest of the community comes first, the individuals in the society are assumed as worshippers of the God. Thus, the novel does not only struggle against political-cultural status quo but also religious mystic status quo, which is seen as a threat to the political unity of people mentioned in *Devran*.

The last book of Alp is *Şawk* is about the group of people forced to migrate from Ararat to Haymana²⁴, and name themselves as “koçer”²⁵. Coming to Haymana, a city full of poverty and death, took two years. It is not the struggle they face but also the problem of struggle to settle in this area. This group is a newcomer nomad tribe; they search for an appropriate place to settle down. The ownership of the lands is another problem. At that moment, the conflict between Kurds and Ottomans, also between Ottoman and other social groups starts. Kurds are symbolized by a Kurdish tribe from Ararat, whose master Hacı Osman Bey and against this group of people there is an Ottoman pasha Dağıstan Bey. Dağıstan Bey is an important character in the novel due to the fact that he is the representation of Ottoman society. Although Dağıstan Bey helps Kurdish tribe and gives them land, actually his main aim is to establish a buffer zone between Ottomans and Turkmens with the help of Kurds. He marries to the daughter of Hacı Osman Bey who is already engaged with Memdız, and his daughter Hacı Osman Bey marries to the daughter of Dağıstan Bey. Kevok does not want to marry to him, but because he intends to rape her, she has to marry him. Indeed, these negative and unpleasant behaviors of Dağıstan Bey and his oppressive and harsh policies toward Turkmens may be a sign of metaphorical criticism of Ottoman state. To illustrate, he confesses in the text:

²⁴ For further information: Rohat Alakom, *Orta Anadolu Kürtleri*, Evrensel Basım Yayım, 2004.

²⁵ Nomad tribe

I did not gain this position of being pasha easily. I have gained it thanks to educating people like training animals and beating with the blood of my whip. I have dealt with those who do not understand the tradition, the order of the Ottoman but I have persuaded them. I can persuade anyone²⁶ (Alp, 2000a, p. 177).

He chooses violence to discipline the people. The head of Turkmens also describes the story from their point of view and according to his idea, Ottoman pasha took their lands by force even though these lands belong to Turkmen and obligate them paying tax, even the resistance caused the loss of lives (p. 46). As a reflection of the pressure, the Ottomans are portrayed with negative attributions such as “kivirtmak” (twist, but metaphorically means to break one’s promise), and “köçek” (dancer boy), “kaypak” (unreliable), “dönek” (renegade person), “namussuz” (dishonest), which can strengthen the feeling of hatred.

The story on the surface tells the migration of a Kurdish tribe from Ararat to Haymana, and their efforts to settle down, but at the end of the novel they cannot manage to settle and turned back to Ararat with many changes. The second story in the novel, which can be read metaphorically, is an adaptation to the “civilized life”, transformation process of the Kurdish society. The main focus is on the character *Memdız*. At the beginning, he is a protagonist as the head of shepherds in the tribe. He is a clever, talented, and honest orphaned man. He is described as an epic hero with supernatural powers, at the same time he is a *dengbej* and *bilurvan* (one who plays pipe). However, the turning point is the marriage of Kevok and the Ottoman pasha. Even though Kevok and Memdız are engaged, Hacı Osman Bey breaks his promise for the sake of his own marriage with the daughter of Ottoman pasha. As a result of this humiliation, Memdız turns into an enemy of Ottoman pasha and works for Turkmens. He steals the herd of the Ottoman pasha with his friends, but he is the only one who survives the massacre of the pasha. As a result of his survival, he becomes a hero for the people. After a while, he becomes a peddler (çerçi) and

²⁶ “Ben bu paşalığı kolay kazanmadım. Hayvan terbiye eder gibi insan terbiye ederek, döve döve, kırbacımın kanıyla aldım. Osmanlının görgü, düzenini anlamayan, akıl erdiremeyenleri yola yatırmaya çok uğraştım, ikna ettim. Ederim de..”

improves his works. And while Hacı Osman Bey gets poorer, he gets rich. However, in this process, he is condemned to forget *töre* (the morals), because he evolves from a shepherd to a “bey” (lord), changes his name from Memdız to “Memet Efendi” due to the meaning of Memdız (it means “thief”) and its classical representation. In addition to this issue, he also wants to take his revenge from Hacı Osman Bey, and decides to get married to the sister of Kevok, Gulamber. As far as all these aspects are concerned, Memdız increases his wealth by means of trade, and changes his status from a poor and orphaned Kurdish shepherd Memdız in a nomad tribe to a civilized, rich man and adapts to urban life becoming Memet Efendi. The process can be read that he adapts to the norms of Ottoman society and that is why he forgets the rules and good manners of his society and turns to “louse” in the eye of Ararat people.

Şawk reveals this adaptation process with the characters of Hacı Osman Bey and his daughter Kevok. At the beginning of the novel, Hacı Osman Bey is a respectful master of the tribe who comes from Ararat. After he and Ottoman pasha Dağistan Bey build close relationship, his behavior toward his wife, his family, and his citizens changes, and this shift ends in the second marriages. In order to get married, Hacı Osman Bey opposes to the traditions and the elders of the tribe (*rihsipi*), which ends up in the loss of his prestige in the society. He fails to keep the Ararat people together in peace, he loses his animals because of an epidemic, and he is not able to harvest due to the storm. At the end of the process, even though they believe they cannot manage, they are on the way of returning to Ararat with his family.

Kevok is another example for the adaptation, her adaptation process stems from a forced marriage rather than a willingly change. After she gets married to Dağistan Bey, she has problems with culture and her language. Her identity is changed; her name is changed as “Keklik Hanım”, her Kurdish name “Kevok” is not used any more. All three stories of Memdız, Hacı Osman Bey, and Kevok brings a conclusion that the negative behaviors are attributed to Ottoman society. Especially the transformation of Memdız from a hero to anti-hero is a conclusion of adaptation to Ottoman culture.

The function of this story and also the conflict between Ottoman pasha and Memdiz may symbolize the political conflict between Turkish government and Kurds.

There are more historical and political references. For example; while the thieves are sought by Ottoman pasha, he harms Turkmen group very much.

Pasha did not stop and terrorized Turkmens... First *the discipline(tedip)* has come. Those who have taken cannot go back, and those who have returned are not healthy as they were before. He said *the reform (islah)* did not allow people to harvest, and forced people to migrate²⁷ (p. 208).

The terms “tedip” (to discipline) and “islah” (reform) are cues for the migration process in the Ottoman State. Especially at the end of 19th century and through 19th century there was such a policy to make Turkmen tribes migrate to central Anatolia, and these movements were legitimized with the terms “*tedip*” and “*islah*”. During this process, a lot of Kurdish groups were placed in Konya, Ankara, and other cities. There is empathy to other ethnic and religious groups such as Turkmens, Alevis, Zoroastrians, *Kızılbaş* (redhead), and Muslims against the “enemy” image of Ottoman power (Alp, 2000a, p. 251).

In sum, Seyit Alp constructs a new language including Kurdish Latin letters, Kurdish words and phrases and oral tradition elements in his texts and creating a new hybrid form in the major language. As indicated by Deleuze and Guattari, Alp changes the phrasal structure of Turkish to some extent and due to the political and collective discourse he comes close to minor literature. The displacement and migration of Kurdish population end up in the encounters of “colonized” Kurdish society and “colonizer” Ottoman power; the language and power struggle come to the surface between two groups. The discourse of colonization and uses of Kurdish words and phrases distinguishes his literature from canonical Turkish literary texts and brings

²⁷ “Paşa, yeteri bilmiyordu. Kasıp kavurdu Türkmeni... İlk ‘tedip’ geldi. Götürülen getirilmedi, getirilen işe yaramadı elayaktan düşmüş kaldı bir köşede. ‘İslah’ dedi çift bozdurttu, göçe zorladı halkı.”

him to the edge of two languages since colonization discourse of Ottomans and Turks is continuous with Kurdish Literary texts.



CHAPTER 3

3. SUZAN SAMANCI: A FEMALE VOICE FROM MINOR LANGUAGE

The main concern of this chapter is to examine the novels and stories of Suzan Samancı basing on her language construction and political-collective positioning. Literary works of Suzan Samancı are worth analyzing since she discusses Kurdish identity-related experiences within Turkish society and problematizes social, political, and linguistic aspects of being Kurd in Turkey. She occupies an important position both in Turkish publication field and Kurdish literary environment. Certain mainstream publishing houses like Can, İletişim, Metis and Sel publish her books. Some interviews were made with her and some researches about her literary texts had media coverage to some extent.²⁸ Fırat Ceweri includes Samancı in Kurdish literary field, even though it is a well-known fact that she did not write any story in Kurdish during this period. Yücel argues that she is one of those authors who is able to speak Kurdish but write in Turkish. They possess Kurdish identity and want to write in Kurdish thus have been integrated into Kurdish literature. In this sense, despite the fact that Samancı did not write in Kurdish before 2015, Kurdish anthologies included Samancı in Kurdish literary field with a view to motivate her (Yücel, 2018, p. 222).

3.1. Shift of the Political and Cultural Atmosphere (1980-2000)

Two characteristic periods from 1980 to 2000s can be mentioned: The era after 1980 military coup and the time after 1990s. 1980 was a milestone for Turkey's history since it has led to epistemological changes in historical, political and cultural fields of Turkey. 1980 coup d'état ended in certain oppressive policies, arrestments and aggravated tortures. Especially Kurds were persecuted and insulted in Diyarbakır Prison. Struggle between spreading Kurdish movement and anti-terrorist departments within the state claimed many lives. Nearly four thousand people were killed through these executions. The forced migrations from East part of Turkey to the West continued between 1991-1995 and nearly two thousand villages were

²⁸ Only her first book was published from a local Publisher house, Cadde Publishing House.

evacuated (Bora, 2018). Political oppressions expelled people to Europe and made them political refugees. Many Kurdish intellectuals moved to European countries such as Sweden and Germany, which set up a Kurdish diaspora in Europe. The fundamental change in 1980s was the establishment of PKK – Kurdistan Worker’s Party- and with the beginning of armed struggle against Turkish Republic in 1978, Kurdish political movement turned to be more radicalized (Bozarslan, 2002). The fight between Turkish army and PKK went on after 1980s and this war was intensified during 1990s.

The years of 1980s witnessed powerful changes in Turkey. Now, a liberal state was trying to be created by means of technological advances and communication tools, which led Turkish economy to join global markets. This economic liberalization brought a political liberation that paved the way for rising political or social groups such as Islamic movement and Kurdish movement. The notions like “individualism” and “self” became significant and “ethnic, sexual, linguistic, and religious” differences were started to be recognized (Kahraman, 2000, p. 39-40). In this sense, nationality-based understanding went through a change and ethnic and cultural differences began to be represented in both political and cultural sphere.

Certain policies about Kurdish language went on. Kurdish language had been suppressed because of the Law 2932. The legislation of 1983 banned publication in those languages which were not recognized as the first official language in any county, this law was canceled in 1991 (Yeğen, 2009, p. 605; Yücel, 2018, p. 31). For a long time, Kurdish language was both denied and underestimated. When 1990s came, Kurdish identity was recognized as a reality and publication in Kurdish language was permitted (1991). Teaching centers and institutions were established in İstanbul in order to gather Kurdish young people together and disseminate Kurdish culture and language (Yücel, 2016, p. 119). The ban on Kurdish language was partly removed in 1991. Some journals that started being published in diaspora continued their publication in İstanbul. Not only Kurdish groups but also other ethnic groups raised awareness about their own identities. Turkey began shifting from a monolithic country to multi-cultural one (Bruinessen, 2015, p. 8).

In 1990s, official Kurdish political parties were founded and they joined the democratic process. Now, they had the chance to be represented in the parliament. Cultural movements accelerated (Yücel, p. 117). European Kurdish diaspora played an essential role in the developing and dissemination of Kurdish literature and culture because of the political freedom in Europe. 1980s were also when cultural and linguistic changes were attempted in European Kurdish diaspora. The political figures were exiled or migrated to Europe after 1980 coup d'état and this caused an "exile literature" to emerge. After 1980, the Kurdish diaspora in Europe expanded especially because of migration waves following Barzani's fail in Kurdish region of Iraq around 1970s and the Islamist revolution in Iran at the end of 1970s. After 1980 coup d'état in Turkey, educated and politicized Kurds had to migrate from Turkey to Europe. The diasporic Kurds established some foundations and preserved their political and social bonds. The main development was seen in printing and broadcasting activities, which denotes a cultural improvement. After this freedom of publishing in Kurdish, the effort to use Kurdish in more ways increased. MED TV started broadcasting and this helped using Kurdish not only in Europe but also in Turkey (Bora, 2016, 864; Bruinessen, 2015).

1990s were the years for a powerful social change, which Bruinessen also mentions. In those times when Tansu Çiller ruled the country, many villages especially from Dersim, Bingöl, Cizre, Şırnak, Mardin and Nusaybin were evacuated and inhabitants of these villages migrated to big cities like Diyarbakır, Mersin, Adana, İzmir, İstanbul and Ankara. As a result of this migration movement, new social and economic classes emerged. During this process, non-governmental organizations started working, but in the middle of 1990s so many murders remained unresolved. During this period, legal Kurdish political parties were founded (Bruinessen, 2015). Throughout 1990s, although no real attempts were made to solve the problem, a discourse around Kurdish issue spread and talking about being Kurdish was not a taboo anymore. Although the politics did not find any permanent solution, public discourses about the issue changed and a lenient discourse was adopted after 1990s. This atmosphere was reflected in literary field. Novels and stories about the issue began to be published and free discussions gained momentum.

3.2. Loss of Language and the Emergence of Silence

Samancı is a productive author; her books were published in 1990s and 2000s, and she continues publishing books. She was born in 1962 in Diyarbakır and stayed there for many years. In 2008, she moved to Switzerland, and now she has been living there for eleven years. Being the first genre she tried, Samancı started writing poems in 1985-87 and then she decided to write stories and novels. Some of her stories were published in literary journals like *Adam Öykü*²⁹ and *Defter*³⁰. She kept writing in various newspapers such as *Demokrasi*, *Özgür Politika*, and *Taraf* from 1995 to 2011. Her novels and short stories are as follows: *Eriyip Gidiyor Gece* (The Night Melts Away, 1991), *Reçine Kokuyordu Helin*³¹ (Helin Smells the Resin, 1993), *Kıraç Dağlar Kar Tuttu*³² (Barren Mountains Were Covered with Snow, 1996), *Suskunun Gölgesinde*³³ (In the Shadow of The Silence, 2001), *Korkunun Irmağında*³⁴ (In the Stream of Fear, 2004) *Halepçeden Gelen Sevgili*³⁵ (The Beloved from Halabja, 2010) and *Koca Karınlı Kent*³⁶ (The City with Giant Ventral, 2016). Until 2015, she wrote in Turkish but this very year she published a storybook in Kurdish called *Ew Jin û Mêrên bi Maske* (The Women and the Men behind Masks), which was published by Avesta Publishing house.

She won the Award of Orhan Kemal Short Story in 1997 ranking second with her book *Kıraç Dağlar Kar Tuttu*. Being edited by Ayşe Kulin, *Canımı Yakma* (Do Not Hurt Me) anthology includes one of her stories. Her short story "Perili Köşk" appeared in a

²⁹Samancı, Suzan; "Ablamdı", (story), Volume 30, September- October 2000, p 109- 110.

Samancı, Suzan; "İtirafçı", (story), Volume 30, September- October 2000, p.93-96.

Suzancı, Saman; "Kaygı", (story), Volume 28, May-June 2000, p.76-79.

³⁰ "Errik Adam", *Defter*, Issue 39, 2000.

³¹ Published by Can Publishing House, 1993.

³² First volume was printed by Can Publishing House in 1996 and second edition was from İletişim Publishing in 2002.

³³ Published by İletişim Publishing in 2001.

³⁴ Published by Metis Publishing House in 2004.

³⁵ Published by Sel Publishing House in 2009.

³⁶ Published by Ayrıntı Publishing House in 2016.

German anthology and *Reçine Kokuyordu Helîn* was translated to German, Flemish, Spanish, Italian, and Swedish. Her story “Berçem” was translated to French under the name of “A-Eurysthée”. Her two Turkish novels *Reçine Kokuyordu Helîn* and *Suskunun Gölgesinde* were translated into Kurdish as *Bajarê Mirinê* and *Siya Bê Dengiyê*.

Currently, she lives in Genova, and keeps writing within the diaspora. She has completed her new Turkish novel and waits for it to be published. Its name has been announced to be “Cenevre' de Sonbahar” (The Autumn in Genova). She also keeps writing in Kurdish. Her short story collection called *Çirokên Jinên Dil Şikestî* [Stories of Broken-Hearted Women] and *Mirzayê Reben* [Poor Mirza] are in publication process. She is a PEN member of Turkey, Kurds, and Switzerland (Haber Podium, 2019). Why she wrote in Turkish in 2015 and which circumstances led her to start writing in Kurdish lately are significant questions. In her interview (2005), she stated that she prepared for writing in Kurdish and aimed to produce Kurdish short stories (Metis Kitap, 2005). Moreover, she accepted that she was comfortable to write in Turkish just because her language of education was Turkish. After her efforts to improve her Kurdish skills, she began writing and published a Kurdish novel (Retrieved from Youtube, 2019).

The texts are entirely about the political atmosphere of 1980s and 1990s, whose main themes are notably missing homeland, adaptation problems, difficulties in learning a new language, feeling of fear and anxiety, and sometimes extreme paranoia feelings. The fear of getting killed, arrested or caught in an illegal situation are other feelings in the texts.

The novels and stories of Suzan Samancı as a Kurdish author were analyzed before. In his thesis, Suat Baran “Dilsel Travmadan Sessizlik Hallerine: Suzan Samancı” (From Linguistic Trauma to States of Silence: Suzan Samancı) (Baran, 2014) concentrates on how the characters lose their native language and adopt Turkish grounding upon minor literature and colonialism concepts. He indicates how the new language process causes the loss of native language and silence among characters and Turkish speaking oppression creates stammering instead of meaningful words. In 2019, Tufan

Erbarıřtıran published a book with the name of *Suzan Samancı'nın Öyküleri Üzerine Bir Deneme* (An Essay on the Short Stories of Suzan Samancı) (Erbarıřtıran, 2019) and Nazan Aksoy also wrote an article in *Birikim* called "Anadilinde yazmak-yaz(a)mamak sorunsalı ve Suzan Samancı'nın anlatıları" [The problem of writing-not writing and narratives of Suzan Samancı] In addition to this literature, some literary journals (such as Notos) and blogs published essays about Samancı's books. Also, her interviews and information about her life were published in many blogs.³⁷

After this transformation, "subjectivity" became an issue in the literary field and social life. These transformations affected both Turkish literature and Kurds in Turkish literature.

Language freed itself from political responsibilities and defined itself as a game, but at the same time it became completely random, arbitrary; language became its own ground. All there are intimately related to literature. Being far from political pressures, literature was searching for its autonomous principles in 1980s, but just as in private life, it experienced femininity and the provincial was left to pressures that threatened its autonomy in addition to pressures from free market (Gürbilek, 2011, s. 12-13).

Despite the fact that there were severe conditions under 1980 coup d'etat and during the state of emergency in 1990s and civil deaths and unresolved murders abounded in and more than 40.000 people were dead, there was also an atmosphere fit for multiple identities in literature, art, and music. A second outbreak named by Gürbilek as "explosion of Turkishness" was witnessed. Gürbilek describes this atmosphere in the following quote:

A country where books are banned, seized from bookshelves and destroyed, but where people believe education is the key to solution of each and every problem anfetishize reading. Land of people who were afraid of using the 'Kurd' of years and realized that there was a 'Kurdish issue' when children sent

³⁷ Memet Fuat mentioned *Kıraç Dağlar Kar Tuttu* in his essay: "Recently, I have read short story book of Suzan Samancı from Can Publishing. Those things cannot be written without living... Yes, you cannot write certain things without experiencing them... I used to think that some day those in the mountains would write their own stories... But when an author appears... it is enough to be able to narrate the whole thing neatly..." (Fuat, 1996)

off for military service did not return home, but also whose favorite pop singers are Kurds (p. 2).

As opposed to the expectations, 80s had important binary oppositions under that oppressive ruling. Although Kurds were being tortured, Şiwan Perwer was the most popular singer in Turkey. Literary field was being shaped in this atmosphere. On the one hand, publishing was under control and printed press was not free; on the other hand, the number of hard-copy magazines and journals was very high and new movements like feminism and Islamism was setting their literary environments. During 1980s fear was dominating feeling, especially in the cultural field. The effects hereof can still be found in certain cultural spheres. In that sense, the reflection of fear throughout 1980s has a place in Samancı's novels. The first impression one gets from Samancı's novels is the atmosphere of fear and anxiety. General tendency in her short stories and novels is to build the narration around a conflict. M. Sadık Aslankara explains the literature of Suzan Samancı based on her first book *Kıraç Dağlar Kar Tuttu* as such:

Samancı focalizes the "covert / unseen war" in these stories. If this focalization remains only as a witness, the work can be the narration of a journalist. However, this is absolutely not true since just witnessing is not sufficient for Samancı. She has gone beyond it. In fact, it is easy to witness but it is difficult to do it in an aesthetic form.... Samancı has generally succeeded this. She merges her stories with the needs of a story. Besides, she includes in her stories other tragedies whether they have their roots in "unseen war" or not³⁸ (Aslankara, 1997, p. 80).

Aslankara describes Samancı's literature with these words: She is successful in reflecting the tension of the era. In this atmosphere, blood, snitch, betrayal, abduction and lost exist. People usually control their back, everywhere is full of police

³⁸ "Samancı, Güneydoğuda süren 'örtük savaş'ı odaklıyor bu öykülerde. Eğer bu odaklama salt bir tanıklık olarak kalsaydı, bir gazetecinin anlatısına dönüşebilirdi sanırım yapit. Ama hayır, Samancı, tanıklık yapmakla yetinmiyor. Tanıklığın çok daha ötesine geçiyor. Oysa tanıklık yapmak kolay ama, bu tanıklığı sanatsal kılabilmek zor.... Samancı genel çizgileriyle başarıyor bunu. Öykülerini öykünün gereksindiği öteki öğelerle de harmanlıyor. Sonra bu örtülü savaştan kaynaklansın ya da kaynaklanmasın, başka başka dramalara da yer açıyor öykülerinde yazar. İşte bu bileşenler Samancı'yı tanık değil, yazar yapıyor."

officials and troops. The reality of the city is fear, which finds its most concrete expression in the fear of death. This fear influences people's personalities and behaviors (Aslankara, 1997, 81). Samancı locates her literature within borders of "minor literature":

We are inside minor literature created by the minority who cannot write in their mother tongue but use a major language. The main aspect of minor language is that everything inside is political. Social issues and the atmosphere around it is the background. In their "Minor Literature and Kafka", Deleuze and Guattari explain this clearly. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari are those authors who analyzed Kafka in detail. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* explains the issue very well. How many people cannot write in their mother tongue today? (This is) The problem of immigrants, exiles and children... The problem of minor literature is our problem. While Deleuze and Guattari ask how a person 'becomes nomad, immigrant or gypsy in relation to their own language' ...we are also the immigrant, gypsy, and the evil of our language. What is minor literature? Minor literature is not the language of a minority group but the literature of a minority group who has to write in a major language. However, its main characteristic is being affected by the deterritorialization of language in all circumstances³⁹ (Edebiyat Haber, 2014)

She explains minor use of the language of those who cannot write in their mother tongue:

Using a dense, striking and implicit language in the texts of those who cannot write in their own mother tongue is beyond deliberate decision; furthermore, it is a linguistic tragedy. Is it possible to be a coincidence to write better in a major language? Is it not the case that Kafka, Joyce, Bckett's tendency to

³⁹ "Anadilinde yazamayan azınlığın Majör bir dilde yaptığı "Minör Edebiyat" in çemberindeyiz bir bakıma. Minör edebiyatın en önemli özelliği her şeyin siyasal olmasıdır. Toplumsal plan ve çevre arka plan olarak kalır. *Deleuze ve Guattari*, "Minör Edebiyat ve Kafka" adlı eserlerinde bunu çok güzel açıklıyor. *Kafka*'yı en iyi inceleyenlerden *Gilles Deleuze ile Felix Guattari'dir*. Minör Edebiyat İçin Kafka adlı incecik kitap çok şey söyler. Anadillerinde yazamayan ne kadar çok insan var günümüzde? Göçmenlerin, sürgünlerin ve çocukların sorunu... Minör edebiyatın sorunu, aynı zamanda hepimizin sorunu. *Deleuze ve Guattari*, "İnsan nasıl kendi öz dilinin göçebesi ve çingenesi olur" derken, *Kafka* "Çocuğu beşikten çalmak, gergin ippte dans etmektir" diyor. Ve bizler de beşikten çalındık, gergin ipten öte, hem de ateşler üstünde dans ediyoruz; kendi dilimizin göçmeni, çingenesi ve günahkârıyız... Nedir "Minör edebiyat"? Minör edebiyat, minör bir dilin edebiyatı değil, bir azınlığın majör bir dilde yaptığı edebiyattır. Ama temel özelliği, dilin güçlü yersiz yurtsuzlaşma katsayısından her koşulda etkilenmiş olmamasıdır."

monologue and stream of consciousness cannot show itself in their mother tongue and being other?⁴⁰ (Edebiyat Haber, 2014)

As a female Kurdish author in Turkey, writing was impossible for Samancı. And thus she explains her writing experience in an interview as follows:

The magical world of books was making me crazy. I was happy in this journey through my own world. At the age of sixteen, when I read Simone de Beauvoir, I discovered myself and opened my eyes to my own womanhood. From then on, I had a model of a female author who is free and powerful. My ambition was to be that author. I was living in Diyarbakır, Amed. I thought that I was a woman and if we had to live through this social pressure just because of oppressive state policies, the only thing we could get would be a destructive triplet gripper, which has also the utmost capacity to destroy our dreams. Nevertheless, I did not lose my belief and overcame with the unbeliever eyes and voice murmuring “Come on, is it that easy?” and began saying “I want to write ⁴¹ (Edebiyat Haber, 2014).

She realizes her existence as both a woman and Kurd. Due to her Kurdish identity, she feels the state domination and she faces the social pressure as a female author.

Her views about the place of women in social life are worth considering since she is one of the few authors in Turkish literature with Kurdish identity and writes about Kurdish women in Turkish. In her book *Halepçe'den Gelen Sevgili*, there is a meeting scene where the intellectuals, businessmen, authors and poets gathered for resolving the conflict about Kurdish issue. They discuss about talking and writing in Kurdish. Some part of the discussion is as follows:

⁴⁰“Kendi anadillerinde yazamayan yazarların da damıtık, vurucu, hatta örtük bir dil kullanmaları, bilinçli bir tercihten öte, yaşadıkları lengüistik dramdır bence, dahası yazmak zorunda kaldıkları egemen dili yazınsal anlamda çok iyi kullanmaları bir tesadüf olabilir mi? Dikkat edilirse *Kafka, J. Joyce, S. Beckett*’in monologa ve bilinçakışına yönelmeleri ana dillerinde yazamamaları ve öteki olmalarının payı yok mudur?”

⁴¹ “Kitapların o büyülü dünyası beni benden alıyordu, kendime ait bu dünyadaki yolculuğumda mutluydum, on altı yaşlarında Simone de Beauvoir’i okuduğumda kendimi ve kadınlığımı keşfettim. Uzaklara, özgür, güçlü bir kadın yazar modeli çizdim ona mutlaka ulaşmalıyım dedim. Tabii Kürdistan’ın şehr-î Diyabekir’inde Amed’de yaşıyordum, kadındım, toplumsal baskıya devletin baskısını da eklersek yok edici üçlü bir kıskaç insanın hayallerini darmadağın eden bir gerçekle karşı karşıya getiriyordu. “Yazmak istiyorum” dediğimde, ‘Hadi oradan sen de, öyle kolay mı?’ diyen inançsız bakışları belleğime kazırken, kendime olan inancımı hiç kaybetmedim.”

[He asked] ‘Why don’t you think writing in your own language?’ Mr. Fehmi ... ‘We are not able to write. Is it that easy to create literature in a language banned for years? We fluctuate, we search and at last what we experience is a linguistic dram’... (Ms. Selma said) ‘Despite the harsh fact that we are hurt, we try to write. And this grief also leads us to write. We are trying to write and reshape and transform our reality it⁴² (Samancı, 2012b, 79).

In the discussion table, Mr. Selim writes in his mother tongue and thus everyone’s eye is on him for an appropriate explanation. He says: “Language did not cause any divisions in no country in the world. When people are divided as “we” and “they” in a country, just know that bells are about to ring. And know that too militant states can never produce art⁴³ (Samancı, 2012b, 79). The meeting is estimated to happen after 2000s since it is held for taking support of intellectuals for soothing the grief experienced in the past. In this meeting, some authors who try to have a close relationship with powerful authors and gain prestigious positions for publishing their books are criticized⁴⁴ (p. 79-81).

With this quote, Samancı implies the freedom in the literary field after 1980s and touches upon how some authors care not about literary development but the reputation. In many of her novels and stories, she problematizes being unable to use

⁴² “... anadilinizde neden yazmayı düşünmüyorsunuz?’ dedi. Fehmi bey, ...‘yazamıyoruz ki! Yıllarca yasaklanmış bir dilde edebiyat yapmak öyle kolay mı? Bocalıyoruz, arayış içindeyiz, lenuistik bir dram yaşıyoruz.’... “(Selma Hanım) yüreğimiz acısa da yazmaya çalışıyoruz, zaten acılar insanı yazmaya itiyor. Gerçekliğimizi yeniden biçimlendirip dönüşüme uğratarak yazmaya çalışıyoruz.”

⁴³ “Dünyanın hiçbir ülkesinde dil olgusu, dil farklılığı savaşa, bölünmelere yol açmamıştır. Bir ülkede biz ve onlar duygusu geliştiği an alarm zilleri çalmaya başlamıştır; hem savaşı devletler de hiçbir zaman sanat üretemez” dedi”

⁴⁴ “Seksen sonrası ilk kez memleketine gelen yurtdışındaki yazar Selim Bey, yeni ünlenmişti, bu ününden memnun görünüyordu. ..İstanbulu yazar Ersan Bey, içkisini yudumlarken kendini dünyanın merkezi gibi görüyordu. Selim Bey ile ikili bir sohbeet dalmışlardı. Ersan Bey’in son yazdığı tarihi romanına övgüler yağdırırken asıl amacı, Ersan Bey’i etkileyip onun çevresine girmek, dostluklar geliştirerek edebiyat piyasasında yer edinmekti.Ama işin ilginç yanı şu ki, Ersan Bey de Selim Bey’in yurtdışındaki ilişkilerinden yararlanmak istiyordu... Ersan Bey Diyarbakırlı yazarlara ‘siz taşralılar’ diye takılırken, bu takılmanın ardındaki gerçeğe inandığı belliydi... Şiir bittiğinde alkışlar yükseldi. Ersan Bey, Selim Bey’e ‘kim bu çocuk?’ dedi. Selim Bey, ‘Öğretmenmiş, mesleğinden atılmış,’ derken, fısıltıyla ‘zavallı, yurtdışına çıkmanın fırsatını arıyor, arkamda dolanıp duruyor, bana şiirler ithaf ediyor,’ dedi, ... (Selma Hanım) ‘Selim Bey, edebiyatı işporta tezgahına çevirenlerin arasına girmiş, arkadaki malını en öne çıkarmayı başardı,’ darken, Ersan Bey ile Selim Bey’in konuşmalarına kulak misafiri oluyordu. Ersan Bey, ‘Gerçi edebiyatta torpil yoktur, ama kim ne derse desin ilişkiler de önemlidir.’... (Ersan Bey) ‘Sen de az kurnaz değilsin yani, bakıyorum da her kentte bir aydın ya da yazar tavlayıp onunla açılım sağlıyorsun, iyi de ediyorsun; bunlar çok önemli, bedeva reklamlardır,’ dedi.”

the mother tongue and the obligation to learn a new language, Turkish. The characters have to use language properly and speak Turkish appropriately. Otherwise, they are humiliated or punished, which is described as such “[I am] the warbler of a foreign language while being stammerer of my own”⁴⁵ (Samancı, 2011b, p. 68). Two types of oppression can be seen in linguistic sphere. First encounters occur in primary school, where teachers force students to learn and speak in Turkish. The language problem emerged after migrations as can be seen in the short story called "Perili Kent", where the father is a teacher and moves to Nevşehir with his family after being appointed to Nevşehir. The city, the language and even the religious sects are different now. As the daughter learns fast, she is adapted to this new language and culture. However, it is challenging to learn a new language for the mother and grandmother. Many stories in *Kıraç Dağlar Kar Tuttu, Reçine Kokuyordu Helîn and Suskunun Gölgesinde* mention a language barrier. Their (Turkish) learning process is painful since they sometimes are humiliated because of their irregular uses of language and dialect. Language obstacle is imbedded in the sub-consciousness. She tries to speak Kurdish in her dreams but she cannot achieve it.

In many of her stories and novels, Kurdish characters have the trauma of learning Turkish and they save tragic memories while trying to adapt to this new language. The characters are generally exposed to jokes about their Turkish dialects and urged to speak a standardized way of Turkish. She explains her conditions after 1980s and even after 1960s, when experiences of Kurdish people in Turkey are not encouraging. They can write since they have experienced the fear and grief in Diyarbakır. All in all, one must not tell what happens but just experience it. Samancı tries to discuss this fear in her novel (Metis Kitap, 2019).

When viewed from this perspective, her texts are closer to minor language especially because “intensive utilization of language” is powerful in Samancı’s literary works. The first aspect of her texts is to break the language structure using an

⁴⁵ “Başkasının dilinde bülbül, kendi dilimde kekemeydim”

unstandardized alphabet. Even though the Turkish Latin alphabet does not include *î, ê, x, w, q*, we see these letters in relevant texts. Many of the Kurdish words, phrases, and idioms are included in these texts. Turkish syntax is bent using idioms from different languages and cultures. Kurdish idioms are common and translated in the footnotes. Words like “belê” (Yes), “sibê” (tomorrow), gundi (peasant) and especially exclamatory sentences in original Kurdish are kept in the Kurdish. “Oy bavo, oy yadê” (Ow father, ow mother), “ez kurbanete” (for God’s sake), “tişt nabe” (no harm will come), “Oxeş oxeş” (It will serve me, right), “çi xweşe çi xweşe” (how good, how good).

There is some specific usage based on breaking syntactic rules. Greek neighbor asks Delila in Turkish “Sevgilin yook senin?” (Samancı, 2012b, 74) and this is syntactically wrong in written Turkish. The question must end with a question mark, which lacks in the sentence. The question sounds like Turkish with Greek dialect. And thus not only Kurdish but also texture of another foreign language mixes with Turkish.

Secondly, new words and phrases can directly be found in texts. Character names change depending on their ethnic origins. Not just Kurdish or Turkish characters but also Armenian, Yazidi and European people with names like Zaven, Rodi, Katy, Hewra, Clarissa, Mikael, Porşev, Berfin, Roni, İza, Tais are in the novels. The underlying reason hereof may be that the characters generally live in European diaspora, which creates a multi-cultural environment. Kurdish names preserve their original letters like “î” (“Rojîn”, “Hîvda”). Especially the phrases and idioms that belong to Kurdish culture and difficult to translate to Turkish are preserved in the texts. “Ben de ji ben de ji” which means “me too” is a mixture of Turkish and Kurdish words. It is explained in the footnote by the author that Kurds who have learned Turkish recently are confused about the use of suffixes “de, da” in Turkish and use Kurdish “ji” and Turkish “de” together (Samancı, 2016, p. 24).

The sentence “Memleketimin zozanındayım” also consists of words from two languages. It means “I am in the highland of my city”(Samancı, 2012b, 60).

“Memleket” is the Turkish word for “my city” while Kurdish word “zozan” means highland. As you see, two languages meet in the same sentence.

The other element is the loss of language in the texts: The characters lose their voices and their ability to talk; the silence, growling, coughing, and other noises are there to communicate. The characters lose their mother tongue and instead gain Turkish in time (Baran, 2014). After state of emergency, this silence deepens. While the reason of first trauma is the removal of Kurdish language from daily life, second of era silence is caused by the separation between city dwellers and villagers. State pressure keeps them from speaking. This era of silence throughout 1980s and 1990s is caused by state oppression.

The reason of stammering is the impossibility to speak in major language politically and linguistically. Throughout the text, the words like "stammering" (kekelemek) are frequently written in order to describe their speech. The characters generally cannot make meaningful sentences but only stammer. Since silence is the main determinant, signifiers of the communication change depending on the circumstances.⁴⁶ Growling, coughing, the voice of boots, screams, bellows, silence are the words used for describing the absence of speech⁴⁷ (Samancı, 2012b).

As a particular Kurdish cultural element, ululation -zılgıt- becomes representative and turns out to be the tool of resistance in mother tongue. Ululation is symbolized here as collective voice, unity and political resistance to major language: “I did not know how to ululate before, I felt embarrassed; but now we are ululating all together. Those with sheepy eyes do not come close since those with wolfy eyes frighten them”⁴⁸ (Samancı, 2011b, p. 74-75).

⁴⁶ “Metalik sesler... İnsanların sesleri yoktu, gürültüleri de.”

⁴⁷ “Hırıltı”, “kalın öksürük”, “postal sesleri”, kesik çığlıklar, böğürtüler ve sessizlik”

⁴⁸“Eskiden zılgıt çekmeyi bilmezdim, utanırdım; şimdi hepimiz zılgıt çekiyoruz. Koyun bakışlılar zılgıt çekmeye yanaşmıyorlar; kurt bakışlılar korku salmış yüreklerine.”

Suskunun Gölgesinde – the story book- (Samancı, 2012a) is worth analyzing to exemplify the loss of language. The first text in the book is called "Errik Adam" and it takes place in a park between a couple and a mad guy. While the couple hangs around the park, the mad man asks for a cigarette. Even after they give the cigarette, the man keeps following the couple, disturbs them and creates anxiety and fear. The mad man and couple talks a few words, but most of what the man says cannot be understood. His speech described is as "mumbling"⁴⁹ While he fires his cigarettes, he says "errik" which means "wow" in Kurdish.⁵⁰ However, the couple understands the word as "erik" (plum) in Turkish and serves plums for him. At that moment, he shouts as "errik" which has two meanings: The first one is the mis-pronunciation of Turkish word "erik" (plum), and the second meaning in Kurdish as explained in the footnote is "wow". The same word has a two meanings in both languages and thus Samancı creates a pun. Although the mad man voices a Kurdish word, the couple understands it like a Turkish word meaning "plum" and they give some plums to the mad man. On the other hand, while two military tanks come, the mad man becomes frightened and says "Çocuklar boom! Kari boom! Öldi" which sounds meaningless at first since there is no proper syntactical order. Then, it becomes clear that the military tanks remind him of the violence he and his family once exposed. He echoes the voice of a bomb as "boom" to describe the explosion and tries to describe the death of her children and wife.⁵¹ The effect of violence causes him to lose his mind and even his mother tongue. He just cannot form a meaningful and proper sentence, which is referred as a rupture by Deleuze and Guattari. After losing his family, he becomes insane. This trauma costs him the ability to talk properly. The only way to talk to people is using meaningless sounds, which can be inferred from the story. He was once exposed to violence, which made him lose his mind and rendered it impossible for him to use his language skills.

⁴⁹ "Bize seslenircesine anlaşılmaz şeyler geveledi"

⁵⁰ It is mentioned in *Suskunun Gölgesi*'nde in the footnote, as an editor note.

⁵¹ The Turkish sentence should be a sentence as "Çocuklarım öldü, karım öldü, bomba patladı", however the mad man could not talk correctly.

The inability to speak is emphasized in *Korkunun Irmağında* as such: “We are silent; we are forced to be silent... Our silence is the other side of our fear”⁵² (Samancı, 2011b, p. 11). Human voice replaces with metallic sounds, the sounds of boots, wheezes, coughing, sneezing in the novel. There are not many dialogues and people generally give messages by coughing or sneezing. Creaking door, sounds of *adhan* and siren, barking dogs can only be noticed in the silence (p. 18). “We are the muted” (Samancı, 2012a, p. 19). The basic feeling in the novel is fear, which causes people not to talk or make noise for any reason. The time and place of the novel are not specifically mentioned, however the city can be inferred to be Diyarbakır and the time period can be mid -1980s and at the beginning of 1990s. The loss of voice and speech comes from the loss of meaning. Due to aggravated torture and many deaths, people come to the border of meaninglessness. So, they cannot behave rationally and talk properly.

Samancı talks about different political and military groups based on metaphorical descriptions. Samancı brings new language patterns to Turkish and creates phrases for describing police, soldiers and spies. “Kara adamlar” (black men), “fil ayaklılar” (those with elephant feet), “yarasa adamlar” (batmen). “Haki renkli[ler]” (those with khaki color) are those that cause the feeling of fear in the context of *Suskunun Gölgesinde*. Khaki color generally reminds military officials and East of the country had been under control of the military service for years. They used to check every person in the streets and have the authority to arrest people in any suspicious situation, which used to frighten people.

“Sarkık bıyıklılar” (droopy mustache) is for nationalist movement followers, while “badem bıyık” (those with almond-shaped mustache) symbolizes Islamists. While “koyun bakışlı” (sheep-eyed people) are the innocent ones, “kurt bakışlı” (wolfy-eyed people) are the policemen and soldiers. Metaphors and connotations help her describe people and situations.

⁵² “susuyorduk, susturuluyorduk... Suskunluğumuz korkunun öbür yüzüydü.”

The structure in Turkish Republic's motto and Atatürk's sentences of Atatürk are changed like this: "Clothes make the man... How happy is he who can say I am my clothes, my clothes well worth the world ("Ye kürküm ye... Ne mutlu kürküm diyene, bir kürk dünyaya bedeldir.")⁵³ (p. 98) The word "Türk" is deterritorialized by the word "kürk" (clothe as we translated it in accordance with the context). This is like bombing the meaning since the original sentence "How happy is he who can say I am a Turk" comes from Turkish national oath and functions as concrete expression of Turkish identity. Samancı destructs the nationalist emphasis in the sentence with her pun.

In sum, while writing in major language, Samancı ruins it systematically. She creates variations within the major language by means of hybrid usages and new expressions. She breaks the rules of standard Turkish and brings her literature closer to minor literature. She also embraces the concept of "minor literature". While the notion of colonialism in Seyit Alp is replaced with minor literature perspective, Samancı folds her own literature with the characteristics of minor literature.

3.3. The Political and Collective Stance of Women in Samancı's Works

As Deleuze and Guattari argue "everything is political" in minor language, but "the individual concern (familial, marital and so on) joins with other no less individual concerns, the social milieu serving as a mere environment or a background" in major literature. The most remarkable representation in Samancı's narrations is the political status of Kurds. Almost each novel and story of Samanlı includes migration and deportation, about migrations, effects of military coup and military oppression on the society including imprisonment and torture. Besides, the political discourse co-exists with the collective *assemblage of enunciation*. Suzan Samancı tries to create the agents, however her characters assume a political and collective meaning on Kurdish women against state hegemony and patriarchal order in Kurdish society in the end.

Korkunun Irmağında -the first novel of Samancı- was published in 2004 by Metis Publishing and published in 2011 by Sel Publishing again. It is about the story of five university students -The Narrator, Mizgin, Yekta, Dara and Kendal- under the

⁵³ Original sentence: "Ne mutlu Türk'üm diyene, bir Türk dünyaya bedeldir."

oppressive political atmosphere. This group follows a political movement, in which they read books of Marx and Lenin. These books are banned but they read them in their native language. The time and place of the story are blurred. Monologues and stream of consciousness throughout the novel make the borders incomprehensible. The city may be Diyarbakır in mid-1980s or at the beginning of 1990s. After the death of her best friend, the Narrator started seeing daydreams and hallucinations under the effect of this trauma; she cannot separate the reality from dream. Being killed, arrested or raped is her biggest fear, around which the plot turns. Cities are under state of emergency and some officials try to pick up suspicious people. She starts counting the nape of the neck among people as a traumatic result of the unsolved murders since the murderers shoot people on their necks.

The novel has multiple political layers. Kurdish movement is the most significant theme, the students memorize the addresses and bring some important information to these places, where they read and keep banned books. The anxiety rises when they see "mezar ayaklı" and "haki renkliler" who might be officials of National Intelligence Service. The names are also Kurdish names and this is another way of symbolization. Akriman symbolizes Assyrian Armenian identity, and Samancı brings different identities together and different existential experiences in Turkey. As a victim of her identity and belief, Samancı goes parallel with massacres toward Kurds and Armenians.

The political pressure does not allow people to talk and the language is collapsed while the silence turns into a tool of communication. The title of the novel, where the silence begins, gives a clue for the plot. This kind of fiction is called "under the shadow of the silence". "Screech of brakes, the sounds of gun and radio-set were only voices."⁵⁴ In one of her interviews, Samancı explains that she talks about war and Kurdish reality with a perspective of female consciousness and fear (Metis Kitap, 2005).

⁵⁴ "... insanlar yalnızlaşıp suskuya gömülüyorlardı. Konuşmalar: fren, silah ve telsiz sesleriydi." (35)

She also accepts that her literature criticizes powerholders: "Based on certain illusions and subconscious fears, there are indirect references to the government with short sentences – with literary and artistic motivations."⁵⁵ (Metis Kitap, 2005) "The expressions in the novel are formed by internal monologue. Telling the story of four young university students in Diyarbakır (Amed) in an atmosphere full of fear and death, I tried to narrate with an ironic and poetic style. There is no storyline in the novel, which makes it a must read one."⁵⁶ (Edebiyat Haber, 2014)

The impacts of 1980 coup d'etat attract the attention in Samancı's stories and novels. The coup comes suddenly and changes the lives of characters. The day is described in the texts as the day that started the whole evil. In "Kırılğan Kent", the coup is explained like that: "Fifteen years ago, suddenly, we woke up with the sound of tanks"⁵⁷ (Samancı, 2002, p. 12). Another story, "Uzakta", reveals the unexpectedness of the coup: "It was a day of September. We were all astonished. Radiotelephones, truncheons, boots...."⁵⁸ (p. 77). "Kokulu Karpuzları Özledim" narrates military coups and their impacts upon a family. The narration is like that: "We woke up with tank sounds in the middle of a night.... At night, soldiers forcefully entered into our house. They asked about my brothers.... We could not get any information (from my father) for five months"⁵⁹ (Samancı, 2012, p. 43). These sentences both refer to that September night when coup d'etat was staged and arrestments hereafter. The father is imprisoned and the brothers have to flee abroad.

⁵⁵ "Aynı zamanda bilinçaltındaki o sanrılar ve korkularla birlikte kısa cümlelerle iktidara dolaylı olarak - edebi ve sanatsal kaygılar güdülerek- göndermeler var."

⁵⁶ "Korkunun Irmağında" içses-monolog romanıdır, kaotiktir, savaşın o ölümcül atmosferinde dört üniversiteli genç karakter, ölümün cirit attığı Amed'in o korku dolu atmosferini metaforik, ironik ve şiirsel bir dille anlatmaya çalıştım, olay örgüsünün olmadığı, anlatılamayan, okunması gereken romanlardan."

⁵⁷ "On beş yıl önce bir gece ansızın tank sesleriyle uyandık..."

⁵⁸ "Bir eylül sabahı donakaldık. Telsizler, joplar, gıcırdayan çizmeler ..."

⁵⁹ "Bir gece yarısı tank sesleriyle uyandık...Bir gece evimiz basıldı. Ağabeylerimi sruyorlardı... Beş ay haber alamadık."

Samancı begins living in Genova in 2008 and her novel includes some autobiographical aspects. Delila and Zeynep moves from Diyarbakır to Switzerland, which Samancı herself experienced. As a female Kurdish intellectual in the diaspora, Samancı and Delila lay emphasis on political and social conditions of diasporic Kurds and some other intellectual problems. The following quote draws the picture of how people had to migrate to Europe using illegal ways, since murders and war in their region never stopped. As of 1980s and with the political asylums, Kurds had to migrate to Europe, which led to a new Kurdish society and diaspora in Sweden, Germany, Switzerland.

The migrations caused some difficulties in adaptation to urban life. Some changes created trouble whereas others such as cola, cigarette, blue jeans were favorable.⁶⁰ (Samancı, 2011b, p. 29) Young women used to admire Westernized life and sought the ways of migration through marriage. Marriage was seen as a tool for climbing the social class. They wanted to arrive Europe since living in Europe meant wearing blue jeans, getting educated and crossing legs without feeling any guilt⁶¹ (Samancı, 2012a, p. 45-46). Late modernity sometimes causes misadaptations such as using drugs or language problems. Third generation migrant children humiliate their family as they do not speak any foreign language⁶² (Samancı, 2012a, p. 101).

As a consequence, political and historical developments in Kurdish geography as from 1980s after 2000s have their place in Samancı's novels and stories. Her narrations

⁶⁰“Kente doluşanlar alışmakta zorlanıyorlardı. Fırın ekmeğine ‘lastik gibi’ diye dudak büküyor, tuvalete oturmakta güçlük çekiyor, ahırın kokusunu özlüyor, diyorlardı. Kola ve kıcı pamuklu sigara içmeyi çok seviyorlardı. Alt üst kot takımlara bayılıyorlardı. Bu takımları giyen birden kentli kesilse de kokularını bir de bakışlarındaki yabancılığı yok edemiyorlardı.”

⁶¹ “... evleneceğimiz erkeklerin Avrupa’da ya da Amerika’da olmasını istiyorduk. Sulav evlenip Paris’e, Bişeng de Toronto’ya yerleştikten sonra bambaşka olmuşlardı... Avrupa’da okumak rahatlıkla blucin ve kolsuz bluzlar giymek, ayak ayak üstüne atmak demektir.”

⁶² “Analarımıza, babalarımıza yaşattığımızı, şimdi çocuklarımız bize yaşatıyor; iyi almanca, fransızca, ingilizce konuşamadığımız için, bizimle alay ediyor, bizden utanıyorlar” diyorlardı. Kara sarı yüzleriyle saçlarını platin sarısına boyatanların çoğu uyuşturucu bağımlısı olurken, diskoteklerden çıkmıyorlardı. ... yabancı kadınlarla aşk yaşayanlardan gururla söz edilirken, yabancı erkeklerle evlenmek isteyen kızların ölümle tehdit edilmesini normal karşılıyorlardı.”

have a political value that helps preserving a national consciousness in major language and also prepares a collective and revolutionary base. The novels and stories are such fields to convey Kurdish society's victimization and reveal their feelings to the reader. Even though Suzan Samancı did not aim to reach any of the groups or achieve any purpose, her literature has still political implications. For the second phase, she concentrates on political and socio-economical changes in the society and their impact on people's lives. Due to the modernization and the rise of capitalism, young people in Kurdish region begin desiring new type of lives, freedom, and appearance; they want to get rid of cultural pressure and seek solutions to live in diaspora.

As a third aspect of minor literature, we can mention that everything in minor literature is collective. Deleuze and Guattari explain collectivity as "the only way the literary machine could fulfill the lack of collective enunciation (literature is people's concern)". The agent has a collective value; individualism is not possible like in major literature(s). Suzan Samancı writes collective values based on two layers: Kurdish identity and Kurdish womanhood. While the novels of Seyit Alp have a powerful collective enunciation, Samancı's approach refers to various experiences of Kurdish identity and socio-economic classes of Kurdish woman. However, her literature already contains an inevitable collective value.

In *Halepçe'den Gelen Sevgili*, Delila is a character with various socio-political identities. She is beyond being an agent and carries collective value of Kurdish women. She is from Halabja and victim of Halabja massacre, who loses her family herein and migrates to Turkey. After she is adopted by Zeynep, she meets a life in Kurdish political movement in Diyarbakır during her childhood. She continues her life in İstanbul during her undergraduate years and becomes research assistant at İstanbul University. However, she has to move to Switzerland after Zeynep moves there. As a result, she experiences living in European diaspora as an intellectual Kurdish woman. Although Delila looks like a single agent character, she keeps collective value formed by many identities. At first, she has a collective Kurdish

identity. Even though she is a Iraqi Kurd, Samancı locates her as a member of Kurdish society. She symbolizes not only Kurds living in Turkey but also all Kurds scattered in four different countries. The imagined Kurdish society is symbolized by her existence in the novel, which is a collective meaning. Secondly, she is the symbolization of Kurdish women, another collective meaning. Looked from a superficial perspective, she does not symbolize masses with her characters but tries to create small stories of different socio-economical classes, different national identities and regions. However, in spite of these efforts, her literature keeps representing a collective value.

Apart from collective womanhood identities, Samancı prefers setting a collective value of Kurdishness and collective voice of other nations like Armenians and Greeks. Her characters are generally from various nations. In *Halepçe'den Gelen Sevgili*, Roni -Delila's boyfriend- is an Armenian. Being executed in independence tribunals, the grandfather of Roni is the friend of Şeyh Said. Using massacres of other nations, she creates a common ground of victimization against Turkish oppression. She talks in the name of oppressed people.

The awakening of Leftist movements and huge increase in politicization during 1970s enable women to organize within Leftist movements. The rise of armed forces and militancy blocked women from joining these actions since they were regarded as weak people and they were made to carry out secondary tasks as passive members (Bora, 2018, p. 770). In the meantime, beginning from 1960s, the literature of women has been rising, which contributed to the critique of current womanhood image in Turkish literature and broadened the critical perspective about "women".⁶³ After 1980s, because of 1980 coup d'etat, women were tortured and crushed under severe humiliation. However, they became more visible in the public sphere and more active in this process since political figures were generally in prison and women took their own responsibility for the actions (p. 778). Being established in 1994, *Kadın Çevresi Yayınları* played a crucial role in exploring feminist theory supported by weekly

⁶³ The pioneer book of Feminism, *Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir, was translated into Turkish with the name *İkinci Cins* in 1969.

magazine *Somut*, which began publication in 1983. Turkey's feminist manifest was announced in 1989 with *Kadınların Kurtuluşu Bildirgesi* (The Declaration of Women's Liberation). "We, the womankind, have been oppressed and exploited for centuries" was the basic message of this manifest.

1990s are worth considering since Şirin Tekeli and other pioneers of feminist movement started rising consciousness by means of "awareness raising meetings" borrowed from US type of feminism. Women used to gather together and talk about their own lives in these meetings. Feminist groups in Turkey did not include Kurds at the beginning, which made feminist movement a middle-class one. The feminist wing of Kurdish movement started with women members of PKK.

The PKK conflict paved the way for Kurdish women to join political field and public sphere and this initiated "Kurdish Feminism". PKK is a male-dominant organization in ideological terms and after women started joining the organization, their place in PKK was questioned. Women's existence in the movement gained a political stance for women and created an ideological discourse that problematized the place of women in Kurdish society. Kurdish women were joining civil life, political field and activist movements much more than pre-1990s. In her article "Özgürleşme Mücadelesinde Kürt Kadın Hareketi", Ruken Alp explains that Kurdish women had to struggle against educational and linguistic obstacles and class conflicts of both Turkish nation state and patriarchal structure of Kurdish society. Women are oppressed under a double pressure. Due to this reason, Kurdish movement was difficult and multi-dimensional for women. During 1990s, women in Kurdish movement became more visible and mobilized as a result of the rise of Kurdish movement and under the effect of political developments. Joining PKK have a powerful influence on women's mobilization. In the beginning, women's participation in PKK was something shameful within the Kurdish society, but just in time women's participation began to be accepted.

Woman issue is important for PKK. Öcalan published a book called *Kadın Ve Aile Sorunu* (The Problem of Woman and Family) and criticized classical family structure of Kurdish culture. Diasporic female militants were burning their bodies for protesting

Turkish Republic in 1990 and 1995 and thus female body turned into a resistance of identity. Alp underlines that Kurdish women still struggle for an oppressed and neglected folk and try to strengthen their movement. On the other hand, they aim to eliminate discrimination toward women by undermining the patriarchal understanding (p. 116).

Samancı's texts are full of womanhood experiences. The story "İtirafçı" (The confessor) is about a young woman who joins PKK but cannot endure the hard conditions of the mountain. Then, she gives up and becomes a confessor and comes back to her village. After she arrives at her village, she is isolated from her society, humiliated for joining PKK as a woman. All in all, she is someone with menstruation.⁶⁴

The mobilization of women is the main theme in the novel *Halepçe'den Gelen Sevgili*. First volume of the novel was published in 2009 while its second volume was printed in 2012 from Sel Publishing. The main characters are Delila and Zeynep living in Diyarbakır. The novel starts in the hotel room at 05:45 and finishes at 20:30 of the same day. Delila remembers her past and some memories about her identity, her homeland, her political and cultural experience in Halabja, Diyarbakır, İstanbul and Genova. She is waiting for a conference and thinks about her childhood in Halabja and Diyarbakır. And the novel is composed of these flashbacks and memories. Her memories start with the Halabja Massacre in 1988 and continues until 2000s when she visits her hometown. It is a remembrance of historical and political developments and daily life in East and West parts of Turkey during 1990s. This way, she confronts with her tragic experiences.

Delila survives Halabja Massacre but loses her family in the chemical attack. She is brought as a refugee to Turkey and adopted by Zeynep in Diyarbakır. Zeynep is an original Turk from Ayvalık but works for Kurdish movement. She comes for her official duty to Diyarbakır and falls in love with Hüseyin. Two years later, Hüseyin passes away while being tortured in the prison. She stays in Diyarbakır and adopts Delila as her

⁶⁴ "Erkek Fatê bile benimle alay etti. 'Aybaşılı halinle ne işin vardı?' dedi."

daughter and keeps working for Kurdish movement. With its narration layers, the novel tells about a long period of cultural and political atmosphere of Kurdish society. The main theme is daily life experience and expressions of Kurdish conflict and military control in Diyarbakır during 1980s and 1990s. The second layer is Kurdish diasporic experience in Switzerland and Europe. The main point is womanhood experiences and being a female Kurdish intellectual both in Turkey and diaspora.

The main layer is the political movement of Kurdish women. As it has been mentioned above, the idea of feminism rose in Turkey and also in Kurdish movement after 1980s. Zeynep works for Kurdish political movement. Even though the name of the political group is not mentioned, it is estimated to be PKK movement. She works for raising awareness of women and listening to their problems. She is the member of international women commission of a party and visits different cities and towns. She is an intellectual woman reading literature, philosophy and history. In the second part of the novel, she moves to Switzerland and improves her intellectual capabilities by means of certain activities. She is called to speak in a conference of multiculturalism under the same title with Noam Chomsky⁶⁵ (p. 67). International Women's Day becomes important after 1980s for Kurdish women. Zeynep has made a speech for panel discussion about 8th March (p. 63). Delila is also brought up as an intellectual woman by Zeynep, whose social context is full of Kurdish movement supporters. They both work for raising women's awareness and criticizing women's attitude in different positions. We can come across various womanhood experiences, some of whose are in Halabja, Diyarbakır or İstanbul. Besides, being an intellectual Kurdish woman and also a foreigner and diasporic person is another minefield in the novel. Additionally, there are female characters from different socio-classes. Even though the mission of Delila and Zeynep is to raise awareness about women's rights, they are also critical about typical cultural codes that name and determine womanhood. Thanks to cultural and economic developments from 1980s to 2000s, women acquired their economic freedom.

⁶⁵ Noam Chomsky (American linguist and political activist) visited Diyarbakır in 2001 and in 2002.

In the end, Delila migrates to her homeland Halabja from diaspora, which is under control of Iraqi Kurdish government. She starts training women in this region and Kurdish women begin follow classes, watch movies together and join cultural activities. Delila feels happier than her previous years in Genova. Now, she has a mission to enlighten the women of her homeland. Since Kurdish women are still under cultural pressure, she initiates a cultural and educational movement. In this respect, Delila has the collective voice of Kurdish women. Samancı has “the collective assemble of enunciation” in her feminist attitude. She speaks in the name of all Kurdish women.

As Samancı’s texts indicate, women are not equal. They have socio-economic within themselves. They are divided as city dwellers and local people or the educated and the illiterate. In *Korkunun Irmağında*, the narrator refers to these differences among friends:

Dara and Yekta were from Mizgin the region, while Kendal and I were urban guys. Even if we were peasants or city dwellers, our identities were written on our faces... We were all in unity with those wild-eyed people who cannot speak their mother tongue, however we thought ourselves superior than others since we got education. But they were feeling anger against the educated⁶⁶ (Samancı, 2011b, p. 27-28).

Even though their Kurdish identity is clear, a difference between urban and rural Kurdish groups also exists. The educated ones despise the rural ones.

In this chapter, the literature of Suzan Samancı has been analyzed in accordance with minor language principles. According to three criteria, Samancı’s novels are closer to minor literature within major language. Reterritorialization of language becomes possible when Samancı creates a new literary language. In the heart of Turkish major language, she invents a distinctive revolutionary language with hybrid uses and

⁶⁶ “Dara ve Yekta Mizgin’in yöresinden, Kendal ve ben biraz kentliydik. Kentli de olsak köylü de nereye gitsek kimliğimiz okunuyordu yüzümüzden... Kendi dilini konuşamayanlar ve yaban bakışlılarla bir bütündük, ama kendimizi bir iki adım önde görüyorduk. Ne de olsa mürekkep yalamışlığımız vardı. Mürekkep yalamışlara karşı öfke duyuyorlardı.”

syntax alterations. The second and third dimensions can be found together even the individual stories are political and collective. Kurdish identity and Kurdish women's identity are powerful topics in Samancı's literature. She also has information about "minor literature", which supports the idea of her narrations' minor use. Kurdish women were politically and socially affected by second wave feminism. The main political representation is revealed in womanhood. While she rejects monotypical womanhood, she gives voices to different Kurdish women. There are numerous educated young Kurdish women including a little maid, female author, mother of a PKK militant, a confessor young woman, mother of a Turkish martyr, a young and unmarried woman and an illiterate woman in her novels. They may be individuals on their own but also share a collective woman identity. The most important point is that Samancı does not make discrimination between women and gives voice to both Kurdish women and women from other ethnic origins including Turkish mothers.

As a third aspect, minor literature has political implications and narrates the realities of relevant geography. Being a part of minority itself is revolutionary act, which is called micro-politics. The literature is for the people and minor literature has to be political. If we are to follow the past experiences of Kurdish citizens in Turkey grounding upon the characters and the collective female voice, we can argue that Samancı's novels and stories are undoubtedly a part of minor literature.

The difference between the novels of Alp and Samancı is the encounter of binary cultures. Alp tends to draw a binary opposition between Turks and Kurds and makes them encounter in cultural, political and linguistic spheres as rivals and enemies. In Samancı's novels, issues are more complicated and beyond binary oppositions of nations under the effect of developments throughout 1980s and 1990s. Alp's novels come closer to collective value since they are based on Kurdish feudal system, whereas Samancı's characters have individualistic features since individualism became a popular phenomenon after 1980s. Despite their individualistic position, her characters have also collective identity around a political position.

Having said that, there are common themes in both Suzan Samancı and Seyit Alp. Their characters and issues in the narrations show differences. Certain dramatic changes in the world, and in Turkey after 1980s changed the literary field simultaneously. The rise of Turkish modernism and feminism after 1980s made impact upon Kurdish society. The massive migration from rural Kurdish areas to big cities in Turkey and Europe reshaped the Kurdish conflict. The topics such as migration and feudal system in Alp's novels were replaced with migration from rural areas to urban ones or Europe and assimilation, modernization and so urbanization. Change in consumption traditions resulted in dramatic transformation of social life. Kurdish women became a matter of fact in Kurdish society and were politicized by female PKK militants' movement, all of which have their places in Samancı's narrations.

Moreover, language is the main concern of Samancı as can be inferred from the problematization of loss of mother tongue in her novels. As Deleuze and Guattari brought the concept of "minor literature" in their essay called "What Blacks are in America today are able to do in English", Samancı makes an analogy between Kurdish identity and "Blacks" in her novel *Halepçe'den Gelen Sevgili* and says: "We are the Blacks of our own homeland".⁶⁷ (Samancı, 2012b, p. 154) In terms of a human right to speak mother tongue, Samancı draws a parallelism between Kurds and "Blacks". In her novels and stories, her main concern is the case of Kurdish identity in social and political sphere.

She reveals various womanhood identities and experiences like being a Kurdish peasant woman, an intellectual and diasporic Kurdish woman, rich Kurdish woman or the mother of a militant. Her novels and stories are in search of heterogeneous identities. Including intellectual Kurdish women, Armenian women, moderate Turkish women, martyries, Kurdish mothers and assimilated Kurds, her characters have a great variety.

⁶⁷ "... kendi yurdumuzun siyahileriyiz"

CHAPTER 4

4.THE AUTHOR IN “THE AGE OF CATASTROPHE”: YAVUZ EKİNCİ

This chapter focuses on the novels and short stories of Yavuz Ekinci. The influence of the political atmosphere and the discourse against Kurdish language after 2000s on Yavuz Ekinci will be discussed. Yavuz Ekinci has published short stories and novels after 2000s, which has functioned to give an insight about publishing in Turkish with Kurdish identity. Ekinci was born in Batman in 1979 and took his B.A from Dicle University Primary School Teaching department and completed his master’s degree in Van Yüzüncü Yıl University’s Turkish Language and Literature department. Now, he is teacher in Batman.

His writing career started with the short stories, which brought him many significant awards. His first book *Mayeser’in Uçuşu* (The Fly of Mayeser) was published in 2004. He made acquaintance with Selim Temo in his senior year of undergraduate education. Temo motivated Ekinci to prepare a portfolio, which brought him Yaşar Nabi Nayır Remarkable Award. But the award was canceled since *Mayeser’in Uçuşu* had been published for a few months ago. *Mayeser’in Uçuşu* (The Fly of Mayeser, 2004)⁶⁸, *Sırtımdaki Ölümler* (The Dead on my Shoulder, 2007), *Bana İsmail Deyin* (Call Me Ishmael, 2008) are his short stories, while his novels are *Tene Yazılan Ayetler* (The Verses Written on the Skin, 2010), *Cennetin Kayıp Toprakları* (The Lost Territory of Paradise, 2012), *Rüyası Bölünenler* (Interrupted Dreams, 2014), *Günün Birinde* (Some Day, 2016), *Peygamberin Endişesi* (The Concern of The Prophet, 2018). In 2016, *Amar ve Sara* (Amar and Sara, 2019)⁶⁹. *Amar and Sara* was the new form of *Günün Birinde* enriched by illustrations of Ahmet Güneştekin.⁷⁰ Being a book for children, *Ravân: Bir At Masalı* (Ravân: A Tale of the Horse) is the author’s latest book.

⁶⁸ Published by Cadde Publishing House in 2004.

⁶⁹ Except of the first book of Ekinci, his books are published by Doğan Egmont Publishing House.

⁷⁰ Ahmet Güneştekin is an artist/ illustrator who has works in the national and international exhibitions. For more information: Beyaz Müzayede, URL: <http://www.beyazart.com/sanatci/Ahmet-G%C3%BCne%C5%9Ftekin>

Sırtımdaki Ölüler earned an award in Haldun Taner story competition in 2005⁷¹ and *Sessizlik Kulesi* received Yunus Nadi Literary Award⁷² in 2008. His stories were turned into screenplays. “İncir”, one section of *Cennetin Kayıp Topraklarında*, was turned into the movie called “ İz / Reç” by Tayfur Aydın, which was awarded in 31st International İstanbul Film Festival.⁷³ *Günün Birinde* was translated to German as *Der Tag, an dem ein Mann vom Berg Amar kam* and selected one of the ten most influential books in Germany (K24, 2019). This book was also staged as theatre play with the same title (Gorki, 2019). Although that was the first time when one of Ekinci’s books was translated into German, his novel attracted great attention. Two of his books were also translated to Kurdish and published by Doğan Kitap. *Cennetin Kayıp Toprakları* was published in Kurdish as *Erdên Bihuştê yên Winda* in 2013 and *Tene Yazılan Ayetler* as *Ayeten Li Can Nivisandi* in 2011.

Ekinci calls himself “the author of the age of catastrophe” (Cumhuriyet, 2017). Akıncı thinks that this era is the age of disasters and the world is full of fear, unsafety, and darkness. And Ekinci narrates the people of this age. Ekinci’s expression is a reference to one chapter from Eric Hobsbawm’s *the Age of Extremes: Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991*. Age of catastrophe includes the period from First World War (1914) to Second World War (1945), in which humanbeing witnessed wars, deaths, the atom bomb, tortures, migrations and deportations. Hobsbawm’s word choice refers to these experiences. Being witness of deportations, murders and bombings in his city, Ekinci as a Kurdish author from Batman interprets his own time as an age of catastrophe. In one of his interviews, Yavuz Ekinci states:

I was born in the age of catastrophe and lived through the age of catastrophe. I witnessed that people’s anger towards other people grew day by day. I’ve seen that people do not tolerate each other anymore. I’ve seen that how the passion for killing surrounds people of this age like a cancer. I have heard happy screams saying: ‘Kill them! Kill them! Kill them!’ Everything you witness captures you. How did I end up here? I was living with the shame of not having

⁷¹ It is one of the prestigious literary award held by *Milliyet* newspaper.

⁷² This award is pioneered by *Cumhuriyet* newspaper which is given since 1949.

⁷³ For the information: <http://film.iksv.org/tr/arsiv/haberarsivi/p/1/525>

died, now I feel so much grief and despair that I could not stop these deaths. Look at these young people whose blood were shed. Nothing is worthy than the life of a person⁷⁴ (Artful Living, 2016).

In the middle of dying people, no peace existed at all. The people in the region saw the fight and grief and that's why Ekinci needed to write what he witnessed. As a Kurdish intellectual and author, he feels responsible of writing the grief of oppressed people. On behalf of other witnesses, he writes about people living through the catastrophe. Family reports, newspaper articles, historical and political names are used in his narratives. Especially his novels *Cennetin Kayıp Toprakları* and *Tene Yazılan Ayetler* reveal Armenian massacre and Kurdish murders by Hezbollah as well as village deportations in Kurdish region.

In 2000s, Kurdish cultural and literary developments accelerated. The globalization and easy access to information thanks to mass media and liberal atmosphere burst in Turkey after 2002 inspired Kurdish intellectuals for cultural progress.

4.1. Political Atmosphere After 2000s

Through 2000s and especially after 2002 elections, Turkey experienced many social and political changes. While the conflict between PKK and anti-terrorist units within the government cost countless lives and forced migrations from East to West continued between 1991-1995 and nearly two thousand villages were evacuated, Kurdish policy of Turkish Republic after 2000s changed. Feroz Ahmad explains these developments in his book *Modern Türkiye'nin Oluşumu* (Making of Modern Turkey). Justice and Development Party (AKP) won elections in 2002 (Ahmad, 2014, p. 464) and a new era started for Turkey. AKP efforted for integrating into Europe more than ever and prepared reform packages. Through these packages, private and public broadcasts started to be made in various languages and dialects, which opened a path

⁷⁴“Felaket Çağı"nda doğdum ve "Felaket Çağı"nı yaşadım. İnsanın insana olan öfkesi çığ gibi büyüdüğüne şahit oldum. Kimsenin kimseye tahammülünün artık kalmadığını gördüm. Öldürme tutkusunun bir ur gibi bu çağın insanın ruhunu nasıl kapladığını gördüm. İnsanların “Öldür! Öldür! Öldür!” sevinç çığlıklarını duydum. Şahit olduğun her şey seni esir alır. Şimdi nereye geldim? Eskiden ölmemiş olmanın utancıyla yaşıyordum şimdi hiçbir ölümü durdurmanın çaresizliğiyle kahroluyorum. Bir baksana, daha hayatının baharında olan gençlerin kanları oluk oluk toprağa akıyor. Hiçbir şey bir insanın canından daha değerli değildir.”

for broadcasting in Kurdish (p. 472). The language courses in any language other than Turkish spread after 2002. Abdullah Öcalan, head of PKK, was arrested in 1999, after which PKK was disarmed. After 2000s, Turkish society began accepting the existence of Kurds as reality. Especially cultural plurality after 2000s resulted use of Kurdish in public sphere (Yücel, 2018, p. 134-138).

After 2007 elections, the democratic solution of Kurdish conflict came to the fore (Ahmad, 2014, p. 482) and following 2011 elections, solution process started. It aimed to settle down this old conflict between Kurdish and Turkish parts and bring peace. However, let alone attempting for peace, some Kurdish parliament members were brought under political ban and Kurdish political party was demolished. It was obvious that there was a dual policy toward the conflict (Ahmad, 2014, p. 485).

The government made serious attempts in 2012 for bringing peace. Erdoğan went through peace and solution process again and tried to solve Kurdish conflict in democratic ways. However, this process came to breakdown in 2015. Political and military parameters in the relationship between Kurds and Turkish government will not be a part of this study. In sum, while 1990s were full of torture and murders, village evacuation and migrations, 2000s changed the political atmosphere and daily life practices.

In its first years, AKP was step softening state's attitude towards Kurdish conflict in order to gain legitimacy in the frame of European Union criteria. One of its serious steps was to end state of the emergency situation in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. In 2009 the government announced Peace Process, a hopeful action for solving Kurdish conflict. And it also softened the authorities of Kurdish movement. Initiation of Kurdish broadcasting in TV channels had a symbolic meaning (Bora, 2018, p. 881-882).

Kurdish literature's development through 2000s will be mentioned in order to enlighten the atmosphere where Yavuz Ekinçi writes because this era is also a milestone for cultural shifts under the guidance of democratization discourse. The

cultural and political climate of 2000s were lenient and diminished certain oppressive attitudes after 1980 coup d'etat. Although Kurdish literature existed before 2000s, its publication was limited in Turkey. The books were generally published for the purpose of building a written language and showing resistance against the dominating power. The main aim of was to preserve cultural elements of Kurds and Kurdish language. Some wanted to create powerful texts no matter how less they were. 2000s enabled Kurdish literature to come to the surface and so its aesthetics and literary value became an important question for relevant authors. 2000s have given the opportunity to talk about traumas, understand and analyze them easily as so much time passed and it became possible to talk.

4.2. Yavuz Ekinci in the Borders of Minor Literature

As previous chapters have indicated, Seyit Alp and Suzan Samancı problematize native language usage. The characters of Yavuz Ekinci also struggle with learning Turkish as a second language and the obligation to learn it.

It makes difference to prefer writing in a language and be obliged to write in a language. As a migrant of my native language, I wonder other authors exiled from their native language. I always wonder what they told and how they narrated in their texts. Even though the texts of these authors were translated into various languages, they could be read in Turkish, either⁷⁵ (T24, 2015).

In *Sırtımdaki Ölüler*, the character describes the words in his throat as “dead” as a corpse lying in his tongue. In *Cennetin Kayıp Topraklarında*, a new teacher comes to the village and warns students to speak Turkish since Kurdish is banned. You are going to speak Turkish at home, at school, and while working in the field. Kurdish is not forbidden. You are not going to speak it anymore. Everybody has to speak Turkish...I'll beat anyone speaking Kurdish⁷⁶ (p. 86-87). These restrictions imposed upon Kurdish

⁷⁵ “Bir dilde tercih edip yazmakla bir dilde yazmak zorunda olmak çok ayrı bir şey. Dilinden sürgün edilen bir yazar olarak, dilinden sürgün edilen yazarları ve eserlerini çok merak ediyordum. Onların nasıl anlattıklarını, ne anlattıklarını merak ederdim. Bu yazarların eserleri birçok dile çevrilmiş olmasına rağmen Türkçede yoktu.”

⁷⁶ “Bundan sonra evde, okulda ve tarlada Türkçe konuşacaksınız. Kürtçe yasak. Kürtçe konuşmayacaksınız. Herkes Türkçe konuşacak, beni anladınız mı?” deyince ... Kürtçe konuşanı çok kötü döverim.”

cause traumas in characters and these traumas appear in dreams. In the same novel, the grandfather faints in the hospital, and perceives nurses as “houris”, believed to be the beautiful maidens living in heaven according to Islamic belief. When he hears people speaking, he recognizes that they speak Turkish. He thinks the language is Turkish in heaven⁷⁷ (Ekinci, 2016e, p. 112). He prefers staying in the hell instead of heaven where the language is Turkish. He remembers the days when Kurdish was banned. When he speaks Kurdish in the city center, he gives all his money to the soldiers as a penalty. He remembers visiting his son in prison. Once he spoke Kurdish, he was beaten in front of his son⁷⁸ (p. 123)

The language ban creates a hatred against the state, which motivates young people to join in PKK. In *Rüyası Bölünenler*, Azat reads his script in Kurdish while going to Mardin. On the same day, PKK attacks police station and soldiers begin controlling the vehicles. When Azat sees the police, he eats the script in panic. The soldiers realize him and suppose that the paper is a hidden attack message from PKK. The commander beats him severely and this maddens him. After his militant sister died, he decided to join in PKK.⁷⁹ (Ekinci, 2016f, p. 48)

His language in the texts is close standard Turkish, which distinguishes him from Alp and Samancı. We see some Kurdish in his texts but no hybrid linguistic use. The use of Kurdish is less in Ekinci’s novels and stories than those of Alp and Samancı. Also, the texts are postmodern with their intertextuality since some references to his previous stories and novels and some other references to classical and contemporary literary texts are made.

⁷⁷ “Yoksa Türkler burayı da mı ele geçirdiler diye düşünüp, içten içe ‘Öteki dünyada Türklere, Türkçe’den çektiğim yetmedi mi hey Yüce Allahım?’ diye inledim.”

⁷⁸ “... eğer cennetin dili de Türkçe ise ben o cennete ayak basmam, bunu iyi bil. O cennet bana ananın koynu gibi haram olsun... Hatırlıyorsun, Kürtçe yasaklanınca şehre gidip Kürtçe konuştuğum için ceza olarak bütün paramı askerlere vermişim... Oğlum tutuklandığında da sadece bir kez hapishaneye gittim. O gün de sırf onunla Kürtçe konuştuğum için oğlumun gözleri önünde eşek sudan gelinceye kadar dayak yedim”

⁷⁹ “Beni aramayın, ablamın silahı yerde kalmış. Onu almaya gidiyorum, ablamın yarım bıraktığı savaşı ben tamamlayacağım”

Ekinci follows proper Turkish grammatic use and makes short and regular sentences like: “Yatalađım. Gnlerdir bu yer yatađındayım. Tkendim. Derim karardı. Kemiklerim sızlıyor. Sırtım yara bere iinde. Etim rd” (Ekinci, 2016d, p. 127). In the quote, these short sentences intensify the meaning and feeling and help overcoming a normative perception. The full stops interrupt the flow of the sentences and feelings, which causes to perceive the situation partially. Since this is a moment of waiting in a blue funk, the fear is conveyed by means of short sentences. Ekinci tends to create such shorter and regular sentences but this can be an attempt to break the general rules of Turkish. Yavuz Ekinci constructs a language that is really close to standard Turkish compared to those of Seyit Alp and Suzan Samancı languages. Although Alp and Samancı usually bring Kurdish letters and words to their texts, Ekinci uses Kurdish in a limited way. His characters’ names are not Kurdish. He makes some Kurdish sentences but his syntax and grammar usage does not include so many components of Kurdish, which differentiates Ekinci from Samancı and Alp. *Asvas, Utanapıřti, Sara, Amar, Mayeser* are some of the mythological names not representative of Kurdish identity.

He sometimes makes linguistic experiments. In “Kafatası” (The Skull) [Mayaser’in Uuřu], he breaks grammar rules by changing structure of the words. He uses capital letters and lower-case letters in one word and syllabifies some words:

Art arda, st ste patlayama bařladılar! ta ta tat... tat ta tat ... tat tarraa ra ta tat... gr salarını arasından, omuzlarından, karın bořluđundan kan sızmaya bařladı. G-3 piyade tfeđi, 7.62 apında, barUT Gazının GERİ tepmeSİ, İcrA miLi ve ilerii gitmesi Yile alıřan, řarjr ileyN beslEnen, ha Va ile sođuyan piYAdenin yan ve tamm otOmatik silAHıdır, yakıN kayNak ve uzak kayNak, geZ Gz arpacık, 100 MetrE, BELe niřan Al, tetiđi ađır ađır ezeRek dřrme! (Ekinci, 2016a, p. 18)

Breaking grammar rules hardens to perceive word and sentences wholly and this is an important obstacle to have the meaning. Here is a scene where the character gets shot and the author wants to suspend the meaning. When the character is shot, the perception and also the reality are lost. Thus, this kind of grammatic use can make the reader feel in between the reality and hallucination. Within the very same story,

the author puts triple dots at the end of the sentences, another rule break, throughout one paragraph rather than dividing sentences.

Another sample in *Cennetin Kayıp Toprakları*, Rüstem finds a handout from Turkish military to motivate militants to surrender to security forces. The sentences were written in capital letters like this: “ELİMİZİ TUTMANIZ YETERLİ” [JUST HOLD OUR HANDS]. In another handout, “HAYATINDA ÖNEMLİ BİR FARK YARAT” [MAKE AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE] is written. These capital letters can be symbols of power and Ekinci reveals state power using language that way.

He frequently uses such words as silence, death, corpse, burnt, burning smell, gunpowder, blood, strong odor, nausea, vomit, cemetery. These words are related to violence and characters are in either a fight or remembrance of a violent scene. These words are associated with politics and condemn the state for using violence against Kurds in the past. As a result, the language Ekinci uses is closer to standard Turkish, however he shifts it without changing the structure. He attempts to deterritorialize the language using collective and political voice, a point to mention in the following part.

4.3. Collective and Political Enunciation

Ekinci makes powerful references to political developments. Since both collective and political enunciation co-exist in his texts, two aspects of the minor language will be explained in this section. One of them is the collective voice of mothers and fathers waiting. In *Rüyası Bölünenler*, we can hear the voice of a father waiting, a symbol of the collective voice of all parents waiting. The father explains the loss of his son as such:

My son, Fahri, studies Medicine in Dicle University, now in his third year. He joined the ranks of the organization with his friends. That was going. We could not have any information from him or his friends anymore. We do not know if they were captured or arrested by JİTEM powers and killed. We just don't know. We know nothing. The name of my son was found in the notes of Abdülkadir Aygan, the confessor. Reportedly, even though the name of my

son did not appear, he would already be killed. Many young people in his notes were executed in the middle of the street or captured and killed after being tortured. With the hope to find or see him, I watched hundreds of guerilla videos and clips on Youtube; still I could not find him. I went to mass graves with the hope that I could find my son and happily and excitingly had DNA tests to discover our son's grave so that we could cry there⁸⁰(Ekinci, 2016f, p. 56).

In this passage, a Kurdish father talks about losing his son and explains his grief and hope to find his corpse. This father represents many Kurdish fathers waiting for their sons. In 1990s, many Kurdish families experienced similar things. The state of emergency and JITEM caused many murders, some of whose are still unsolved. The assassinations of the political figures after first Kurdish party was legally founded were mentioned in Bruinessen's article: "Indeed, it is widely believed that many of the killings by unknown actors were carried out by persons acting on the instructions or in cooperation with the police or in particular the intelligence service of the gendarmerie, JITEM" (Bruinessen, 1996, p. 21).

Abdülkadir Aygan was a PKK member and became a confessor for JITEM and informed JITEM members on individual PKK members and general organizational structure. He worked in JITEM and played important role in the executions. (Bianet, 2009) His name is mentioned in the text, which turns stories into more powerful narratives because of the existence of a real historical JITEM figure whose name functions as historical evidence. Ekinci also deterritorializes Turkish word "şehit" (martyr). Even though "martyr" is used for Turkish soldiers, who go willingly to death for the sake of protecting their homeland, Ekinci mentions PKK militants as also "şehit", the martyries PKK. He reverses common martyrdom discourse in Turkish and

⁸⁰ "Oğlum Fahri, Dicle Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi'nde üçüncü sınıf öğrencisiyken arkadaşlarıyla saflara katıldı. Gidiş o gidiş...Bir daha ondan da arkadaşlarından da hiç bir haber alamadık. Yolda yakalandılar mı yoksa JITEM kaçırıp öldürdü mü? Bilmiyoruz, hiç bir şey bilmiyoruz. Sadece yıllar önce itirafçı Abdülkadir Aygan'ın ajandasında oğlumun adı çıktı. Dediklerine göre, oğlumun adı çıkmasa zaten öldürülecekmiş. Ajandadaki isimlerin büyük çoğunu ya sokak ortasında infaz ettiler ya da kaçırılıp işkenceyle öldürdüler. Belki görürüm, belki bulurum diyerek oturup Youtube'dann yayınlanan yüzlerce gerilla videosu, klibi izledim ama yok oğlum Fahri'mi onların arasında göremedim. Açılan her toplu mezara oğlumun kemiklerini bulurum umuduyla gittim, başında ağlayacağımız bir mezarımız olur sevinci ve heyecanıyla DNA testi yaptırdım."

distorts the national meaning of the term. This passage exhibits the new meaning of the martyr:

[He said] Narin, she participated in the movement in 1998. After six months, she was martyred in a fight. We took her funeral from Bingöl. Her body was full of burnts and wounds. There were twenty-three tracers on her body. She was decapitated. It can be seen in the newspapers that the soldiers posed with her head ⁸¹ (Ekinci, 2016b, 45).

Narin was a PKK member; she was “martyred” by Turkish soldiers and tortured. Ekinci brings the Kurdish martyrdom discourse to major language Turkish, which gives the term an opposite meaning. Even though Turks mention PKK members as “terrorists” and Turkish soldiers as “martyrs” who were killed by PKK guerrillas, this context turned “terrorists” into “martyries”.

Yavuz Ekinci creates testimonial narratives in his texts. The narratives are about Kurdish political history and also Armenian massacre memories. *Cennetin Kayıp Topraklarında* tells the story of an Armenian woman Hatice/Almast, who was Islamized and her Kurdish family. *Cennetin Kayıp Topraklarında* is also significant to understand the political meaning of remembering. Being published in 2012, its third edition came out in 2016. The novel starts with a sentence in Kurdish: “Kurê min, dinya siya darekê ye”⁸² and it opens with a suicide scene, where a dead body is handing, and ends with the very same scene. Anger and hatred are what Rüstem feels when he sees his father's dead body. The novel consists of three parts, respectively Üzüm, Nar, and İncir (The Grape, The Pomegranate, and The Fig). These three parts tell different stories of the same family members. The Grape is written from Rüstem's voice and narrates his childhood in the village (Mişrita, Batman). The villagers are exposed to physical and psychological violence of the state. Villages are evacuated, PKK militants and Turkish soldiers fight; bombs, torture and violence never end from

⁸¹ “Hacı Zübeyir çoktan anı olmuş bir şeyi hatırlar gibi fotoğrafa tekrar baktı, ‘Narin’ dedi, ‘1998 yılında saflara katıldı. Altı ay sonra da Bingöl’de girdiği çatışmada şehit düştü. Cenazesini Bingö’den aldık. Kızımın bedeni yanık sigara ve yaralarla doluydu. Yirmi üç mermi izi vardı. Başı gövdesinden kesilmişti. Gazetelerde çıkıt ya hani, askerler kesik başıyla poz vermişlerdi.”

⁸² “My son, the World is a shadow of a tree.”

Kid Rüstem point of view. The kid witnesses torture and violence and they have to migrate from their village.

The Pomegranate mentions the violence of Kurds on Armenians by means of the female character Hatice (her original name is Almast). Originally, she is Armenian, but her group is attacked during Armenian massacre and all her family members are killed. Hasan, a Kurdish man, saves her. After saving Almast, he oppresses and forces her to change her identity and become Muslim. Her name is changed as Hatice. He also gets married to her. Hatice would keep her real identity and the massacre secret until she dies. This section is about the violence of Kurds on Armenian groups in the early times of Turkish Republic.

The third chapter takes place in 2000s. Rüstem is a young man and living with his family in a city. They had to migrate, no need to mention. Hatice passes away and wishes her body to be buried in her Armenian village. This part tells their journey to Armenian village that they had to leave for many years ago. PKK members and Turkish soldiers are still fighting there and thus Rüstem and his father are not allowed to go to the village. The father does not give up and go on with the journey. They are caught by the soldiers. Not only Rüstem and his father but also Hatice's dead body is tortured. They have to return home with a decomposing dead body. Mirza commits suicide since he feels frustrated and embarrassed too much.

Olca Akyıldız and Halim Kara compare two novels in their article "Çağdaş Türkçe Kurmacada Şiddeti Yazmak: *Tol ve Cennetin Kayıp Toprakları*" on the basis of the violence in language. *Cennetin Kayıp Toprakları* problematizes the reality, remembrance and narration of remembrance by grounding a text on witnessing. The novel represents both state's violence and daily violence among individuals. In addition to state power, it reveals one ethnic group's torment on another. By this narration, Ekinci creates two different mode of victimization: While Kurds are Turkish Republic's victims, they are perpetrators of the violence against Armenians (Akyıldız & Kara, 2015). Writing gains a political and collective meaning when Rüstem sees his father's dead body and receives the divine message. The hatred and anger whisper

to him and just as Gabriel said "Read"⁸³ to the Prophet Mohammad in the cave, they say him to "Tell". Now, writing has a collective and political value. Akyıldız and Kara argues that this narration functions as more than a personal story of facing with the violence and places violence as the fate of people living in this region. Rüstem overcomes with the traumatic effect of this by writing and recording and he positions himself as the agent of the local people (p. 297). That year of 1915 was remembered with the memory and witnessing. In his conferences which were collected and published as *Edebiyat ve Felaket* (Literature and the Catastrophe), Marc Nichanian brings a new idea that the literature is the only way of conveying catastrophe (Nichanian, 2011, p. 86- 91). In this sense, Ekinci as a Kurdish author confronts Armenian massacre in Turkish texts, a contingent theme in Kurdish literature.

In this sense, Rüstem gains a collective and political value, as an actor in minor language but cannot be accepted as a real agent. Having Armenian massacre in it, this novel is also important for Kurdish literary field. After 2000s, Armenian massacre began to be included in both Turkish and Kurdish literary pieces. In his master thesis "The Possibility of Justice and Peace: The Representation Of 1915 And Armenians In Kurdish Literature" (Akın, 2016) Abdulkadir Akın mentions testimony of Kurdish characters following the 1915. After the rise of Kurdish literature in 2000s, the 1915 became a popular issue in Kurdish novels. According to Akın, the relation between perpetrator (Kurds) and the victim (Armenians) and the testimony of Kurdish characters can be regarded as admission and a kind of confession. However, Kurdish writers like to free Kurds from being the perpetrator of such a massacre and give the whole responsibility to Turkish Republic. They accuse the state for using Islamic sensitivities of Kurds.

Kurdish literature started telling the tortures after 2000s, a point to be found rarely in Turkish literature. Adnan Çelik traces it back in Kurdish literature. According to his

⁸³ "Babamın tükenen umutlarının ardından gelen beklenmeyen intiharı, önce yatağımı bir mezara, sonra evimi bir mezarlığa ve derken hayatımı da bir cesede dönüştürdü. Dizlerimi karnıma çekip, tüm bedenimle uyumayı beklerken, birden kin ve öfke, Hira Mağarası'nda Hazreti Muhammed'e 'Okul' diyen Cebrail gibi gelip göğsüme oturdu ve "Okul!" yerine emredercesine 'Anlat' dedi" (Ekinci, 2016e, p. 13).

ideas, the authors started creating narratives with massacre and witnessing stories after 2000s. The novel is one of the significant novels in Turkish written by a Kurdish author⁸⁴ (Çelik & Öpengin, 2016, p. 14). 2015 was the hundredth year of Massacre, which brought new discussions about the massacre to Turkish media and academia. Especially in recent years, the number of Kurdish novels and stories about 1915 has increased and nearly half of them was written in the second phase of 2000s. The publication of *Anneannem* (Armenian memoir book about 1915) by Fahriye Çetin in 2004; the murder of Hrant Dink in 2007; and the hundredth anniversary of Armenian massacre brought this issue to the surface and led to increase in the number of the literary texts about it. Even though the state discourse is not willing to confront this issue, a new movement aims to face with the history of Turkish Republic. The tendency of writing about Armenians and 1915 in Kurdish literary pieces can be considered as a result of the attempt to construct a collective memory. Indeed, Kurdish authors makes this catastrophe thing continuous with Armenians. In their texts, Kurds are both victims of Ottomans and Turkish Republic and also perpetrators of the slaughter cast upon Armenians. The texts are about witnessing Armenian girls and boys who were rescued and raised as Muslims. Especially oral history studies facilitated telling these stories in Kurdish. And Kurdish authors writing in Turkish also tell these stories. Modern Turkish novels rarely focus on Armenian issue. General attitude of modern Turkish literature is to neglect or negotiate the deportation of Armenians. Many authors follow that national discourse, in which Armenians are represented as “disloyal traitors” (Çelik & Öpengin, 2016). Adnan Çelik and Ergin Öpengin explain the possible reasons of Kurdish literature’s focus on Armenian issue as such: Young Kurds started showing interest in it and realized how the state tortured both Kurds and Armenians. They found a common ground for Kurds and Armenians in terms of victimhood. Kurdish authors represent both Armenians and Kurds together against the “hegemonic power” of Ottoman State and then Turkish Republic. In this sense, Ekinci distorts the relationship between the perpetrator and

⁸⁴ Adnan Çelik and Ergin Öpengin points out that there are a few books in Turkish by Kurdish authors, dealing with the massacre: Serdar Can’s *Nenemin Masalları* (The Tales of My Grandmother) (1993), Zülküf Kışanak’s *Ahparik Sarkis* (2011), Metin Aktaş’s *Harput’taki Hayalet* (The Ghost in Harput) (2012), Yusuf Bağı’s *Ermeni Kızı Ağçik* (Armenian Girl Ağçik) (2007), and Yavuz Ekinci’s *Cennetin Kayıp Toprakları* (The Lost Territory of Paradise) (2012).

the victim since it places Turks and Kurds in opposition to each other. However, the construction does not work much because anyone can be both victim and oppressor.

Apart from Kurdish literature, Armenians started to appear in Turkish novels, especially after 2000s with the effect of the hundredth commemoration of 1915's massacre. Armenian massacre became a theme in Turkish literature. Murat Belge prepared a book about the novels about Armenians in Turkish literature called *Edebiyatta Ermeniler* (Armenians in Literature) (İletişim, 2013). The early samples denied the Armenian issue or tried to legitimize the forced deportation as a political result. Murat Belge indicates that many books about Armenians were written for denying or hiding the issue and revealing that "Armenians were guilty" of the deportation. However, this attitude has been changing since 2000s, which paved the way to autobiographic books on Armenian people's identities such as Fethiye Çetin, as mentioned before (Hassanpour, Sheyholislami & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012).⁸⁵

The short stories have generally metaphoric political references, while the novels have direct political references. *Tene Yazılan Ayetler* and *Cennetin Kayıp Topraklarında* have the most powerful political references. The first edition of *Tene Yazılan Ayetler* was published in 2010. That book made its third edition in 2016 by Doğan Publishing House. The novel is based upon two stories linked to each other as seen in the very end. While the first story is about the mythological character *Utanaşişti*, the second one tells story of an author, Asvas.

The novel opens with this passage:

The texts you are reading now and will read then consist of my writings that I reached after a comprehensive research. These researches were been conducted to investigate the life of Asvas, who was kidnapped and killed by the state for some and by Hezbollah militants -dirty workers of the state- for

⁸⁵ "Orhan Pamuk and Elif Şafak brought a new insight to Armenian issue. Turkish famous novelist Orhan Pamuk said in his interview to a foreign newspaper '30,000 Kurds and one million Armenians were killed in these lands', which sentence caused him to protests in Turkish media. For this reason, he had a lawsuit and was charged with payment penalty. Elif Şafak *Baba ve Piç* (*The Bastard of İstanbul*) concerns about it, and she was suited by the right-wing attorney Kemal Kerincsiz, who asserted Armenian characters were 'insulting Turkishness'."

others. Asvas, who had a modest life and was only interested in his stories and novels that he would write, became a famous writer read all over the world soon after his death. In the universities, theses were written on his works and symposiums were held. In ten years, his works were translated into so many languages. As a result of this, UNESCO announced 2010 as 'the year of Asvas'. In this context, as many organizations about Asvas will be drawn around the world, his stories and novels will be turned into different pieces of art... President Atilla Dođu used the term of 'Asvas is Turkey' in his speech of death anniversary of Asvas this year. This analogy met with great appreciation by artist circles. Even some columnists created for criticizing everything told that they would not criticize but enjoy it. Artists and journalists launched campaigns to find out the facts of the incident after the president's analogy. Mehmet Őarman, the country's biggest businessman and a friend of Asvas in his youth, announced that he would financially support a lot of projects for Asvas⁸⁶ (Ekinci, 2016d, p. 17-18).

The novel is about Asvas, a Kurdish author character who is kidnapped and killed by Hezbollah. Since UNESCO announces 2010 as the year of Asvas, a businessman friend of Asvas wants to support a project narrating his life. Berzah intends to write a biographical book about Asvas and shoot a film and starts collecting data about his life in Diyarbakır and Batman. He finds out that his lost novel "Tene Yazılan Ayetler". This is also author's another novel by the way. After working hard, they prepare a documentary. And he collects data to write his life as a novel, which constitutes the novel itself.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ "Őu anda okuduđunuz ve bundan sonra okuyacađınız metinler kapsamlı bir araŐtıma sonucu elde ettiklerimden yola ıkararak yazdıklarımın oluşuyor. Bundan 16 yıl önce kimilerine göre radikal militanlar, kimilerine göre devlet, kimilerine göre de devletin kirli işlerini yaptırdıđı Hizbullah'ın militanları tarafından kaılıp öldürölen yazar Asvas'ın hayatını, incelemek için bu araŐtırmalar yapıldı. YaŐadıđı günlerde sade bir hayat süren ve sadece yazacađı öykü ve romanlarla ilgilenen Asvas, ölümünden kısa bir süre sonra dünyanın her tarafında okunan ünlü bir yazara dönüŐtü. Üniversitelerde eserleri üzerinde tezler hazırlanıp sempozyumlar düzenlendi. Sekiz on yıl içinde eserleri onlarca dile çevrildi. Bunun sonucunda UNESCO önümüzdeki yılı yani 2010 yılını 'Asvas Yılı' olarak ilan etti. Bu kapsamda dünya genelinde Asvas'la ilgili birçok etkinlik hazırlanacađı gibi öykü ve romanları da deđişik sanat dallarına uyarlanacak. ... Cumhurbaşkanı Sayın Atilla Dođu, Asvas'ın bu yılki ölüm yıldönümünde yaptıđı konuşmada 'Asvas Türkiye'dir' benzetmesini kullandı. Bu benzetme sanat çevreleri tarafından büyük beđeni ile karŐılındı. Sanki her şeyi eleŐtirmek için yaratılmıŐ olan kimi gazetelerin köşe yazarları bile bu ifadeyi, eleŐtirmeyip, beđendiklerini ifade ettiler. Sanatılar ve gazeteciler, cumhurbaşkanının bu benzetmesinin hemen ardından olayın gerçek faillerinin yakalanıp hesap vermesi için kampanyalar baŐlattı. Yazarın gençlik yıllarından arkadaŐı olan, ... ülkenin en büyük iş adamı Mehmet Őarman önümüzdeki yıl Arvas'ın anısına düzenlenecek bir çok projeyi maddi olarak destekleyeceđini kamuoyuna açıkladı."

⁸⁷ The last story "İimdeki Mezar" from *Bana İsmail Deyin* has same topic like death of Asvas. It was published two years before *Tene Yazılan Ayetler*.

The second story is about the journey of Utanapišti. He is immortal as a punishment from God and lives in hundreds of years at different times in various lands. While he is looking for his wife Lili around the world, he comes across many historical, literary and mythological figures. He chases after death because being immortal is difficult to endure. At the end of the novel, he visits Diyarbakır and meets Asvas. He keeps the lost novel of Asvas “Tene Yazılan Ayetler” and gives it to Berzah. He is the Gilgamesh character Utnapishtim, who was sentenced to immortality. He survives the great flood and becomes an epic immortal character. Through the novel, the Hezbollah terrorist group and their murders are narrated. Asvas is murdered by Hezbollah after being tortured and is buried in a yard of a house. Nobody could find him for years. Hezbollah is a militant organization, which was active between 1993-1995. It committed a lot of murders, mainly targeted Kurds. In 2000s, the organization was collapsed. As a Kurdish author, Asvas is kidnapped by a car and his tapes of torture and query was declared to be found. So, as estimated, he is killed by Hezbollah.⁸⁸ (p. 24- 25)

⁸⁸ “Asvas’ın Sorgu ve İşkence Kasetleri Bulundu: Tene Yazılan Ayetler romanını yazarken, kaçırılan yazar Asvas’a ait sorgu ev işkence kasetleri bulundu. Kaçırıldıktan sonra yıllarca kendisinden hiç bir haber alınamayan yazarın öldürüldükten sonra Diyarbakır’daki bir mezar eve gömülmüş olabileceği ihtimali üzerinde duruldu / 17 Ocak 2000’de Hüseyin Velioglu’nun öldürüldüğü Beykoz Operasyonunun ardından Türkiye mezar evlerle ve domuz bağı ile tanıştı. O operasyonda imha edilmek istenen harddisklerin çözülmesiyle halkın unutmak istediği o korkunç görüntüler tekrar gündeme geldi. Harddisklerin çözümünden yola çıkarak başka mezar evlerin ve domuz bağı ile öldürülmüş kişilerin de olduğu bilgisine ulaşıldı. Beykoz Operasyonunun ardından 19u İstanbul, Üsküdar ve Kartal’da olmak üzere, Diyarbakır, Tarsus, Konya, Ankara ve Batman’da bulunan mezar evlerden tam 52 ceset çıkarıldı. FBI tarafından onarıldıktan sonra, çözümleri Türk mahkemelerine gönderilen harddisklerde yer alan Hizbullah kayıtlarında, sorgularda adı geçen ve orada öldürülen pek çok kişinin cesedine henüz ulaşılamadı. Hizbullah’ın arşivinde sorgu, işkence ve infaz görüntüleri bulunan, ancak cesedine ulaşılamayan kişilerden biri de Tene Yazılan Ayetler romanını kaleme aldığı dönemde kaçırılan Asvas’dır. Yazarın sorgu ve infaz kayıtlarının bulunduğu harddiskleri inceleyen emniyet yetkilileri, onun da Diyarbakır’daki bir mezar eve gömülmüş olabileceği ihtimali üzerinde durduklarını açıkladılar. Asvas, Güneydoğu’da süren kanlı savaşa her zaman muhalif olan kalemlerde biriydi. Bu muhalifliğini de her platformda dile getirmeye çalışıyordu. Gerek TSK’yı gerekse PKK’yı hedef alan yazılar kaleme alıyordu. O günlerde çok sayıda, ölüm tehdidi almasına rağmen, Diyarbakır emniyetinin koruma önerisini reddetmişti. Asvas, yaptığı bir söyleşide “Tene Yazılan Ayetler” adında bir roman çalışması olduğunu söylemişti. Bu açıklamasından bir ay sonra, evinin önünde, kar maskeli iki adam tarafından Renault marka bir taksiye bindirilip kaçırıldı. Yapılan tüm arama ve operasyonlara karşın, kendisinden bir daha haber alınmadı. Hizbullah tarafından kaçırılıp, öldürüldüğü tahmin edilen yazar Asvas’ın cesedi bugüne kadar hiç bir yerde bulunamadı. Yetkililer, operasyon sonucunda ele geçirilen video kasetlerin ve harddisklerin incelenmesi sonucu yazar Asvas’ın sorgu ve işkence görüntülerinin ele geçirildiğini ifade ettiler. Operasyonlarda ele geçirilen dökümanların incelenmesi sonucu ele edilen bilgiler doğrultusunda Diyarbakır, Adıyaman, Batman, Gaziantep ve İstanbul’da bazı adreslere operasyon düzenlendi. Asvas da diğer birçok kayıp gibi, Hizbullah arşivlerinde öldürüldüğüne dair bilgiler olmasına karşın, cesedi henüz bulunamayanlardan biridir.”

In its fiction, historical names and places are attributed a lot. The quote expresses that Beykoz operation was held by the police in 2000 and Hüseyin Velioglu was shot. Famous newspaper *Milliyet* made a news from this event (Milliyet, 2017). Even though Asvas is a fictional name, other names as Konca Kuriş and Mehmet Sünbül were belonging to real victims (Milliyet b, 2017). Additionally, Mehmet Şarman -the businessman supporting the novel of Asvas- is also an author. The tormented body of Arvas was found on May 6th (2010), which was also explained in a newspaper text⁸⁹ (p. 244-246). The novel gives an insight into two political aspects of Kurdish issue. The novel opens with a commemoration of Asvas; the prime minister makes a speech about him with praise.

During 2000s, remembrance and commemorations were possible and the discourse of government was supporting this kind of organizations. Writing about the past, remembering and keeping memories by means of anniversaries, literary pieces and other ways were also possible after 2000s. Although it was not possible to use such a discourse in 1980s and 1990s, 2000s paved the way to discuss Kurdish issue and past experiences of Kurds. When this came to the surface, political discourse became supportive and volunteer to solve the problem. Even the media and the intellectuals were supporting these attempts. As a 16-year-case, the loss of Asvas is taken into consideration again and tracked and supported by the prime minister. He says “Asvas is Turkey”, which means Turkey recognizes his identity. Using such discourse, not only

⁸⁹ “İnsan Kasapları: (6 Mayıs 2010 tarihli gazetelerden) Hizbullah’ın inanılmaz vahşeti! Diyarbakır’daki korku evine yapılan baskında, evin bodrumunda kafalarına çivi çakılmışe, bacakları kesilmiş ve telle boğulmuş üç ceset bulunup çıkarıldı. Cesetlerin ikisinin kayıp gazetecilere, birinin de yazar Asvas’a ait olabileceği belirtildi: Kayıp yazar Asvas’ın cesedi bulundu. Lider kadrosunun ele geçirilmesi ile büyük darbe yiyen terör örgütü Hizbullah’ın, eşi görülmemiş bir ‘toplu mezar’ vahşetine giriştiği de ortaya çıktı. Güvenlik güçleri savcı eşliğinde Diyarbakır’da dün, iki itirafçını gösterdiği yerlerde kazı yaptı. Kar yapılan hücre evlerinde dehşet tablosuyla karşılaşıldı. Evin kazılan her köşesinden toprağa gömülmüş cesetler çıktı. Elleriyle ayakları dozuz bağı ile bağlı olan, cenin pozisyonunda gömülen üç cesedin Diyarbakır ve Batman’da kaçırılan gazetecilere, bir cesedin ise ‘Tene Yazılan Ayetler’ romanını yazarken Diyarbakır’daki evinin önünden kaçırılan yazar Asvas’a ait olabileceği belirtildi. Ele geçirilen iki Hizbullah militanının itiraflarıyla derinleştirilen ve toplu mezar tespitine kadar uzanan operasyonlar, terör örgütünün müstakil evleri tercih ettiğini de ortaya koydu. ...Asvas’ın kafasına çivi çaktılar. ‘Tene Yazılan Ayetler’ romanını yazarken kaçırılan yazar Asvas’a ait olduğu sanılan cesedin kafatasına beton çivisi çakıldığı, diğer bazı cesetlerin de kol ve bacaklarını kırıldığı ve kesildiği, maktullerin işkenceye maruz kaldıkları öğrenildi. ... Asvas’ın islamcı yazar Konca Kuriş’in ve Malki cinayeti davası sanığı Mehmet sümbül’ün sorgulandığı video kasetler bulunmuştur.”

Asvas as a unique sample but also Kurdish citizens are tried to be persuaded that they will be safe and secure. The rise of democratic discourse gives chance to confront the past. This atmosphere leads Yavuz Ekinci as Berzah character in the novel to follow the traces of collective memory and create a historical and political narrative. Behind Asvas's lifestory, there is another political story including torture Kurds were exposed and new attempts for the resolution of Kurdish issue. The novel has some literary views like this:

After September 12, a great deal of stories was written avoiding intervention. Without doubt, its reason was the fear upon the country. Everybody was in the mood to see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. I think keeping quiet was like to be a part of it. In my opinion, the author should not be away from his age and the world even it worths his/her life⁹⁰ (p. 189).

Before his death, Asvas was interviewed and he explained his ideas about writing in insecure times as stated above. "Bana İsmail Deyin" (Call Me Ishmael) can be analyzed based on the discussion of politics and collectivity (Ekinci, 2016). Being often repeated as a leitmotif, "Bana İsmail Deyin" is also the name of short story and the related book. This text tells the last moments of a dying soldier, who was shot at the top of a mountain. "Call me Ishmael! I was shot at the top of the mountain away from everybody. My dead body was there. My mother kept saying that I did not die. However, I was dead there."⁹¹ (Ekinci, 2016c, p. 36) Although he died all alone and the story seems like an individualistic story, it has a collective ground since the soldier's mission looks like telling stories of all who sacrificed themselves.⁹²

Call me Ishmael! I was not given that name by my family. Nobody called me by this name. I was not registered to the public records of my country... While I was watching my body be a part of dust under the raw blue sky, I suddenly

⁹⁰ "... 12 Eylül'den sonra suya sabuna dokunulmadan bolca öykü yazıldı. Bunun nedeni ülkenin üzerine çöken korku bulutlarıydı kuşkusuz. İnsanlar yazdıklarından olayı mahkum edildi. Herkes yaşanan insanlık dışı onca olay karşısında üç maymunu oynadı. Susmanın suça ortaklık olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bence yazar yaşadığı çağdan ve dünyadan bedeli kendi canı da olsa uzak durmamalıdır."

⁹¹ "Bana İsmil Deyin! Herkesten uzak o dağ başında vuruldum. Cesedim orada kaldı. Annem ölmediğimi söyleyip durdu. Oysa ben orada öldüm."

⁹² "Call me Ishmael" is the first sentence of Moby Dick by Herman Melville.

saw the God... With a high volume, he said 'Tell'. 'Tell! Tell for the sake of those sacrificed like you!... Call me Ishmael! I chose this name for myself. I told my story for the sake of those similar to me. The stories are identical with those engaged to death. I was shot at the top the mountain. The other one in a cave... The other one was shot in a shrubbery. As a result, we either were died or killed⁹³

These expressions can summarize the collective aspect of dying. Death carries a collective meaning and the soldier is given a divine mission to tell the stories of those with similar fate. He is also a collective figure chosen by the God. Another significant point is that he calls himself as "İsmail", the symbol of sacrifice. The story of Ishmael (İsmail) is famous for telling the story of sacrifice. In Islam, Ishmael is the son of Prophet Abraham, who intends to sacrifice his son by God's order. The soldier thinks that he also sacrifices himself and he calls all those killed in mountain or in a cave as "İsmail" without classifying or making any explanation hereabout. The story questions the purpose of this sacrifice and to whom they were offered.

Call me Ishmael! Oh, people whom we died in the mountains are sleeping in their beds! Did you immediately accept our death, didn't you? Didn't you express in the quarters that we were immortal, did you? But, I died... You forgot me. You acted as if I had not lived before. We have no names. Our entire life only corresponds to a limited number⁹⁴ (p. 40).

While being "İsmail" has a collective meaning since there are many people dying for the sake of the powers, it also has a political facet. These people will not be remembered one by one but their death will be used in political discourses. We can talk about an empathical case here that makes Turks and Kurds close to each other. The soldiers are also sacrificing themselves like "İshmail".

⁹³ "Bana İsmail deyin! Bu adı bana ailem vermedi. Beni bu adla kimse çağırmadı. Yurttaş olduğum devletin kayıtlarında da bu adla kayıtlı değilim.... Mavisi soyulmuş göğün altında bedenimden arta kalanların yavaş yavaş toprak oluşunu seyrederken birden Tanrı bana göründü... Gür bir sesle 'Anlat!' dedi. 'Anlat! Kurban edilen tüm benzerlerin adına anlat!... Bana İsmail Deyin! Bu adı kendime ben seçtim. Hikayemi tüm benzerlerim adına anlattım. Benim gibi ölümlü nişanlı olanların hikayeleri birbirinin aynısıdır. Ben dağ başında vuruldum. Bir diğeri mağarada... Bir diğeri ise bir çalılıkta vuruldu. Sonuçta ya öldük ya öldürdük. Bu bizim yaşamımız."

⁹⁴ "Bana İsmail Deyin! Ey uğruna dağlarda öldüğümüz yataklarında uyuyan insanlar! Öldüğümüzü hemen kabullendiniz değil mi? Her zamanki gibi meydanlarda ölümsüz olduğumuzu söylediniz değil mi? Oysa ben öldüm... beni unuttunuz. Hiç yaşamamışım gibi. Adlarımız yok. Sadece bir sayıya karşılık geldi tüm yaşamımız."

The most different political reference in the novel is the Kurdish with three colors as yellow, red, and green (p. 43). Ekinci was able to use such reference due to the liberal political atmosphere of the era. Constitution of Iraq recognized an autonomous Kurdistan region in the north of the country in 2005. Having a Kurdish autonomous region is narrated in the novel as: "WELCOME TO IRAQI KURDISTAN REGION". As Kurdish author writing in 2000s, Yavuz Ekinci has a more different experience than older generations thanks to the lenient atmosphere. Clashes decreased a lot while democratic solution packages increase. Compared to the year before 2000s, publication in Kurdish and discussions about Kurdish identity were eased.

Ekinci also narrates such historical cases as Hezbollah victims, burning of Kurdish villages and forced migrations. Even though producing literary pieces in Kurdish was possible after 2000s due to political and linguistic circumstances, he preferred writing in Turkish. His books were published by canonical publishing houses such as Doğan and İletişim Publishing House and he received prestigious literary awards. Under these circumstances, Ekinci has produced his short stories and novels, made interviews for many of his books with various newspapers. (Milliyet, K24, Radikal) He has also crossed the national borders and made his novel *Günün Birinde* be translated into German. This book was chosen as one of the top ten influential books in Germany. Additionally, his short stories were turned into screenplays for cinema and theatre. As a result, Yavuz Ekinci is accepted as canonical Turkish literature and he opens himself to literary spheres of Europe.

Ekinci creates a political and collective enunciation and constructs a testimonial for Armenian massacre. His characters' witness Kurdish people's suffering and hear about Armenian massacre. He uses method of turning to the narrator. To sum, he has a mission for telling the story of witnessing. Ekinci uses a messianic language; the narrators are inspired to write and started writing for the sake of public. According to Casanova, the authors of this kind of literary texts have a mission and the only way for such an author to be far away from being a "prophet", "collective messenger" or "national soothsayer" is to live in an autonomous literary field (Casanova, 2010, p. 218). Just because Kurdish society is still not autonomous in terms of literature, Ekinci

seems to have a messianic and collective mission while writing. Thus, his characters have no voice of agent. Instead, they symbolize a political and collective group. As we mentioned before, the language of Yavuz Ekinci is very close to standard Turkish. But his novels and short stories also include some Kurdish sentences and Kurdish names while re-constructing the language within Turkish codes. Ekinci's literature can be summarized as modernist since he uses Turkish in a hybrid manner making Kurdish-Turkish sentences and including phrases. Some of the themes are continuous from Alp's works to Ekinci's. Oral literature tradition can be seen in works such as the story of Kawa the Blacksmith.⁹⁵ (Ekinci, p. 103) The novel refers to so many literary texts from mythological texts to religious books, from modernist Turkish novels or Kurdish books and world literature. He is loyal to oral literature tradition but does not avoid creating modernist novels in Turkish. But we should emphasize that Ekinci is not that much into minor literature in terms of linguistic patterns just because he does not break many rules.

In a nutshell, although the atmosphere of 2000s allowed authors to use Kurdish, Ekinci did not prefer it, but instead he built his texts with Turkish phrases. Hybrid use cannot be seen in his texts, since Ekinci pay attention to use correct Turkish grammatics. He is far from minor literature because he constructs a new language, which is not dense and hybrid. Postmodernism also accelerated the rise of minor literature after 2000s because it problematizes modernist literature's dominance. The existence of local cultures, ethnical and national values bring forward the concept of minor literature. In this sense, new generation authors are familiar with the concept of minor literature.

Not only belongingness to an identity but also circumstances of the era and marketing of the novels have a powerful influence on the dissemination of Kurdish authors' works. Yavuz Ekinci is one of the well-known contemporary authors using media and

⁹⁵ Some of the themes continuous in the novels starting from the Seyit Alp to Yavuz Ekinci. "Demirci Kawa" is also one of Kurdish mythic character. As a modernist author, Ekinci harmonized the ancient stories Şehname and a blacksmith Kawa in a novel, with a nationalistic discourse. Kawa defeats Dehhak in Şehname. Ekinci tells similar story, when Kawa go to the fight with dehhak in the novel, he decorates a flag with "the fabrics in red, yellow, and green coloured" and give it name as "The flag of Kawa".

other marketing tools of literary field. Literary field is directly associated with political atmosphere. In his interview, Şükrü Arğın argues that there was an essential transformation in socio-cultural atmosphere from 1971 coup d'état to 1980 coup d'état. Literature was not a "traditional" way of understanding anymore but fell under the influence of a new atmosphere, the "modernist" one. In Turkey, the traditional cultural atmosphere of the era, which was under the hegemony of "leftist intellectual groups" and "similar communities", shifted to the new cultural atmosphere where "free market" is the determinant factor. What matters as a result of this development was the fact that publishing became a sector and the readers turned out to be "customers", which led to a fragmentation in the public (Arğın, 2017). Especially since 2000s, publishing sector has been rising and marketing has also become important for novels, short stories and other fictional books. In her thesis "Türkiye'de Roman Yazarlarının Markalaşma Süreci: Elif Şafak Örneği" (Branding Process of Novelists in Turkey: Case of Elif Şafak) Belma Canbay reveals that Elif Şafak places her name as a brandname as one of the bestseller authors in Turkish (Canbay, 2014, p. 76). Canbay tells how Elif Şafak and Doğan Publishing House follow the process for marketing her books and turning Elif Şafak's name into a brand. Ayşegül Kirpiksiz, the marketing director of Doğan Egmont Publishing House, mentions in her interview that they go through a process to decide the name of the book and the cover page with a committee when it comes to Elif Şafak's books. Doğan Publishing seems to follow similar process for Yavuz Ekinici even more less. To illustrate, the cover page of *Cennetin Kayıp Topraklarında* novel was published with the cover page consisting an image of a pomegranate in the previous edition and Kurdish edition. The topic in the novel is related to Armenian massacre and the name of second chapter in the novel is called "Nar" (The Pomegranate). So, it seems that the cover page symbolizes Armenian culture and massacre using an image of pomegranate. For the last edition, the cover page is changed and is designed specially. In this last edition, Yavuz Ekinici had a title as "the author of catastrophe age", which was mentioned in the cover pages. Ekinici emphasized in his interviews that even previous volumes did not include this information. As Nurdan Gürbilek points out, after 1980s, living has turned to be a shop window, the publishing sector has been influenced by the codes of capitalism and of course producing books are

now no different than producing another commodity. In this sense, the cover page of a book is especially important. This is the reason that Yavuz Ekinci's cover pages were prepared carefully. Also, the interviews and media representations function as other significant attempts for promoting his new books. Yavuz Ekinci is visible through his interviews about his new novels and short stories.

One of the marketing strategies is to turn novels into screenplay and that eases the process of earning reputation while also having a powerful effect on sales. Even though Yavuz Ekinci is not a best-seller author in Turkish, his novel *Cennetin Kayıp Topraklarında* was turned into screenplay with the name of "İz/Reç". He has also theatre play adaptation, which reveals that he has attempted to use some new tools that branding books and authors employ. There is a transition between the genres from literary texts to visual arts and this has more power on the audience for a piece to be popular. Even though publishing has many dynamics such as distribution and advertisement, we can argue that Yavuz Ekinci has followed the branding rules of Doğan Publishing House. These rules were similar to Elif Şafak's strategies like representation (using social media such as Twitter and Instagram for announcing the books and interviews).

Eventually, we can put forward that Yavuz Ekinci and Doğan Publishing use modern tools of advertising and they follow a branding process to make Yavuz Ekinci a brand as a Kurdish author. Even though Seyit Alp and Suzan Samancı have succeeded to some extent, Ekinci's process differs from theirs. The marketing process and linguistic aspects of Yavuz Ekinci create this difference between them. His language is fit for Turkish grammatics, but his density and hybridity fade in the novels and short stories. As a result, even though he has some powerful collective and political references in his texts, Yavuz Ekinci differs from the concept of minor literature because of linguistic aspects. In this respect, his texts leave minor literature aspects aside.

As to linguistic preferences, a considerable division between Alp, Samancı and Ekinci catches the eye. Since he narrates nomad tribes, the language of Alp has local verbs and phrases, Kurdish words and oral tradition elements. However, Samancı and Ekinci

have an intellectual voice within urban language. This preference is also a conclusion of political shift around 1980s. Parallel to this development, the language turned out to go from local to urban. The characters in Samancı and Ekinci are generally intellectual people like authors or students. Novels of Alp include many local issues, moral and traditional topic, while Samancı and Ekinci have a concern about global and national issues related to individual problems.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Bringing Kurdish authors to attention is significant since these authors stay in limbo due to their literature. They write in Turkish with their Kurdish identities. Their texts neither belong to Kurdish literature nor Turkish literature. Due to this dilemma, these authors are underestimated. In this sense, the main aim of this study was to analyze the short stories and the novels of three authors employing minor literature concept.

Throughout this research, I have attempted to understand and analyze literary texts of Kurdish authors whose native language is not Turkish, but still write in Turkish. Since here is a blurred literary field and any specific classification about these authors has not been made before, I had difficulty in selecting authors. Except for a few books or articles, no specific source which consists and classifies these authors exists. In his book *Kürt Edebiyatına Giriş*, Mehmed Uzun mentions Seyit Alp as the author writing in Turkish (Uzun, 2006, p. 88). Clémence Scalbert Yücel refers to Suzan Samancı in her article "Emergence and Equivocal Autonomization of Kurdish Literary Field in Turkey" and her book *Kürt Edebiyatının Anatomisi* [Anatomy of Kurdish Literature] that she is the Kurdish author in Turkish. She gives informs us that Firat Cewerî includes Suzan Samancı in his Kurdish anthology even though she did not write in Kurdish until 2015. Thus, to analyze and compare these authors, I decided to work on those denominating themselves with their Kurdish identity and problematize the political results of ethnic identity in their texts. In this regard, Seyit Alp is as an early period Kurdish writer at the beginning of 1970s, while Suzan Samancı and Yavuz Ekinci are contemporary Kurdish authors. Samancı's subjects are generally about paranoia of the political atmosphere of 1980s and 1990s, whereas Ekinci is interested in the testimony of massacres and murders of Kurds and Armenians.

Although the number of Kurdish authors cannot be estimated, there are numerous authors considering high Kurdish population in Turkey. However, there is limited number of author names under the category of Kurdish authors in Turkey, which

might be related to describing the authors with their identity and political positioning about Kurdishness. Accordingly, I would like to express that all Kurdish authors in Turkish could not be categorized under the concept of minor literature, since it is a way of reading some texts of specific authors rather than making categorizations in the literary field. As to my research, the texts of these three authors are suitable to examine under the concept of minor literature, which eases the understanding of the elements in these novels. Due to the political and collective positioning in their texts and language divisions from the standard use, his words distinguish them from canonical texts of Turkish. There are well-known Kurdish authors and poets in Turkish literary canon such as Yaşar Kemal, Cemal Süreya, and Ahmed Arif with their completely unique literary aspects. In that sense, minor literature does not include all authors in major language, some specific texts and authors should be considered under the category of minor literature.

Despite difference between their periods, three authors generate similar thematic aspects for the representation of Kurdish society: migrations, deportations of the villages, the political pressure, and the violence. Seyit Alp writes in the early period of the Kurdish issue. In this period, Kurdish writing and publishing were banned; however, Kurdish political and cultural movement was initiated. In addition to the political pressure, the lack of a standardized Kurdish written language and the genre of the novel tradition discourage Alp to write in Kurdish. As opposed to Alp, the writing periods of Suzan Samancı and Yavuz Ekinci correspond to 1990s and 2000s, when Turkey was liberalized. The democratization discourse rose and freedom for Kurdish relatively after 2000s came out. The preference of Turkish should have stemmed from the improvement of his own Kurdish. The period when Seyit Alp produced his novels were full of political pressure and he generally constructs the metaphors. Seyit Alp creates a binary opposition of colonized and colonizer. The former is Kurdish society, while the latter is Ottoman State. There is a collective discourse from all other ethnic and religious groups against Turkish power and the discourse of being brother with the other “colonized” groups is significant. The “brotherhood” discourse is contingent in Samancı and Ekinci. Samancı’s novels and short stories also include certain characters such as Armenian or Assyrian oppressed

by Turks. Ekinci carries this attitude one step forward and he concentrates on witnessing. As a Kurdish man, one of the agents of Armenian massacre, he narrates witnessing the massacre based on his character called Hatice/ Almast. While specific oppressor and oppressed groups based on binary oppositions abound in Seyit Alp's novels, these groups are varied in Samancı's and Ekinci's novels. The oppressed and the oppressor can replace in their texts. For instance, in *Halepçe'den Gelen Sevgili Zeynep* as a Turkish character is not portrayed as the oppressor, but a volunteer in Kurdish movement. In *Cennetin Kayıp Topraklarında* Hatice/Almast reverses this process. Normally, there is a discourse about Kurds being tortured by Turkish Republic but in Hatice's case, her family is the victim killed by Kurdish villagers. And Ekinci exchanges the victim roles in this novel.

Alp's another criticism is towards Kurdish society. He criticizes feudal structure of Kurdish society and builds an opposition of "ağa" and peasants. Samancı and Ekinci write after modernization period and thus, the feudal structure theme cannot be found in their texts. Adaptation to modern city life and emergent culture have become trend topics in their writings. Suzan Samancı brings the issue of women in Kurdish society to her novels and shows different womanhood experiences in Kurdish society and the crisis of being a Kurdish intellectual woman.

All three authors create a trouble of language-speaking in their texts. Their characters generally face the problem of inability to speak their native language and adapt to the new language. The confrontation with the new language namely Turkish generally happens during primary school education, while the second encounter happens in the cities, to which they are migrated. After their migration to big cities from rural villages, their first trouble is always the language. Sacrificing Kurdish to not to be humiliated and learning Turkish under severe conditions is the common theme of three authors. While the native language is lost, new ways of expressions arise. For example, Samancı creates silence. In 1980s and 1990s, fear and paranoia are the dominant feelings leading characters to lose their linguistic ability and the phrase is replaced with silence, growling, mumbling, coughing, and sneezing. Ekinci stages another encounter: The trauma of massacres causes people to lose their language,

so keep silence. The loss of identity of Hatice/Almast results in the impossibility to speak.

Creating minor language reveals different aspects of three authors. Seyit Alp uses a hybrid language consisting of both Turkish and Kurdish words and phrases. His hybrid use of the phrases are constructed in two languages. The elements of oral tradition are also preserved in his texts. The regular use of Turkish shifts and Kurdish words, sentences, exclamations have a place in Turkish text. His language comes close to minor language since he breaks grammar rules and brings new letters and words to Turkish. There are ruptures in his novels due to hybrid use of Turkish and Kurdish. As stated before, a collective and political representation of Kurdish identity is also seen. Turks are portrayed as colonizer of Kurdish while Kurdish society has social and political unity against colonizer Ottoman or Turkish forces.

For Samancı and Ekinci, this era facilitated the publication of their books from many famous publishers such as İletişim and Doğan. They were interviewed for various magazines and newspapers. The rise of social media also supported them, whose fame increased via Twitter and Facebook. Even though Seyit Alp's novels are published by Kurdish or Socialist publishing houses, books of Samancı and Ekinci come out of canonical Turkish publishers, which indicates that they are approved and accepted to Turkish canon with their Kurdish identity and visible in Turkish literary field.

The question of the importance of these novels and the short stories in terms Turkish linguistic and literary spheres necessarily come to the fore. Even though the analysis of three authors are not adequate to draw a general picture about the issue, I can argue that literary style of these authors can disclose that literary texts in Turkish are not monotype while some of the themes like discourse of colonialism are consistent with Kurdish literary texts. In this sense, we can talk about a binary effect on the language and literary field. But, this can be best understood with new researches comparing Kurdish and Turkish authors and rethinking these texts under the light of minor tendencies in visual arts and cinema.

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