A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON SUICIDE NOTES:
MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS IN SUICIDE NOTES OF MEN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

FAZİLET CANBOLAT

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

JUNE 2018

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science/Arts / Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON SUICIDE NOTES: MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS IN SUICIDE NOTES OF MEN

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June 2018, 194 pages

This thesis was dedicated to investigate a part of the suicide phenomenon by using suicide notes. The main aim of the study was to examine the note leavers' experiences in relation to others. The most suitable method was thought to be qualitative research; therefore, 12 documents were obtained from Ankara Public Prosecutor office by purposive sampling, and the data set was analyzed by utilizing inductive and interpretative thematic analysis. According to the findings of primary (semantic) level analysis, the categories were labeled as *'emotions', 'perceptions', 'functions'* and *'phantasies'*. There were several themes and sub-themes under those categories. Based on the findings from the primary level analysis, an interpretative level of analysis from a Lacanian point of view was conducted. In this secondary (latent) level analysis, the mental relational interplay of the emotions of the subject related to the Other in the suicide notes has been the focal point. The findings yielded latent themes such as *'ambivalence of emotions (aggressivity)', 'issues related to*

separation' and *'issues related to the Law'.* The '*issues related to separation'* theme was thought to be composed of sub-themes such as '*the investment for the eye of the Other as an urge to escape from persecution anxiety*' and '*the illusion of omnipotence'.* On the basis of those findings, a diagnostic discussion, which highlighted narcissism in addition to a psychotic structure, specifically paranoia, was provided. In terms of implications, the findings of this study may be utilized while evaluating the transference of the suicidal patients in the psychotherapy settings.

Keywords: Qualitative Study, Suicide Notes, Lacanian Analysis, the Other, Psychotherapy

ÖZ

İNTİHAR NOTLARI ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR ARAŞTIRMA: ERKEKLERİN İNTİHAR NOTLARINDA ZİHİNSEL TEMSİLLER

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Haziran 2018, 194 sayfa

Bu tez, intihar notlarını kullanarak intihar olgusunun bir kısmını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın temel amacı not bırakan kişilerin diğerleriyle ilişkilerindeki deneyimlerini araştırmaktır. En uygun metodun nitel araştırma metodu olduğu düşünülmüştür, bu sebeple amaca uygun örneklemle Ankara Başsavcılığı'ndan 12 doküman alınmış, tüme-varımsal ve yorumlayıcı tema analizi yöntemi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Birincil (anlamsal) düzey analizlerden edinilen sonuçlara göre kategoriler *'duygular', 'algılar', 'fonksiyonlar'* ve *'fanteziler'* olarak isimlendirilmiştir. Bu kategorilerin altında çeşitli temalar ve alt temalar bulunmaktadır. Birincil düzey analizlerden elde edilen sonuçlara dayanılarak, Lacanyen bakış açısıyla yorumlayıcı düzey analizler yapılmıştır. Bu ikincil düzey analizlerde, intihar notlarında failin büyük Başka'ya ilişkin duygularını zihinsel düzeyde incelemek esas amaç olmuştur. Bulgular *'çift-değerli duygulanım (agresiflik)', 'ayrışmaya ilişkin meseleler'* ve *'yasaya ilişkin meseleler'* gibi bir takım

örtük temaları ortaya çıkarmıştır. *'Ayrışmaya ilişkin meseleler'* temasının *'zulüm kaygısından kaçınmak için Büyük Başka'nın gözüne yapılan yatırım'* ve *'tümgüçlülük düşlemleri'* gibi alt temalardan oluştuğu düşünülmüştür. Bulgulara dayanılarak narsisizm ve psikotik yapıyı, bilhassa paranoyayı işaret eden tanısal bir tartışma sunulmuştur. Uygulama bağlamında, psikoterapi alanında intihara meyilli hastaların aktarımlarını ele alırken bu çalışmadan edinilen bulguların kullanılabileceği düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler*: Nitel Araştırma, İntihar Notları, Lacanyen Analiz, Büyük Başka, Psikoterapi

To My Family

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

prosecutor secretary Hülya Buldu. If they did not have trust in me, this study would not exist. I feel really thankful.

I would like to thank my research group and peers who helped me to organize my thoughts and findings. I think my peers Burcu Pınar Gökdemir and Derya Özbek Şimşek deserves special thanks here. I would also like to thank Hakan Tilgel for helping me with English translations and general organizations of the thesis. Besides, I want to thank all of my supervisors, supervisees and patients who contributed to my professional development as a psychotherapist.

My special thanks go to my precious ones. First, I want to express my gratitude for Berfin Özge Özdemir for being such a sweet, motivating, helpful and whole-hearted housemate. I will never forget your support at the day of my dissertation defense just as all the other days you cooked for me or left a piece of chocolate onto my laptop in order to increase my motivation to study. You are my little mother. I feel very luck to have a bro named as Metin Emenullahi. I want to thank him for always being honest with me, supporting and enlightening me whenever I feel confused. We had delightful conversations, and I know that we will continue having them at our fourties during our barbecue parties. The last but the most, I would like to thank Sudeyf Musayev. He studied with me in order to motivate me, even when he did not have any work to do. He has always been there for me and endured all the hardships of my faces. He is more than a friend for me and he is just like a mountain which I can always count on. I am very grateful to have you in my life. I love you guys!

Lastly, I want to thank my encouraging and supporting family. They made me who I am. I feel greatful to have them behind my back and they are fortunately there.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and Background

'There is but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide.'

Albert Camus (1942)

Suicide notes are accepted as significant tools for studying suicide according to the literature. Tumram and Ambade (2016) defined suicide notes as "the notes, where the victim has documented the intention to terminate one's own life" (p. 256), and they evaluate this document as a message. According to Chris Thomas (1980), the first probable suicide note in ancient history was written on a papyrus in Egypt; and the owner of the note was claimed to have depressive psychosis. The poems on this papyrus were interpreted by Thomas, and they were claimed to "reflect inner fantasy rather than external reality" (p. 285).

Shneidman (1981), as a suicidologist, expected to discover a key in the suicide notes which facilitates to understand the motives of the act of suicide; in fact, he thought that if this key was discovered, it might be used in understanding the acts of other people who completed suicide but did not leave a note. In fact, the motivations in the suicide notes were investigated by lots of studies. It was said that the content analysis of the suicide notes may provide information in order to analyse individual cases (Chynoweth, 1977). Moreover, the studies conducted on the motivational contents of suicide notes were claimed to provide a chance to explore possible preventative programs (Chynoweth, 1977; Ho, Yip, Chiu, & Halliday, 1998).

On the other hand, according to McClelland, Reicher and Booth (2000), suicide notes, as a manner of communication, reflects the relationships of the suicidal people rather than indicating an insight about the motives of the suicide. Accordingly, in a qualitative study from sociology realm, it was discovered that "relationship break-down" is the most common initiator of suicide (Scourfield, Fincham, Langer & Shiner, 2012). In another qualitative study conducted by Sanger and McCarthy Veach (2008), suicide notes were analyzed by using grounded theory, and the interpersonal nature of those notes was searched for, due to the fact that the researchers evaluated suicide notes as "acts of communication" (p. 356). They found out seven main themes; namely, "instructions, positive relationships, negative relationships, explanations, relationship reconciliation (maintenance), concern for others and acknowledging end of relationship". Furthermore, the suicide notes involve information about various emotions of the note-leavers. Besides, the notes have a purpose for "eliciting certain emotional responses from survivors who had been close to the victims" ("Suicide Notes", 1961). For example, Ho et al. (1998) claimed that the notes left by the people who completed suicide may relieve the relatives left behind; in fact, they said that the notes may create a "therapeutic effect" due to the fact that they may include explanations related to the act of suicide. On the other hand, those notes may also cause negative or devastating emotions in the recipients. For example, the qualitative study conducted on suicide notes by McClelland et al. (2000) by using discursive analysis revealed that blaming oneself or blaming the recipients of the suicide note is the main function of the notes written by the suicide completers. In addition, a quantitative study conducted on suicide notes indicated that "apology and shame" were the most common themes with a prevalence of 74% (Foster, 2003).

The main purpose of the current study was to examine the note leavers' experiences in relation to others. In addition, it was intended to investigate the mental relational interplay of the emotions of the the subject related to the Other from a Lacanian point of view, with the help of qualitative method because of the fact that an in-depth analysis is needed. The documents, which were obtained from Ankara

Public Prosecutor office, were analyzed by using thematic analysis. It was thought that the findings of this study may be utilized while evaluating the transference of the suicidal patients in the psychotherapy settings.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although communication is viewed as "sending and receiving messages" or "a dynamic process of exchanging meaningful messages" (Steinberg, 2007, p. 39), the suicide notes of the people who completed suicide, or the suicide act itself, reflects a one-way, linear direction which means the note-leaver sends a message but blocks the incoming message and does not receive a message, due to the nature of death. It may be possible that the person who writes a suicide note fills in the gaps in his/her mind or phantasy. Therefore, the representations of the subject and the Other in the mind of the person who killed himself/herself and the phantasy behind might be essential issues to explore. From a Lacanian point of view, suicide may be counted as passage to the act (passage à l'acte) which is defined as "an exit from the symbolic network [language]" and "a dissolution of the social bond" (as cited in Evans, 2006, p. 140). I think that 'leaving a suicide note' becomes an important issue to explore at this point.

1.3 Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The primary aim of the current study was to examine the note leavers' experiences in relation to others. The secondary research question was, "How are the mental relational interplay of the emotions of the subject related to the Other in the suicide notes?". In other words, the intent of this thesis is to learn about the mental dynamics of the note-leavers in their relationships with the Other.

1.4 Research Setting and Data Collection Strategy

Menninger (1938) asserted that one should focus on the "unconscious purposes" rather than the statistical analysis and conscious motives in order to

understand the phenomena of suicide, due to the fact that it is "a very complex act and not a simple, incidental, isolated act of impulsion, either logical or in-explicable" (p. 23). Suicide as a complex phenomenon is hard to be understood by using scales or numbers. In the current study, qualitative analysis is chosen as the method because it may allow the researcher to deeply examine the matter in the suicide notes; in fact, the aim of the qualitative research is to evaluate a social phenomenon within its context deeply and fully, instead of focusing on generalizability (*thick description*) (Hays & Singh, 2012). It was thought that using the suicide notes, as the acts of communication, may give the essential information about the relational interplay of the emotions between the subject and the Other as represented in the mind of the subject who completed suicide.

The data corpus, which was acquired from Ankara Public Prosecutor office, consists of 12 files containing suicide notes, notebooks, social media shares, last messages statements of the relatives and eyewitnesses, and official reports such as crime scene investigation reports and autopsy reports. On the other hand, the selected data (data set) consists of suicide notes, notebooks, social media shares and last messages. The number of those documents depended both on the sufficiency of the data and the permission of the Public Prosecutor office. Purposive sampling was used as the sampling method for this study, in accordance with the nature of the qualitative methodology. Due to the fact that the data was constituted of documents, a thematic document analysis was conducted as the method. Parallel with the research questions, the data was analyzed with an inductive and interpretative thematic analysis.

1.5 Implications

This study provides the opportunity to understand the themes in the suicide notes both from a semantic and a latent level. The subtle aim of the study was to take an initial step in answering the question of how to evaluate and handle the transference of suicidal patients in the psychotherapy settings. From a Lacanian point

of view, clarifying the clinical structure may help to determine the analyst's position in the therapy setting (Fink, 1997). The current study aimed to explore the mental relational interplay of the emotions of the subject toward the Other from a Lacanian point of view. It was thought that if a repetition or a cycle was detected across the cases in those notes, it might give an insight about the diagnosis and provide a contribution to the clinical psychology area in terms of understanding the communication styles, the representations associated with the Other and the transference relationships of the suicidal patients. Thus, it may help to determine the analyst's position in the therapy setting. As a limitation, the cases' histories in the form of anamnesis do not exist in this study. Therefore, the documents were deeply analyzed and a thick description was provided.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

In this part, general information related to the thesis has been given. After this part, detailed literature review is shared in Chapter 2. In the Chapter 3, research methodology is discussed in detail. Chapter 4 is the part in which the findings of the primary level analysis are given, whereas in the Chapter 5 the secondary level of analysis is shared. The last chapter is constituted of the general discussion which shelters discussion of the findings, the conclusions and the implications.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

'It is quite generic as can be seen in burial practices, certain types of which clearly display the psychological meaning of a return to the mother's womb.'

Jacques Lacan (1938/n.d)

In this part, firstly the literature related to suicide notes is discussed in detail. The studies utilizing nomothetic approach and the studies utilizing idiographic approach are given; in other words, both quantitative and qualitative studies related to suicide notes are shared. Secondly, the literature on suicide from a psychoanalytic perspective and from a Lacanian approach is provided.

2.1   Research on Suicide Notes

Suicide notes are significant tools for studying suicide according to the literature. For example, the content analysis of the suicide notes may provide information in order to analyse individual cases (Chynoweth, 1977). In addition, the individual's subjective situation before committing suicide may be analyzed by using suicide notes, and they may give essential information about a deeper understanding of the act of suicide (Chynoweth, 1977). Moreover, the studies conducted on the motivational contents of suicide notes may create a chance to explore possible preventative programs (Chynoweth, 1977; Ho et al., 1998). For example, Shneidman (1981), as one of the suicidologists, hoped to discover a key in the suicide notes which eases to understand the motives of the act of suicide; in fact, he thought that if

this key was discovered, it might be used in understanding the acts of other people who completed suicide but did not leave a note.

On the contrary, according to McClelland et al. (2000), suicide notes, as a manner of communication, reflects the relationships of the suicidal people rather than indicating an insight about the motives of the suicide. Congruently, Tumram and Ambade (2016) defined suicide notes as "the notes, where the victim has documented the intention to terminate one's own life" (p. 256), and they evaluate this document as a message. Furthermore, the suicide notes involve information about various emotions. Those notes have a purpose for "eliciting certain emotional responses from survivors who had been close to the victims" ("Suicide Notes", 1961). Ho et al. (1998) claimed that the notes left by the people who completed suicide may relieve the relatives left behind; in fact, they said that the notes may create a "therapeutic effect" due to the fact that they may include explanations related to the act of suicide.

There have been multiple areas of research by utilizing suicide notes as a key to understand the phenomenon of suicide (Ho et al., 1998). The analysis of suicide notes have been carried out by two main approaches namely, 'nomothetic' and 'idiographic' approaches. The former is related to quantitative research and focuses on the generalizability, whereas the latter is a requirement of the qualitative research and designates in-depth analysis of the cases (Leenaars, 2002). Most of the studies used statistical analysis based on 'the multidimensional model of suicide' which belongs to Leenaars (Leenaars, 1988). The content or thematic analysis were observed to be the most commonly used methods; however, those methods were not used as in the qualitative research; rather, the researchers studied with pre-existing categories and numbers, which means they conducted quantitative studies by using suicide notes. The qualitative research on the suicide notes had two main focal points in terms of topic. One of the lines in research on suicide notes has been searching for the motivation behind the notes. Another stream of research was on utilizing the

suicide notes as communication tools. In this section of the study, both the quantitative and qualitative findings related to suicide notes are described.

2.1.1 Research utilizing nomothetic approach.

2.1.1.1 Who leaves a note, who does not?

Although suicide notes are used as an important research tool in the literature, it was shown that a minority of the people who completed suicide leaves notes or letters; therefore, generalizability of those studies conducted on the suicide notes to the suicide population was thought to be controversial (Koehler, 2007; Stack, & Rockett, 2016). Nevertheless, studies indicated that the demographic differences between the people who leave notes and who do not are inconsistent and contradictory; therefore, it can be said that there is not a clear consensus in the literature on this issue (Olson, Wahab, Thompson, & Durrant, 2011; Tewksbury, Suresh, & Holmes, 2010).

Haines, Williams and Lester (2011) investigated the characteristic features of the individuals who leave suicide notes and who do not; and found out that the interpersonal problems may lead to leave suicide notes whereas psychiatric disorder and taking medical help decrease the probability of leaving a note. Moreover, according to a two-year study conducted in Greece, using the methods of hanging or firearm and not having a psychiatric disorder increases the probability of leaving a note (Paraschakis, Michopoulos, Douzenis, Christodoulou, Koutsaftis, & Lykouras, 2012). When attempters and completers of suicide were compared, it was found out that the completers were more likely to leave notes (Brevard, Lester, & Yang, 1990; Dejong, 2007). In terms of the content, the ones who completed suicide were shown to use more sentences with future tense and reference to the others accompanied by positive emotions and less reference to the metaphysics, when compared to the suicide attempters (Handelman, & Lester, 2007). Moreover, a recent study conducted by Carpenter, Bond, Tait, Wilson and White (2016) investigated the characteristic

features of the individuals who leave suicide notes. According to the findings of this study, using gas inhalation as a suicide method increases the likelihood of leaving a suicide note, whereas being female, being Aboriginal Australian, using a vehicle or train as the method or having a mental illness decrease the probability of leaving a note. However, their study indicated that there is a notable resemblance between the population who leaves suicide notes and who does not. Similarly, another study conducted in India asserted that there is not a great difference between the note leavers and none-note-leavers in terms of demographic properties (Girdhar, Leenaars, Dogra, Leenaars, & Kumar, 2004). Moreover, a study conducted in Ohio indicated that there is an essential similarity between the two populations although the researchers found out that the people who leave alone and make suicide-threats are more likely to leave suicide note (Callanan, & Davis, 2009). In addition, the resemblance of note-leavers and non-note-leavers was indicated in the other studies from Turkey (Demirel, Akar, Sayın, Candansayar, & Leenaars, 2008), and from Mexico (Cha´vez-Herna´ndez, Pa´ramo, Leenaars, & Leenaars, 2006).

The controversy of the findings between the studies was questioned in terms of the passage of time. In fact, it was indicated that 12-15% of the people who completed suicide had left notes behind (Leenaars, 1988); however, this rate rose to 40% over time (Leenaars, Lester, Wenckstem, McMulin, Rudzinski, & Brevard, 1992). Moreover, in a study conducted in Hong Kong, suicide notes of people in the years of 1992 and 2000 were compared, and it was found out that the characteristics of note-leavers changed in eight years in Hong Kong, so this phenomenon may not be static as expected (Wong, Yeung, Chan, Yip & Tang, 2009). Furthermore, in another study which used a 6 years of population, it was indicated that there is not a significant difference between the people who left notes and who did not (Cerel, Moore, Brown, Van de Venne, & Brown, 2015). Although the controversy continues, it can be inferred from the literature that there is not a systematic difference in terms of the characteristic features or the demography between the note leavers and non-note-leavers.

2.1.1.2 Characteristics of note-leavers and contents of suicide notes.

The relationship between the content of the suicide notes and demographics of the note-leavers have been another research area. In terms of gender, there were small or no differences between the notes (Leenaars, 1987; Lester, & Heim, 1992; Lester, & Linn, 1997). According to the literature, women and men do not differ in terms of the love and achievement motives in their suicide notes (Canetto, & Lester, 2002; McClelland, et al., 2000). On the other hand, Lester (2008) claimed that the suicide notes written by males include more contents related to relationship and communication and less contents related to the causes and insight. In another study, the suicide notes of females indicated less hostile emotions in the intrapersonal realm; in addition they used less directive messages and certain terms, and took less responsibility personally when compared to the males (Black, & Lester, 2003). Moreover, a recent study, which compares women and men in terms of the contents of their suicide notes, indicated that women write their suicide notes by using more 'negations, discrepancies, present tense verbs, words from dictionary, words showing cognitive process and referral to others', when compared to men; and the results yielded that 'content indicative of hopelessness', 'defeat-entrapment' and 'falling short of internalized standards' were the main trends in the suicide notes written by females (Lester, & Leenaars, 2015). In addition, Lester, Haines and Williams (2010) found out that women's notes included more insight words and words referring the self. In another study, it was found out that escaping from pain was a less common content whereas romantic relationship problems were more common in the notes of men (Lester, Wood, Williams, & Haines, 2004).

In terms of age, it was indicated that the notes of young people who killed themselves were longer, more emotional and included contents related to seeking forgiveness while the notes written by elderly people were shorter, less emotional and included specific directions related to what to do (Ho, et al. 1998). A study focusing on 15-year-old and younger people revealed that they give an explanation for the reason of the act, mention love and write about instructions (Freuchen, &

Grøholt, 2015). On the other hand, a study conducted on the notes of the people who are in the late adulthood indicated that those people have difficulty about the drawbacks of aging such as isolation and illness (Bauer, Leenaars, Berman, Jobes, Dixon & Bibb, 1997). The study of Black and Lester (2003) also emphasized the importance of the ill-health among the notes of elderly. In addition, elderly people mentioned "escaping from pain" (Lester et al, 2004), and being "burden to others" commonly (Foster, 2003).

The cultural differences were also explored in terms of the suicide notes. For example, a study, in which the themes in the suicide notes from Turkey and US were compared, showed that there are more shared elements when compared to culture-specific elements. However, in the same study, it was an important finding that "indirect expressions" were more common in the notes from Turkey (Leenaars, Sayin, Candansayar, Leenaars, Akar, & Demirel, 2010). Nevertheless, the literature indicates that there are not major differences in terms of the suicide notes across the cultures (Leenaars, Haines, Wenckstern, Williams, &, Lester, 2003; Girdhar, et al. 2004; Olson, et al. 2011).

The contents of the suicide notes have been studying in order to understand the roots of the act of suicide. In a study conducted by using 40 suicide notes, it was found out that in 30% of the notes 'last wish' was declared and 20% of the note-recipients were siblings. In this study in which the %55 of the sample was 21-30 years old and majority were males (65%) financial problems and relationship problems related to love were found to be the common reasons. Eighty percent of the sample committed suicide in their home, and hanging found to be the most frequently used method. In addition, hopelessness and depression were found to be the most common diagnosis (Bhatia, Verma, & Murty, 2006). Moreover, in his study, Foster (2003) indicated that "apology and shame" were the most common themes (74%) in the suicide notes. Furthermore, Leenaars and Lester (1999) conducted a study on the suicide notes of the alcoholics and found out that although they did not differ from the notes of non-alcoholics, 'unbearable psychological pain,

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cognitive constriction, indirect expressions, rejection-aggression, and identification-egression' were the main themes (p. 363). According to the study of Black and Lester (2003) the suicide notes of the people who killed themselves violently consists of "less joy, less love for others, less humour/irony, and less thanks" (p. 241). The researchers explained those contents as a function of alienation. In addition, the thesis written by Dejong (2007) indicated that stumbling job or financial stress observed more often in the notes of the suicide completers when compared to the notes of attempters. However, in terms of "melancholia, guilt or anhedonia", the two groups did not differ (p. 4).

2.1.2 Research utilizing idiographic approach.

2.1.2.1 Qualitative studies on suicide notes.

Although Shneidman (1998) believed that both qualitative and quantitative studies should be used in the investigation of suicide, he asserted that the idiographic nature of the qualitative method is the most suitable way to conduct research on the suicide notes (as cited in Leenaars, 2010). He was curious about the motives within the suicide notes; and he benefited from Allport's view (1942) related to personal documents while studying (as cited in Leenaars, 2010). Shneidman's psych-ache theory (1998) asserted the idea that the lethality of suicide depends upon the psychological pain, pressure and perturbation. In addition, the thesis written by Olson (2005) named as "The use of suicide notes as an aid for understanding motive in completed suicides" explored the motives of suicide in the suicide notes by using the method of grounded theory. His categories at the end of the study were 'alienation, failure/inadequacy, psychologically overwhelmed, leave problems behind/escape and reunification/afterlife'. Olson (2005) interpreted those categories as the psychological pain, in a similar way to Shneidman (1998), and hopelessness of the note-leavers. Similarly, most of the studies conducted on suicide notes seek to find out the meaning of those notes within the context of the note-leavers' life (e.g. Ho, et al. 1998). For example, according to Chris Thomas (1980), the first probable

suicide note in ancient history was written on a papyrus in Egypt; and the owner of the note was claimed to have depressive psychosis. The poems on this papyrus were interpreted by Thomas (1980), and they were claimed to "reflect inner fantasy rather than external reality" (p. 285). As an example of the social constructivism, Thomas did not separate the person from background and emphasized the links between the individual and the Egypt culture in which it was believed that "the soul had a separate existence from the body" (p. 284).

According to McClelland et al. (2000), suicide notes, as a manner of communication, reflects the relationships of the suicidal people rather than indicating an insight about the motives of the suicide. Congruently, Sanger and McCarthy Veach (2008) analyzed suicide notes by using grounded theory and searched for the interpersonal nature of those notes due to the fact that they evaluated suicide notes as "acts of communication" (p. 356). They found out seven main themes; namely, 'instructions, positive relationships, negative relationships, explanations, relationship reconciliation (maintenance), concern for others and acknowledging the end of relationship'. In addition, McClelland et al. (2000) conducted discursive analysis on suicide notes and they exhibited that blaming oneself or blaming the recipients of the suicide note is the main function of the notes written by the suicide completers. Relationships with others have been another study topic along with the communication styles within the suicide notes.

Not just from the realm of psychology but also from the sociology branch, there are studies on suicide. Even though his study did not focus specifically on the suicide notes and his method of research was based on a positivist approach rather than a qualitative inquiry, Émile Durkheim is considered as a foremost suicidologist from the sociology field. In fact, he (1897/1952) investigated suicide from a sociological point of view by conducting statistical analysis, and developed his theory on suicide which integrated social elements as the causes. According to him, 'integration' and 'regulation' within the society are the main determinants of the act of suicide, and he proposed four categories which indicated the types of suicide;

namely, egoistic, altruistic, anomic and fatalistic suicides. Moreover, the importance of relationships was also emphasized in the recent sociological studies. For example, a sociological study, named as "Sociological Autopsy: An integrated approach to the study of suicide in men", explored the social context of people who completed suicide, by using the documents taken from the UK coroner's files (Scourfield, Fincham, Langer & Shiner, 2012). Their aim was to investigate an individual's decision to commit suicide from a multidimensional point of view. They used all the information within those coroner's files including the suicide notes and analyzed the data by using qualitatively driven mixed method, and obtained a great deal of findings related to sociology. In terms of the suicide notes, their findings revealed that the form and content of the notes diversify. They found out that "relationship break-down" is the most common initiator of suicide and the sub-categories of this main theme were declared to be murder/attempted murder, punishment, dependence, sexual jealousy and separation from children (Scourfield, Fincham, Langer & Shiner, 2012). Another qualitative study conducted as a sociology thesis, investigated "moral and cognitive meanings of suicide" by using psychological autopsy as a technique (Kilbourne, 1983). This study revealed that there is a moral meaning showing itself as excuses in the suicide notes. In addition, a psychological point was made in this study in terms of escaping from reality, feeling grief, loss and flight themes.

To sum up, the research on the suicide notes by utilizing the qualitative inquiry has been mainly divided into two branches; namely, the motivations and the communication in the suicide notes. The former searches for the reasons of suicide within the context of the note-leaver's life; whereas the latter mostly focuses on the relationships and the interpersonal nature in the suicide notes.

2.2   Psychoanalytic Approach and the Suicide

In order to comprehend suicide from a view of the psychoanalytic theory and unconscious motives, one should firstly turn his attention onto the Freudian death instinct due to the fact that as Weatherill (1999) claimed self-destructive acts and

suicide are often interpreted as the expression of the death instinct. Freud assumed that drives, instincts and structures are constituted onto the pleasure seeking quality of the human organism. The *pleasure principle* is defined as an individual's striving for pleasure while putting his efforts to avoid the pain (Mullahy, 1948). However, after the First World War, due to the opposing symptoms of traumatized veterans to the pleasure principle he revised his opinions on the pleasure principle (Van Haute & Geyskens, 2007). By writing "*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*", Freud introduced the *death drive* which indicated that there is a strong inclination towards self-destruction among the human-kind; and he claimed that life and death instincts find expression in mental representation and affect of a person (Freud, 1923). He stated that it is "the tendency of organism to return to a pre-organic, inanimate state" (Freud, 1920, as cited in Razinsky, 2013, p. 133), and added that "life and death instincts are commonly observed to be fused, blended, and alloyed with each other" (Freud, 1924/1960, p. 31).

According to the Freudian theory, an instinct attaches to its object by pleasure principle; however, an individual may become fixated on an object. *Fixation* is described as "a very close attachment of the instinct to its object" (Mullahy, 1948, p. 5). If the attachment with the object is too close, it starts to provoke death instinct; in fact, Freud claimed that suicide is only possible through the process of identification (Mikhailova, 2005), which is defined as being like someone (Clair, & Wigren, 2004). In *Mourning and Melancholia,* Freud (1915/1917) put forward his ideas indicating that suicide is related to the hostility which has turned inward and to the murder of the inner object which is ego-usurping. In case of melancholia, Freud (1915/1917) claimed that when the ego experiences ambivalence towards the lost object, it becomes divided and the part of the ego which identifies with the lost object turns into the centre of the hostility which is directed against the person's own ego; hence, the person kills himself along with the ambivalent part object. In other words, according to Freud, a loved object would create aggression when it is lost, and the introjection of this object would direct the aggression toward the ego, which is now

identified with the lost object (as cited in Kernberg, 2012). Viewed in this way, suicide is the hostility which changes its direction towards the ego.

Some of the post-Freudian theoreticians also explained suicide as the destruction of inner object. Menninger (1938) stated that "the disturbance in a child's prenatal comfort by the violent act of birth", *birth trauma* in Freudian terms, causes a kind of intense protest in the infant (p. 26). This protest continues in the nursing relationship and the child directs his aggressive, sadistic and erotic impulses to the depriving object with self-defensive intents. Deprived from the object, the child feels like he is going to die; and that's why the thing which an individual kills himself for the sake of is an equivalent to the mother's breast. Menninger (1938) stated that ingestion of poison as a suicide method indicates oral cravings; and in those cases the need for love is exaggerated in a pathological manner. Associating suicide with the mechanisms of identification and introjection, Menninger (1938) claimed that self is treated as an external object, a loved one; and instead of the real loved object, the introjected one is killed. Therefore, suicide is a kind of murder and a wish to kill, according to him. Indeed, constantly there is an "inverse relationship" in the suicide and murder rates across the countries (Menninger, 1938, p. 37). Shneidman also defined suicide as "murder in the 180th degree" (2001, p. 92).

According to Klein (1935/1975), the suicide of the melancholic patient is an expectation for saving and getting united with the good internal or external object whereas aiming to kill the hated bad internal object and the id. Moreover, she stated that aloneness is similar to suicide due to the fact that it generates a lack of object, specifically the good object which symbolizes love and relationship. Bion (1959) resembled suicidal behaviours to the transference of the patient to the therapist and to the attacks of the patient towards the therapist. According to him, just as an immature ego's aggressive attacks on the links between the infant and the breast; the patient's hate, hostility and envy does not allow him/her to introject. Therefore, Bion (1959) stated that suicide is an acting out. Kernberg (2012) stated that "death drive" is a result of pathological progress of severe aggression which is directed against the self.

Unconscious motivation toward self-destruction is linked with psychopathology, and it openly destroys both self and significant others. Internalization of significant relations with others governed by aggression may ultimately impress the concept of self and of others. Kernberg (2005) asserted that "lack of integration of the concepts of self and of significant others becomes evident in non-reflective, contradictory or chaotic descriptions of self and others." He added that the psychopathology dominated by aggressively invested internalized object relations results in "a protective fixation" and "exaggeration of the early defensive operations" of the defence mechanisms.

Some of the theoreticians directed their attention to murder of the ego rather than the murder of the inner object. Suicide is re-examined as "self-directed aggression" (Ellis, 2001, p.133). For example, Karen Horney (1950) evaluated suicide as the result of self-hate in the neurotic person. According to her, suicide is a symptom or consequence of neurosis. She linked hope with tragedy and disappointment; and claimed that "tranny of should", in other words resignation from the real self in the search for perfection and ideal self, causes humiliation, shame and embarrassment. Those emotions constitute an important base for suicide or self-destruction. Horney stated that "we see tragic waste in human experience only if there are constructive, creative strivings and these are wrecked by obstructive and destructive forces" (1950, p. 378). Similarly, Winnicott (1971) focused on the personality structure of the suicidal people and the importance of annihilation. He mentioned suicide as an "accomplishment"; in fact, according to him, it is a purposeful, meaningful and logical act. The interruption of the true self by unfavourable conditions and hindered creativity and authenticity causes suicide instead of the death drive, according to him. Winnicott (1960) claimed that different internalized facets of the self are in a struggle, and suicide is an attack towards the undesirable parts of the self. The child endeavours to protect what is benign in his inner world while he tries to destroy the badness within the self. According to Winnicott (1965), when the false self is so dominant that the true self is in a risk of annihilation, suicide as a "reassertion of true self" occurs. In other words, suicide is a

preservation of true self from insult even if it costs to the destruction of the total self. On the other hand, Kohutian theory put forward the idea of lack of self-object. When there is a lack of adequate self-objects which is defined as "the mental representation of an object's proven ability to sustain selfhood" (Mikhailova, 2005), the life becomes meaningless for an individual. According to Kohut (1978), even if there is not a sense of guilt or aggression, the existence of emptiness or "a feeling of inner deadness" may result in suicide (p. 5). The disintegration anxiety, which is a more powerful fear when compared to the death anxiety, may result in suicide. Kohut viewed suicide as a venture to recover humanness; as "a remedial act- the wish to wipe out the unbearable sense of mortification and nameless shame" (Kohut, 1984, p.241).

Briefly, according to the psychoanalytic realm, suicide is interpreted as a phenomenon associated with death instinct and the murder of the lost inner object as well as the murder of the ego. On the other hand, the Lacanian theory shows us that the formation of ego as an other (ideal-ego) in addition to the introjection of the other's look (ego-ideal) is linked with suicide.

2.2.1 The Lacanian Approach.

In the current study, I will try to explore the note-leaver's relationship with the Other; therefore, I think that it might be essential to integrate here the main components of the Lacanian approach, especially related to the subject and the Other. Although there is not any reachable or comprehensive theory embracing the phenomenon of suicide from a Lacanian point of view, Jacques Lacan, as one of the most well-known and controversial psychoanalysts of the last era, is claimed to have a close acquaintance with the aforementioned phenomenon in terms of both his professional applications and his personal life. Roudinesco (1997) states that "for while there was a higher rate of suicide among Lacan's patients than among those of some of his colleagues, this was mainly because he was ready to take on suicidal types whom other analysts refused" (p. 307). It is said that Lacan accepted extremely

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challenging cases. Moreover, it is claimed that there were times that Lacan verbalized killing himself by taking an overdose of tranquilizers (Roudinesco, 1997). With this respect, he mentions suicide in some of his writings within different contexts, in fact, when the Lacanian literature is reviewed carefully, it can be realized that there is a great deal of hidden information related to suicide within his ideas on the death drive and his definition of the passage to the act (*passage à l'acte*).

To begin with, self-destructive acts and suicide are often interpreted as the expression of the death instinct (Weatherill, 1999); therefore, Lacanian thoughts on death instinct may be an important step towards understanding how he addresses suicide. Freud's theory of *death instinct* proposes that there is a strong inclination towards self-destruction among the human-kind (Freud, 1923). Unlike the psychoanalysts who rejected Freud's notion of death instinct, Jacques Lacan emphasizes the importance of this concept and evaluates it as a central phenomenon to the psychoanalytic theory, by stating "to evade the death instinct in his [Freud's] doctrine is not to know his doctrine at all", (Lacan, 1966/2006, p. 679). However, in Lacanian theory there is a notable divergence in terms of the explanation of the death instinct when compared to Freudian theory (Mikhailova, 2005). Lacan revised Freud's death instinct theory and changed the word *instinct* into *drive* because he thought that an instinct should provide an organism's survival; however, with an opposite direction to an instinct, a drive aims at its satisfaction, in other words, aims at its own extinction or death (Mikhailova, 2005). In addition, Lacan's ideas alter from Freud's in terms of the source of the death drive. Freud declares that the death instinct is related to nature (biology), whereas Lacan emphasizes that the death drive is not related to biology, rather he thought that it should be understood within nurture (culture) (Boothby, 1991). Another distinction of Lacanian death drive is his thought indicating that the death drive is not a distinct drive. Indeed, Freud believes that the death drive is the opposite of the sexual drives, whereas Lacan states that "every drive is virtually a death drive" (Lacan, 1966/2006, p. 719).

Lacan associated the feeding relationship with the death drive. The link between the weaning complex and suicide was declared as the "appetite for death" which may turn into the condition of "nonviolent suicide" the examples of which are "anorexia, drug addiction (by mouth), or gastric neuroses" (Lacan, 1938/n.d., p. 21-22). The interruption of the symbiotic relationship between mother and the child is claimed to leave "a permanent trace in the child's psyche" (Evans, 2006, p. 120). Furthermore, Lacan makes an association between the mother and death by claiming that the "burial practices" symbolizes "a return to the mother's womb" (Lacan, 1938/n.d., p. 22). According to Lacan, when the sublimation of imago of mother's breast to the social relationships is not possible, it becomes lethal. He claimed that "in abandoning himself to death, the subject seeks to find the imago of mother again" (as cited in Rudinesco, 1997, p. 145). Therefore, it can be claimed that suicide is an effort to turn back to the symbiotic relationship, to the real, where the separation from the mother did not take place and there was not the lack; in fact, it may be interpreted as a desire to go beyond the symbolic (language). Thus, suicide may be linked with reunion with the lost object, in Lacanian psychoanalysis.

The death drive is closely relevant to the ethical realm of Lacan's thought which is based on Kant's ideas (Evans, 2006). In order for an act to be ethical for Kant, the act should be done with a manner exclusive of duty; in fact, an ethical act should not be caused by duty. In other words, it should be "in itself" and the subject should not consider what is following (after) it or expect any pleasure or satisfaction. In addition, it should be beyond the symbolic and allow "the subject to detach itself from the ambiguity of words". Lacan asserts that "suicide of the subject" fully adjusts to the structure of Kant's ethical act (Žižek, 2002). Indeed, he asserts that "suicide is the only completely successful act" (Lacan, 1973/1990, p. 66-7). This act has the features of a "radical freedom" and liberation because the subject is "not the same as before" after doing the act (Grigg, 2008). Moreover, suicide sets the body free from despotism of the current social and political establishments captivating the body; therefore, it is a refusal to the moral and ethical values accepted by the society (Zevnik, 2016). In Lacanian psychoanalysis, suicide is associated with passage to the

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act (*passage à l'acte*) which is defined as "an exit from the symbolic network [language]" and "a dissolution of the social bond" (as cited in Evans, 2006, p. 140). Acting out, on the other hand, is defined as "a symbolic message addressed to the big Other" (Evans, 2006, p.140). Soleim (2012) differentiates acting out from the passage to the act by stating, "while the latter is an attempt at separation, the former can be read as an appeal that reaffirms the attachment to the Other".

Distinctively from the other post-Freudian theoreticians, Jacques Lacan puts forward his ideas on 'subject' as an opposition to the ego (Evans, 2006). According to Lacan, in the mirror stage a sense of self (ego) is developed by the child; in fact, the unity of the body represents "the mental permanence of the *I*" (Lacan, 1949/1977, p. 504). The coherence of the image in the mirror constitutes the first representation of *ideal-ego* which is an imaginary projection (Swales, 2012). However, due to the gap between the fragmented body (disintegrated inner self) and the coherent specular reflection (ideal-ego), the infant starts to feel rivalry towards his own image and an aggressive tension arises between the infant as a subject and the mirror image (Evans, 2006). This tension is resolved when "the mirror stage comes to an end" as Lacan said "by the identification with the imago of the counterpart and the drama of primordial jealousy" (1949/1977, p. 507). The child, with a libidinal investment, internalizes the mirror image as the core of his ego, and this identification with the specular image is also the source of the secondary identifications (Fink, 1997). However, the identification with the mirror image shelters both aggression and eroticism, and this "erotic aggression", which is an important feature of narcissism, becomes the fundamental ingredient of all future manner of identifications. The characteristic feature of narcissism indicates a transition from excessive self-love to excessive "narcissistic suicidal aggression" (Evans, 2006, p. 6). In addition, the transition from a fragmented body image to a united (*orthopaedic* with Lacanian terms) body creates an alienation (Lacan, 1949/1977). In the mirror stage, the ego is constituted onto a misunderstanding and the "subject becomes alienated from himself" (Evans, 2006, p. 118).

In 1960, Lacan revised the mirror stage and claimed that the recognition or approval in the gestures of the parent who holds the baby before the mirror stage, or in front of the mirror, is the cause of the libidinal investment at this stage (as cited in Fink, 1997). Indeed, the imaginary order is rewritten by the symbolic emphasizing the style of the language used by the parents in front of the mirror. Aggressivity and rivalry of the imaginary order turns into "ideals, authority figures, law, performance, achievement, guilt, and so on" in the symbolic order (Fink, 1997, p. 89). The *ego-ideal* which is a symbolic introjection develops when the child introjects the Other's look at himself, which means the child starts to see himself in a similar way to how others see him (Swales, 2012). According to Lacan, the O*ther's desire* becomes the intermediary to all human knowledge at this moment of the identification with the specular image. Lacan evaluated suicide as an act induced by the desire, "a desire for death he [subject] affirms himself for others" (Mikhailova, 2005).

The Other, in Lacanian approach, can be associated with various concepts. Fink (1995) declares that it is a psychological locus which is linked with language and unconscious; indeed, Lacan states, "the unconscious is the Other's discourse" (as cited in Fink, 1995, p. 4). In this sense, Fink (1995) uses terms such as "the Other of language", "the linguistic Other", "the Other as language" in order to explain Lacan's concept what he names in French as *L'Autre du langage* (p. 5). Moreover, after describing alienation of the subject in the language, Fink (1995) states,

> The Other, in this sense, can be seen as an insidious, uninvited intruder that unceremoniously and unpropitiously transforms our wishes; it is, however, at the same time that which enables us to clue each other in to our desires and "communicate" (p. 6).

As a prior intruder, Fink (1995) points at the mOther's tongue, and declares that the Lacanian Other corresponds to the mOther. Indeed, Lacan uses *the Other* in various "faces or avatars" such as language, law, demand, desire or jouissance (Fink, 1995, p. 13). Therefore, we may claim that *the Other*, in Lacanian sense, has a slippery and complex form. According to Evans (2006), "the other" (the little other/

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a) is different from "the Other" (the big Other/ A). In that respect, the former is associated with the specular image (counterpart or the ego). On the other hand, the latter is related to the symbolic order (language and law) as well as another unassimilable subject just as the mOther.

I think that the Lacanian approach has a distinctive place in the psychoanalytic realm with its divergence from the post-Freudian approaches in terms of its terminology and logic. In the current study, the latent level analysis was based on a Lacanian point of view due to the fact that it was thought that this approach fits well with the research question and with the nature of qualitative inquiry.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

'Suicide is a very complex act, and not a simple, incidental, isolated act of impulsion, either logical or inexplicable.'
Menninger (1938)

This section describes the research approach in addition to sampling method and research sample, methods of analysis, procedure, trustworthiness of the study, researcher's role, ethical considerations and limitations.

3.1 Research Approach

Menninger (1938) asserted that one should focus on the "unconscious purposes" rather than the statistical analysis and conscious motives in order to understand the phenomena of suicide, due to the fact that it is "a very complex act and not a simple, incidental, isolated act of impulsion, either logical or in-explicable" (p. 23). Suicide as a complex phenomenon is hard to be understood by using scales or numbers. In the current study, qualitative analysis is chosen as the method because it may allow the researcher to deeply examine the matter in the suicide notes; in fact, the aim of the qualitative research is to evaluate a social phenomenon within its context deeply and fully, instead of focusing on generalizability (*thick description*) (Hays, & Singh, 2012). Therefore, small sample sizes are generally used in the qualitative research (Killam, 2013). In addition, qualitative method provides the opportunity to ask questions which permit to understand both the process and etiology; such as *how, what* and *why.* It is exploratory rather than confirmatory; in

this respect, qualitative inquiry is "a journey, not a destination" (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 29). In order to understand qualitative research, one should start by comprehending ontology. Ontology is defined as the beliefs about the truth or the way to answer the question of "What is the nature of reality?" (Killam, 2013, p. 7). There are two types of ontology; namely, realism and relativism. The qualitative inquiry takes its roots from the latter one. In fact, a relativist believes that there are multiple realities which can be shaped by context, and the reality can change by time (Klenke, 2016). An important point which the ontology influences is the epistemology, and it is defined as the way to get knowledge by asking questions such as "How is the knowledge acquired?" or "How do we know what we know?" (Killam, 2013, p. 8). In addition, it determines whether a researcher will be an insider or an outsider of the study. An etic approach requires the researcher to be an outsider or a separate being from the research due to its positivist nature; however, an emic approach is established upon social constructivism and requires the researcher to have an active role in the research by the regard of the potential effects of the researcher on the study (Morgan, & Smircich, 1980). Qualitative method is closely associated with the emic approach (Gudykunst, 2002). Both the epistemology and the ontology affect the methodology chosen; in fact, Killam (2013) states, "a methodology is driven by the researcher's ontological and epistemological beliefs" (p. 9).The methodology can be explained as the philosophy of obtaining data or "the study of how the research is done" (Klenke, 2016). A researcher's approach may be qualitative or quantitative. The quantitative study tries to find out the single truth by using objective measures, whereas the qualitative study focuses on the experiences and context with the help of in-depth studies because it is established upon a relativist approach which assumes that there are multiple realities (Killam, 2013).

3.1.1 Sampling method and research sample.

Purposive sampling is chosen as the sampling method for this study. In accordance with the nature of the qualitative methodology, this type of sampling requires including only the cases with specific characteristics or experience due to

the fact that the point is to enrich the data (Macnee, & McCabe, 2008). Furthermore, choosing the specific study units yields the most relevant data in parallel with the research objectives (Yin, 2011).

Table 1. **Characteristics of Sample**

Code name	Age	Gender	Method of Suicide	Date of Death	Type of the Document
A.	23	Male	Cutting and jumping	2012	Suicide Note
B.	35	Male	Hanging	2011	Suicide Note, last messages
C.	23	Male	Hanging	2013	Suicide Note, last messages
D.	45	Male	Hanging	2013	Suicide Note
E.	34	Male	Firearms	2015	Suicide Note, last messages
F.	33	Male	Hanging	2014	Suicide Note
G.	51	Male	Firearms	2014	Suicide Note, social media share
H.	43	Male	Hanging	2014	Suicide Note
I.	54	Male	Ingestion of medication	2012	Suicide Note
J.	43	Male	Hanging	2013	Suicide Note
K.	26	Male	Hanging	2013	Last messages, social media shares
L.	17	Male	Firearms	2010	Suicide Note Notebook

The purposive sampling aims to obtain in-depth information about a phenomenon (Hays, & Singh, 2012); therefore, this type of sampling is thought to be appropriate for the research goals. It is thought that using the suicide notes, as the acts of communication, may give the essential information about the experiences of the note-leavers. The data corpus, which was acquired from Ankara Public Prosecutor office, consists of 12 files containing suicide notes, notebooks, social media shares, last messages statements of the relatives and eyewitnesses, and official reports such as crime scene investigation reports and autopsy reports. On the other hand, the data set consists of suicide notes, notebooks, social media shares and last messages. The number of those documents depended both on the sufficiency of the data and the permission of the Public Prosecutor office.

Among the obtained files, 10 of them contain suicide notes or letters, and some of those files have also last messages and social media shares. One of the files contains last messages and social media shares without a suicide note; and the last document consists of a notebook with a suicide note, doodles and writings in it. The sample characteristics can be seen in *Table 1*.

3.1.2 Methods of analysis.

In the current study, document analysis in terms of the thematic content is conducted. According to Coffey (2014), documents can be perceived as concrete footprints of the social settings; in that case they can reveal information about the social settings and people's lives. Moreover, the documents have a function; in fact, they contain messages. While analysing documents, production and reception are the two important points to understand because reality in a document is built by both the writer and the recipient (Coffey, 2014). Therefore, the suicide notes, as the notes mostly supposed to be written just before the act of suicide, may contain important information about the person's last experiences in addition to his relations with the others. Moreover, I thought that those notes may indicate us the mental representations of the note-leavers with the help of a latent level analysis.

Table 2. **Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87)**

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Coffey (2014) states, "it is entirely possible and appropriate to undertake a thematic analysis of a documentary data" (p. 370). Thematic analysis which is known as the mainstream of the qualitative research is not bound by a particular theory or epistemology; however, it can be used as a tool in various methods or epistemological approaches such as grounded theory, conversation analysis, discourse analysis or phenomenological analysis, so it is a "theoretically flexible approach" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.77). Thematic analysis is conducted by tracing the patterns or themes within the data (Boyatzis, 1998). Due to its flexible nature and suitability to use in the analysis of documents, thematic analysis was preferred in this study. The data was analyzed in accordance with the phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) as given in *Table 2*.

Patton (1990) states that it is the most ideal way to start the analytic process by a descriptive way which requires a semantic level analysis; and after that the researcher should continue with the interpretations in which the semantic level findings are theorized with the help of the previous literature. In the same direction, the analyses in this study consisted of two main steps. Firstly, I conducted a primary (semantic) level thematic analysis in order to find an answer to my first research question which was *"How are the note leavers' experiences in relation to the others?"* In this step, while coding the suicide notes, I used an inductive reasoning. The aim of the inductive thematic analysis is to find out the "explicit or the surface meanings of the data" (Braun, & Clarke, 2006, p. 13). Moreover, in this type of analysis, the researchers do not benefit from a pre-existing coding frame (Boyatzis, 1998).

In the second step, I interpreted and discussed the findings from the primary level analysis with the help of the Lacanian literature in order to answer my second research question which was '*How are the mental relational interplay of emotions of the subject related to the Other in the suicide notes?*' In other words, I conducted a secondary (latent or interpretative) level analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) states, "a thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations" (p. 13). Congruently, in this second part, I tried to focus on the unconscious processes with a curiosity of what is underneath of the surface. Moreover, the latent level thematic analysis fits well with the psycho-analytic interpretations (Braun, & Clarke, 2006).

3.1.2.1 Lacanian psychoanalysis and qualitative research.

Vanheule (2002) states, "psychoanalysis and qualitative research fit together so well" (p. 337). According to him, qualitative inquiry can be located into the applied psychoanalysis which deals with *extra-clinical* data. He exemplifies these types of data with ego documents, literary texts, works of art, jokes and the data

obtained from the colleges. I think that the suicide notes, last messages and the social media shares in the current study can be evaluated as extra-clinical data in the form of ego documents. While developing his concepts, Lacan also utilized extra-clinical data although he had doubts about the applied psychoanalysis; on the other hand, decoding the signifiers and finding out the implicit meanings can be counted as a psychoanalytic study from a Lacanian point of view (Vanheule, 2002).

Although the Lacanian psychoanalysis was established on Freud's ideas, it demonstrates separation from the Freudian approach by some important nuances; especially, Lacan's emphasis on linguistics contributes to this separation (Mellard, 1998). Indeed, Mellard (1998) evaluates this differentiation as "Lacan's tropological reinvention of psychoanalysis through linguistics" (p. 500). Lacan's involvement in language is claimed to take its roots from his doctoral dissertation named as 'Paranoid psychosis and its relation to the personality (*De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité*)' in which he analyzed the linguistics in the literary productions of Aimée, who was a paranoiac female case (Evans, 2006). According to Lacan, an infant is born into a predetermined universe of discourse or language; therefore, Lacan evaluated "the Other *as* language" (Fink, 1995, p. 5). In other words, meaning is predetermined by the words of others so as the wishes or desires; consequently, language brings about the alienation of the person from the essence of his being but also it allows us to communicate. Congruently, Fink (1995) mentions two types of talk; namely, 'ego talk' and 'some other kind of talk' (p. 3). The former is linked with the conscious thought whereas the latter is associated with unconscious and Lacan's Other. In fact, Lacan states, "the unconscious is language" (as cited in Fink, 1995, p. 8). According to him, the language is associated with the symbolic order which is defined as the period of life in which the child goes through the linguistic communication, enters into intersubjective relationships and accepts the law (Homer, 2005).

Due to its emphasis on the language, the Lacanian psychoanalysis is considered to be linked with qualitative inquiry, in the literature (Vanheule, 2002;

Parker, 2005). Especialy, it is thought to be associated with discourse analysis; indeed, language is established onto discourses (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine, 1984). Moreover, a written text, as a locus of language, is claimed to be a form of "socially structured signification" (Parker, 2005, p. 164) which may remind us social-constructivism which is one of the most important elements of qualitative research. Furthermore, Parker (2005) states, "we speak in relation to the big Other" (p. 172). According to Parker (2005), in order to conduct a Lacanian analysis, "the organization of the signifiers", which I guess corresponds to the primary level analysis in the current study, should be the primary aim of a study, and the interpretations should take their roots from those significations.

3.1.2.2 Procedure.

The data collection continued throughout a year. First of all, the ethichal permissions from the ethical committee in METU and Ankara Public Prosecutor office have been taken. After that, special meetings with various public prosecutors were organized. As the researcher in this study, I realized that even if a researcher has all the permissions, it is really important to establish good relationships and represent his or her reliability to the officers, in order to take a document out of the Public Prosecutor office. At the beginning, some of the prosecutors were really helpful and shared their suicide case documents with me. I kept visiting the office weekly, even if I could not take any files evey time I went. After a while, I could have the verbal permission of the chief prosecutor in order to search for the general files related to suicide. Surprisingly, some of the officials offered me to join to the crime scene investigation through the end of the data gathering process; however, I thought that joining this investigation was irrelevant to my research questions and the aim of the study so I thanked them for their collaboration and kindly refused their generous offer.

Among a vast number of files, I looked for the ones which contain a suicide note and took photocopies of the related documents with the help of an official.

While checking the files, I realized that there are so many suicide cases especially with a method of hanging; however, the number of suicide notes does not demonstrate a similar frequency. When gathering my data, I came up with only one suicide note which belongs to a female; however, her hand-writing was very hard to read and the file did not contain sufficient information so I did not integrate this suicide note to the selected data. On the other hand, the data of the current study consisted of the suicide notes belonging only to males with an aim to provide homogeneity. Indeed, the majority of the suicide notes that I could reach were belonging to males. This may be a representative of the current situation in terms of the frequencies, as well as a coincidence. At the end, I acquired 12 files containing suicide letters, last text messages, social media shares, statements of the relatives and eyewitnesses, and official reports such as crime scene investigation reports and autopsy reports from Ankara Public Prosecutor office. The selected data for thematic analysis consists of the suicide notes, last messages, social media shares and personal stuff like a notebook belonging to males. Among the files, 10 of them contain suicide notes or letters, and among those 10 files some of them have last messages and social media shares, too. One of the files contains last messages and social media shares without a suicide note; and the last document consists of a notebook with a suicide note, doodles and writings in it (see *Table 1*).

Before starting the analysis, I transcribed and organized the data by giving the owners of the notes code names, in order to provide the anonymity. I have read and re-read over and over again both the suicide notes and the some other documents taken from the Public Prosecutor Office, and took notes related to the documents. After getting familiarized with the data, I started to code the first suicide note manually. Due to the fact that my approach to the data is inductive, I tried to note down the codes which stem from the data. One by one, I have analyzed all the files. When the coding of the documents was finished, I searched for the emerging themes based on the initial codes. By comparing the emerging themes across the files, I determined the potential themes. Afterwards, I checked out whether the themes are coherent in terms of the coding extracts in each and all the cases. By using this

process, I obtained a thematic map of the analysis, and started to refine my definitions and names of the themes. This procedure has been continuing even when writing the report. Furthermore, during the latent level analysis, I compared and contrasted the findings from the primary level analysis with the existing literature; specifically with the Lacanian literature and gave new names to the emerging latent themes.

3.1.3 Trustworthiness of the study.

According to Morrow (2005), subjectivity, reflexivity, sufficiency of the data and the interpretations determine a study's trustworthiness. Qualitative research provides the researcher with the opportunity to take into consideration his/her own emotional reactions during the interpretation of the data (Hubbard, Backett-Milburn, & Kemmer, 2001). In fact, it is a necessity of the qualitative research due to the subjective nature of the method. According to the philosophy of the qualitative research, the reality is constructed by social, cultural and historical elements (Neuman, 2000) due to the fact that it is established upon relativist ontology (Clark, 1998), rather than realism. The epistemological background of the qualitative studies is social constructivism in which the "reality is specific to the individual, and, therefore, there are multiple realities" (Dempster, 2011, p. 154). As a result, it is not possible to shot one's eyes to subjectivity (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). In fact, subjectivity in the qualitative research is not managed or restricted; on the contrary, it is utilized as data in order to enrich the quality of the research. Therefore, how the researcher gives meaning to the world have an effect upon the process of research. Due to this effect, the reflexivity of the researcher comes into prominence (Patton, 2002). Reflexivity can be defined as realizing and becoming aware of the researcher's background, personal experiences, inclinations, assumptions or positions which may affect the research; and revealing them for self and others by the usage of "bracketing" (Fischer, 2009).

Throughout the study, as the researcher, I tried to be aware of my emotions and thoughts by observing myself, and sometimes I took notes related to those emotions which may be counted as a reflexive diary. In addition, by attaining to the weekly meetings with a research group, I shared my emotions and ideas related to the research. I reflexively disclosed those emotions and ideas in 'the researcher's role', 'findings' and 'interpretations' parts of the study. Besides, by conducting a semantic level analysis, I tried to stay out of my imagination and rely on the data (or the signifiers). Thus, I think that those elements contributed to the confirmability of the study. Moreover, I think that asking other people's opinions about themes and conceptualizations increased the credibility of this study. To illustrate, I consulted to my supervisor as well as my research group about my findings and interpretations. In addition, a peer examination with the help of my classmates was done in order to conceptualize my findings. Both the research group and my peers consisted of clinical psychologists who are continuing their education in METU Clinical Psychology Graduate Program. Another point that makes this study credible, I guess, is that the chosen method and the research questions match well with each other. Besides, I think the data can be evaluated as sufficient in terms of saturation because through the end of the coding, I noticed that the themes became recurring. Throughout the procedure of coding and establishing my categories, themes and sub-themes, I have taken notes as memos and I tried to integrate those memos to this report, which, I guess, increases the dependability of the study. The interpretations of the findings are also thought to be sufficient. Furthermore, I tried to interpret the findings within a cultural context.

3.1.3.1 Researcher's role in this study.

The reflexivity should start from the beginning of a research (Finlay, 2002). In this part, I tried to bracket out my own experiences and world view. I am a female doctoral student in the clinical psychology program of Middle East Technical University. My own interest in the subject of suicide began through my path of life which integrated two important loses. The first was one of my friends from my

department whose method of suicide was hanging. The second one was my cousin who died because he fell down from the cliffs; in fact, it is still not known whether it was an accident or a suicide. In both cases, there were not any suicide notes. This may be the reason why I have chosen to conduct my study with the suicide notes. In addition, as a clinical psychologist, I had conducted sessions with some patients who had suicidal thoughts. At those moments of the sessions which we talked about suicide, I may claim that I felt a blockage in the middle of the therapy room. This blockage may be defined as an interruption in the communication from the side of the patient. My particular background in the psychology department which has been continuing almost over ten years widely shaped my view on the interpersonal dynamics. As a clinical psychologist, I try to focus on the unconscious processes which mean that my attention is generally on the underneath of the surface. In addition, I have a personal curiosity about the interpersonal dynamics, and self and other perceptions in case of suicide. Briefly, it can be said that my life experiences and my background directed me to select my research topic and research questions.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

Special care was taken in ensuring that the ethical standards were met. Institutional permissions were taken from the ethical committees at METU and Ankara Public Prosecutor office. The rights of the note-leavers have been protected throughout the research. Information related to their identity was kept secret while using and publishing the data. In addition, the names of the relatives and specific places were changed in order to provide anonymity.

3.3 Limitations of the Study

Certain limiations can be in question regarding the current study. Some of the restrictions can be associated with the nature of the qualitative inquiry whereas some of them are linked directly with the research design. Nevertheless, I carefully

considered the ways in order to lessen the impact of those limitations over the research.

First of all, subjectivity in the qualitative research may be evaluated as a researcher bias and perceived as a limitation by some domains within the qualitative research just as in the quantitative point of view. However, I have already mentioned that the definition of truth alters for qualitative and quantitative inquiries. In this study, I have taken my roots from my belief in social-constructivim which supports the idea of multiple realities, and it proposes that reality can be shaped by context and time. A difficulty here was providing confirmability of the study by staying out of my imagination. On the other hand, by making my interests, emotions and experiences as transparent as possible, I tried to utilize my subjectivity with an aim to enrich the quality of the research. In addition, throughout the process I tried to stay stick to the data and to hear what the data tells. Thus, I guess the findigs can be evaluated as confirmable to some point.

As I said, some of the restrictions are intrinsic to the current study rather than to the nature of the qualitative research. For example, it can be claimed that the anamneses of the cases does not exist, and the cases are dead so the analysis is pointless. Nevertheless, the current study took a standpoint of Lacanian approach which pay attention to the signifiers. In fact, Parker (2005) stated that a discourse analysis from Lacanian point of view would not aim to find out "any kind of reduction to the biographies of the characters"; instead "it would be searching out the signifying elements that do not make sense and specifying the role these nonsensical elements play in organizing and disrupting the flow of a text." (p. 168). Even though the current study cannot be counted as a regular discourse analysis, it evaluates both the content and the language in the suicide notes, last messages and the social media shares.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

'And we must recognize its [suicide's] meaning, for as analysts we deal with it.'

Jacques Lacan (1966/2006)

In this part of the study, initially, I shared the Vignettes of the cases in *Table 3*, in order to provide the reader with a more comprehensive picture of the cases. After that, I described the findings of the primary (semantic) level analysis with example extracts. In other words, I mentioned the general findings and their structure, in this section. The semantic level analysis means finding out the "explicit or the surface meanings of the data" (Braun, & Clarke, 2006).

Table 3. **Vignettes of the Cases**

Code name	Vignettes
A.	A. was a 23-year-old, fourth grade medical student who killed himself by cutting various parts of his body including his throat and throwing himself from the fifth floor of his own house.
B.	B. was a 35-year-old, married, soldier who killed himself at his own house, by using the method of hanging, although a gun and bullets were found by the officers in his bedroom on the bedside cabinet. He had previous suicide attempts and a quarrelsome marriage involving violence. In addition to his suicide note, there are his last text messages with his wife in the case file.
C.	C. was a 23-year-old male who had been working at a hotel in another city. He hung himself on a tree limb in METU woodland after he texted her sister and gave the directions for his death place. He had previous suicide attempts.

Table 3 (cont'd)

D.	D. was a 45-year-old, married, driver working in a company, and he killed himself at his workplace, in the convention hall, by using the method of hanging.
E.	E. was a 34-year-old, married male whose job information is not available; however, the case file includes the last rageful messages which he sent to his father. He killed himself at his own house by using firearms with a shot in the head. In his suicide note, he mentions his plan of murder.
F.	F. was a 33-year-old, divorced male who had worked as a taxi driver and as personnel in a nightclub, but was unemployed recently. He did not have a constant residence, and killed himself at his sister's house by using the method of hanging. He had a tattoo in his forearm writing "Never give up".
G.	G. was a 51-year-old, married, furniture salesman who killed himself at his own house (in the in-suite bathroom, under a blanket), by using firearms with a shot in his chest. In his suicide note, he mentions his plan of murder.
H.	H. was a 43-year-old, married, unemployed male who killed himself at his own house by using the method of hanging. He was a schizophrenic patient who had committed suicide a few times previously.
I.	I. was a 54-year-old, married male whose job information is not available. He killed himself in a hotel room which he checked in two days before his death, and he used the method of ingestion of various medications with alcohol. He wrote his notes onto the pill boxes most of which belong to the psychoactive drugs (antidepressants like Lustral and Zestat).
J.	J. was a 43-year-old, married male who was working as a salesman of dried fruit/nuts but he had been living alone lately due to the quarrels he had with his wife. He killed himself at his own house by using the method of hanging.
K.	K. was a 26-year-old male who hanged himself in the chimney flue of his own house. He had a number of tattoos in different parts of his body, containing a hand motif with a rose and a chain, a woman head motif, another hand motif getting out of a window, and writings such as "HİCRAN", "RABİA", "ÖMRÜM" and "ille de sen". K's last messages with his girlfriend and his last facebook-shares were used as data.
L.	L. was a 17-year-old high school student who killed himself in his dormitory room by using firearms. He was known with his successfulness at school and he had championships in some contests. In his file, it is claimed that he was in love with a girl named as Sevgi. L's suicide note as well as his notebook was used as data, during the analysis.

4.1 Findings of the Primary (Semantic) Level Analysis

Four main categories with themes and sub-themes emerged during the primary level analysis. I labelled the main categories as *'emotions', 'perceptions', 'functions'* and *'phantasies'*. The first category, which is *'emotions',* has two themes which are *'positive emotions'* and *'negative emotions'*. *Positive emotions* theme has three sub-themes which are *'love', 'gratitude/thankfulness'* and *'relief'*. Moreover, *negative emotions* theme has three sub-themes; namely, *'blame (guilt, shame, sadness and anger)', 'hopelessness'* and *'anxiety'*. The second category is *'perceptions',* and this category also revealed two themes; namely, *'perceptions related to self'* and *'perceptions related to others'*. Both of the themes have two sub-themes: *'Grandiose/ perfect self-perception'* and *'weak / inefficient self-perception'* for the former and *'ideal other'* and *'negative other'* for the latter. The third category was named as *'functions'* category, and it has three themes; specifically, *'the functions related to blame', 'informing others about suicide'* and *'punishment'. The functions related to blame* theme has two sub-themes which are *'the need to be cleared of responsibility or blame'* and *'the need to clear other from responsibility or blame'*. The fourth and last category was labelled as *'phantasies'*, and there are two themes under this category; namely, *'phantasies related to life after death'* and *'phantasies related to control after death events'*. These categories and themes with their sub-themes can be seen in *Table 4*. Throughout the study, I tried to refine the labels that I put on those categories, themes and sub-themes. On the other hand, I also paid attention to stay loyal to the actual data.

Those categories, themes and sub-themes were thought to have some concurrences, in other words, the boundaries between them were fluid in a way, maybe due to the complicated nature of the act of suicide. To illustrate, the themes under the *emotions* and *perceptions* categories were thought to be overlapping at some points. In addition, *blame* as a sub-theme may both go under the category of *functions* and the theme of *negative emotions* due to its association with guilt and shame. However, it was thought that *the need to be cleared of responsibility or*

blame and *the need to clear others from responsibility or blame* better fits with the *functions* main category, whereas blame associated emotions such as *guilt, shame, sadness* or *anger* better fits with the *negative emotions* theme.

Table 4. **Categories, Themes and Sub-themes of the Suicide Notes**

Categories	Themes/Sub-themes

Emotions	Positive Emotions
	• Love
	• Gratitude / Thankfulness
	• Relief
	Negative Emotions
	• Blame
	   • Self-blame (Guilt, Shame and Sadness)
	   • Blaming Other (Anger)
	• Hopelessness
	• Anxiety

Perceptions	Perceptions related to self • Grandiose/ perfect self-perception • Weak/ inefficient self-perception Perceptions related to other • Ideal other • Negative other
Functions	The functions related to blame • The need to be cleared of responsibility or blame • The need to clear other of responsibility or blame (No-blame) Informing others about suicide Punishment

Phantasies	Phantasies related to life after death
	Phantasies related to control of after death events
	   • Last wills and requests
	   • Directives, instructions and advices
	   • The control of other's emotions

Moreover, it was hard for me to distinguish *anxiety* extracts from *relief* extracts because they followed each other. Therefore, in some parts, I used similar

extracts while describing both of the sub-themes. In addition, the extracts under the *negative others* sub-theme may be overlapping with the extracts under the *blame* sub-theme. Furthermore, I think that the *perceptions* category is closely linked with the *phantasies* category in this study because both categories indicated a positioning of self and others by the cases. In this part of the study, those categories, themes and sub-themes are discussed in detail.

4.1.1 Emotions.

4.1.1.1 Theme I: Positive Emotions.

I detected three sub-themes under the *positive emotions* theme: *Love, gratitude/ thankfulness* and *relief.*

Love. In most of the notes, love is one of the issues which are mentioned. The segments which were thought to contain the meaning of affection, intimacy, fondness, compassion or the word "love" were coded as love. For example, a medical student (*Code name: A.*) who killed himself by cutting various parts of his body including his throat and throwing himself from the fifth floor writes, "My one and only brother, it was you, whom I loved the most in my life. (*Bir tanecik abim, bu dünyada ben en çok seni sevdim*)". This letter also includes similar expressions pointing love such as "my one and only mother" and "my one and only father". Similarly, in another suicide note, the owner of the note (*Code name: C.*) starts with saying "I love you all very much. (*Herkesi çok seviyorum.*)", and continues to write about his romantic love:

> I kept her within me, nobody knew about her or heard about her. I kept her presence within me, in my heart… Mehtap, she lives in Elmadağ. She was of prime importance to me. She was my precious. How many times does a person love or fall in love with someone? I loved her so many times. I fell in love with her so many times. […] I love you so much. My all, goodbye. (*Onu hep içimde sakladım ben. Kimse bilmedi, kimse duymadı. Varlığı bir bende saklıydı, yüreğimde… Mehtap, Elmadağ'da oturuyor. Her şeyden öteydi benim için. Canımdı benim. İnsan kaç kere sever, kaç kere aşık olur. Ben onu defalarca*

sevdim. Defalarca aşık oldum… […] Seni çok ama çok seviyorum. Her şeyim, hoşçakal.) (C.)

Indeed, romantic love was one of the explicit versions of love which showed itself in different cases. For example, the last messages of K. with his girlfriend reveal romantic love as a theme, with expressions such as "I love you very much. (*Seni çok seviyorum ya.*)" and "I would die for you. (*Senin için ölürüm.*)". Another example may be from J.'s letter in which he declared his romantic love to his wife by saying, "Begüm of course, Begüm, my only love, my life. […] My beloved, when you read this note, I will not exist most probably. I will immigrate with my love for you. (*Begüm tabi ki, Begüm, tek aşkım, ömrüm benim. […] Sevgilim, bu notu okuduğun zaman muhtemelen ben olmayacağım. Sana olan sevgimle göçeceğim.*)". In fact, J.'s note is the longest suicide note among the cases, and not only he mentions romantic love but also he declares his love towards other people, like his relatives.

Besides, the theme of love emerged in different shapes across the notes. For example, in L.'s notebook there is a writing saying, "What a beautiful thing is to love. (*Sevmek ne güzel şey.*)", although it is scribbled. Moreover, in a case (B.) who hanged himself at his own home, a lack of love is mentioned with a sentence: "Love my kids so much that they will not take after me. (*Çocuklarımı çok sev ki bana benzemesinler.*)". In another example (G.), love becomes the reason of the thoughts of murder:

> When I am going I thought that the ones I love the most (my wife and my daughter) should not feel sorrow or suffer, so I said that three of us should go altogether while leaving the life. (*Giderken en sevdiklerim (karım ve kızım) sonra üzülmesin sıkıntı yaşamasın diye hayattan ayrılırken üçümüz birlikte gidelim dedim.*) (G.)

Even though he did not plan a murder, a similar context emerges in J.'s suicide note while he says, "My brothers, I love you all very much. Think about the fire that I am in now; I hug you with a many times more than this heat. (*Ağabeylerim hepinizi*

çok seviyorum. Şu an ki nasıl bir ateş içindeyim, onun kat kat sıcaklığıyla hepinizi kucaklıyorum.)". Considering that fire may hurt a person, this way of hugging which J. describes may reflect a blend of love and hate, or a wish to hurt besides love, an intrinsic anger towards brothers which will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Gratitude / Thankfulness. Another sub-theme was gratitude or thankfulness. The segments declaring appreciativeness, gratefulness, blessings or thanks were coded as gratitude or thankfulness. For example, in A.'s note there were signs of this theme in various parts:

> My one and only mother… The noble woman who gave birth to me with her own desire out of nothing; who fed me and raised me; who has always been behind my back. I kiss your hands. […] My dear family, I am so grateful for every minute I spent with you. (*Bir tanecik annem… Hiç yoktan, kendi arzusuyla beni dünyaya getiren, besleyip büyüten, her zaman arkamda olan yüce kadın.. Ellerinden öperim.* […] *Canım ailem benim, sizinle yaşadığım her dakikaya binlerce şükürler olsun.*). (A.)

Likewise, C. writes, "There are so many people who invested in me. Particularly, my family, my friends etc… (*Üzerimde emeği olan çok insan var. Başta ailem, arkadaşlarım vs…*)". In addition, I. writes onto his antidepressant pillbox: "Asude, we have had beautiful times till that year. (*Asude, seninle bu seneye kadar güzel günlerimiz oldu.*)". Moreover, in the suicide note of a schizophrenic patient (H.), who hanged himself, gratitude and thankfulness was detected as a sub-theme where he states, "Let the people who I love and who love me know that I died. I believe that they helped my wife and children both materially and morally. (*Benim sevdiklerim insanlar beni seven insanlar haberi olsun öldüğümden. Maddi ve manevi eşime ve çocuklarıma yardımcı olduklarına inanıyorum onların.*)". Another example may be from J.'s letter where he declares:

> I am the luckiest little brother because I am a brother of you. […] Gürkan, thanks for your efforts. […] My mother, my mother who never smiled. She

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entertained me as a guest very well. We ate gliko yesterday. God bless your hands. (*Dünyanın en şanslı küçük kardeşiyimdir sizlerle kardeş olmakla. [...] Gürkan, emeklerin için sağol. [...] Benim anam, gülmemiş anam. Beni çok iyi misafir etti sağolsun. Dün gliko yedik. Ellerine sağlık.*)". (J.)

Relief. The last sub-theme of the positive feelings was relief. This sub-theme was linked with concepts related to getting rid of pain and finding a solution to the problem. Indeed, A. says, "I am getting rid of my pain. (*Acılarımdan kurtuluyorum.*)". Moreover, K. texts to his girlfriend saying, "Never mind, I want to get rid of my pain and distress. It is better to get hurt once than to get hurt every day. (*Boşver, şu acılarımdan ve şu sıkıntılarımdan artık kurtulayım. Her gün canım yanacağına bir kere canım yansın daha* iyi.)". In addition, suicide might have been perceived as a short cut solution to the problems by the cases, which at the end provides relief. In fact, B. says, "This will be shortcut. (*Böylesi kısa yol olacak.*)". As an example to the relief related to finding a solution to the problem, C.'s statements may be focused on. In his suicide note, C. describes his feelings towards a girl and mentions that they cannot come together due to the fate. At the end of his note, he states that "From now on, I will always be around you. (*Artık hep senin yanındayım.*)". This statement may be interpreted as a solution to the problem and a relief, as well as C.'s phantasy related to after death. In addition, in C.'s texts with his sister, it was noticed that when his sister asks "Is death the solution? (*Ölmek çözüm mü?*)", he answers by saying "I think so. (*Bence çözüm.*)". Accordingly, in those messages, C. states, "There is no other solution. I have come to my last destination. There is no more I can do. (*Başka çarem yok, gidebileceğim son noktaya vardım. Bundan öte yol yok benim için.*)". In the same direction, J. evaluates suicide as a solution to the problem by saying:

> I feel suffocated, brother. I also feel anxious a bit about my health. While I am writing this moment, the pen does not stand still in my hand. My hand shakes very badly in recent times. It does not allow me to work. There is also my mind… It is another problem. I know that it will strike one day. I can not let it happen. What will I do in the hospitals? *(Ben çok bunaldım abi. Biraz da korkuyorum. Sağlığımla ilgili. Ben şu anı yazarken kalem elimde durmuyor.*

Elim artık son zamanlarda lapır lapır titriyor. Herhangi bir iş yapmama da izin vermiyor. Ha bir de beynim var. O ayrı bir dert. Vuracak bir gün biliyorum. Buna müsaade etmem. Ben hastanelerde ne yaparım.) (J.)

Related to this passage, I thought that J. is anxious because of his illness but he evaluates suicide as a solution in order to end this illness or anxiety. In addition, he declares, "Her and Can's place is safe, so I am going this much relaxed. (*Onun ve Can'ın yeri güvenli. Bu yüzden ben de bu kadar rahat gidiyorum.*)". This relaxation may also be interpreted as a relief.

4.1.1.2 Theme II: Negative Emotions.

Under the *negative emotions* theme, three main sub-themes were detected; namely, *blame, hopelessness* and *anxiety*.

Blame. One of the most common sub-themes in this study was blame; in fact, all the suicide notes contained at least one code associated with blame. This sub-theme emerged in different versions across the suicide notes; namely, self-blame (guilt, shame and sadness), blaming other (anger), no blame and the need to be cleared of responsibility or blame. Last two versions of blame will be discussed under the category named as *"functions"* due to the fact that they did not reveal any emotions openly; in fact, they were thought to be containing functional messages. McClelland et al. (2000), by using discursive analysis on suicide notes, showed that blaming oneself or blaming the recipients of the suicide note is the main function of the notes written by the suicide completers. However, in this study, the negative emotions caused by those different versions of blame were focused on so they emerged as a theme under the category of negative emotions.

*Self-blame: Guilt, shame and sadness. One of the versions of the blame sub-theme was self-blame in the analysis of the suicide notes. Self-blame was thought to end up with emotions such as guilt, shame and sadness. The most common statements which represented self-blame were "Forgive me" and "I am sorry". For

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example, A. writes, "I know that it is a very selfish act, […] Please forgive me. (*Biliyorum, çok bencilce bir hareket; [...] ne olur beni affedin*.)". In this statement, the owner of the note evaluates his behaviour as a "selfish act" so he might have felt guilty or shameful. Furthermore, B. blames himself in his suicide note, by making various confessions such as:

> Fatma, I cheated on you many times, be prepared. […] I could not befit myself beating, swearing and insulting you so I was very sorry, and I am. Please give me your blessing. […] I apologize for making them (children) suffer this pain. Especially, TUĞÇE, my daughter, I made you so upset and I broke your heart so many times. Forgive me please. (*Fatma seni defalarca aldattım buna hazırlıklı gel. [...] Sana el kaldırdığım küfür ettiğim hakaret ettiğim için çok üzülüyor kendime hiç yakıştıramıyordum bu nedenle çok üzüldüm ve üzgünüm bu konuda hakkını helal et lütfen. [...] Onlardan da böyle bir üzüntüyü onlara yaşattığım için özür diliyorum. Bilhassa TUĞÇE seni çok üzdüm ve çok kırdım kızım. Sen de affet beni ne olur.*) (B.)

The usage of "sorry" in various areas in B.'s suicide note may be associated with guilt and shame as well as his sadness. Congruently, I. writes to his wife Asude: "I tortured you so many times (*Ben sana çok çektirdim.*)." which may reflect his regret and sadness besides his guilt and shame. Moreover, D. who hanged himself at his work place makes a confession about playing gamble and apologizes in his suicide note by stating:

> My purpose was to make money but I lost. The more I lost, the more I gambled. I took loan from banks and at the end of two years; I was not able to pay my debts. The ambition to make money led me to lose more money. […] I am very sorry for giving you a hard time like that. (*Amacım para kazanmaktı fakat kaybettim. Kaybettikçe daha çok oynadım. Bankalardan kredi çektim ve böylece iki yılın sonunda borçlarımı ödeyemez duruma geldim. Para kazanma hırsı çok para kaybetmeme sebep oldu. [...] Sizlere böyle bir şey yaşattığım için çok üzgünüm.*) (D.)

In his confession and apology, D.'s feelings of shame, guilt and sadness may be inferred. On the other hand, in E.'s suicide note self-blame emerges as a construct which resembles to self-punishment. He says, "Don't cry for me, nobody should. I

deserved this life. (*Bana ağlama kimse ağlamasın. Ben bu hayatı hak ettim*.).", which may be representing his shame and guilt. Similarly, in his text messages with his wife, B. states, "I am going to hell. (*Cehenneme gidiyorum.*)". I thought that this message may reveal an anticipation of punishment which takes its basis from the feelings of guilt and shame. In addition, J. says to his wife, "I do not forgive myself about the issues related to you. (*Ben kendimi sana karşı affetmiyorum.*)". Indeed, shame emerges in J.'s note in various parts; to illustrate, he wrote: "Deniz Brother, I feel ashamed and smashed towards you, so it goes, my brother. (*Deniz Ağabeyim benim, sana mahçup, sana ezgin ama öyle işte kardeşim.*)". He blames himself by saying, "I am paying my dues with my life. [...] It is nobody's fault. Everything is because of me and it is my own decision. (*Ben hatamı hayatımla ödüyorum. [...] Kimsenin hatası değil her şey benim yüzümden, karar da benim.*)". In addition, J. blames himself for the act of suicide when he states, "Take care of my mother. I am the one who is stubbing her in the back again. (*Anneme iyi bakın ona yine en kötü kahpeliği ben yapıyorum.*)". L. also blames himself in his notes that he wrote in his notebook while he says, "I am a slaverer. I droll all the time. (*Saçmalayan bir insanım ben. Her zaman saçmalıyorum.*)".

Blaming Other: Anger. In the analysis of the suicide notes, another version of the blame sub-theme was detected to be blaming other. Blaming other was linked with anger across the notes. For example, B. not only blames himself in his suicide note but also blames his wife:

> Fatma, you are the reason of my death, I think you are not as innocent as you think you are. I am fascinated whenever you announce yourself as innocent and convince yourself to believe this. [...] You left although you know that I will commit suicide. Right? This will be shortcut, exactly the way you wanted. Good luck with that. I am done, now it is your turn. (*Sebebimsin Fatma bence sen kendini bildiğin kadar masum değilsin. Kendini her seferinde masum ilan ederek buna da kendini inandırmana hayranım. [...] Sen benim intihar edeceğimi bile bile gittin değil mi? Böylesi kısa yol olacak tam da senin istediğin gibi sana kolay gelsin ben bittim şimdi sıra sende.*) (B.)

I thought that B. uses an aggressive, sarcastic and blaming style of language towards his wife. Indeed, the anger associated with blame may be inferred from his statements above. Similarly, K. blames his girlfriend harshly and aggressively in his text messages by saying:

It is nothing more than hurting me. You never message me. Today, late afternoon you messaged me. Why do you do this to me? You don't have to act like this just because I love you. Tell me that you don't love me, and tell me "don't message me anymore", I won't. If only you loved… Those were the days… But not anymore. […] Derya says the truth. God damn you! I hope you die. Even Ceyda was different from you. You are ordinary and cheeky. Get away from me! I have nothing to do with you anymore. (*Canımı yakıyorsun her gün başka bir şey değil. Ya hiç mesaj atmıyorsun, bugün akşama doğru mesaj attın, niye ama böyle yapıyon seni seviyorum diye böyle yapmana gerek yok. Bana de ki seni sevmiyorum atma bir daha mesaj de atmam sana mesaj. Keşke sevsen nerde o eski günler ama şimdi yok* […] *O Derya'nın dediği doğruymuş, Allah senin belanı versin inşallah geberirsin. Ceyda bile senin gibi değildi. Adi yüzsüz git kızım benden artık uzak dur, işim olmaz artık seninle.*) (K.)

In another example, E. states, "Yet, everyone should realize their own mistakes and regret them. I am paying my dues with my death. […] The only reason for my death is my FATHER. (*Ama herkes hatasına yansın. Ben canımla ödüyorum.* […] *Benim ölümüme tek sebep BABAM.*). Although in the first part the object of the blame is ambiguous, in the following part E. blames his father harshly in his suicide note and writes the word "father" by using upper case. In the note, he mentions his father's swearing at E., and there is a constant use of this particular swear-word throughout the letter as an indicator of his anger. Ambiguity in the target also appeared in I.'s note on the pill box while he says: "You made Ahmet an enemy of me. (*Ahmet'i bana düşman yaptın.*)". It is not clear that who I. blames. Furthermore, in his note which he wrote for his son, G. says, "The most important reason of getting tired of my life is that I can no longer stand Mehmet who is a thief and who is thankless. Perceive the event as a revolt against the system. (*Hayattan bıkmamın en önemli olayı hırsız ve nankör olan Mehmet'e artık dayanamamaktan ve düzene olan isyanım olarak bak.*)". At first, G. blames his brother Mehmet; the usage of "thief"

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and "thankless" may be interpreted as his anger toward his brother. Later, he blames the system which he is also angry with. As can be seen, not only the people around the note-leavers but also other things like system can be blamed. Another good example for this is H.'s accusation of economic problems. H. says, "The reason was working with minimum wage; it was poverty, misery. My personality was good but my financial matter was ignoble. […] The reasons for my suicide were poverty, misery and working with minimum wage. (*Sebebi asgari ücretle çalışmaktı ve yoksulluktu, fakirlikti. İnsanlığım kişiliğim iyiydi ama maddi yönüm şerefsizdi. [...] İntiharımın sebebi yoksulluk, fakirlik ve asgari ücretle çalışmaktı.*)". Likewise, C. blames the destiny in his statement:

> I loved her heaps of times. I fell in love with her again and again. But, fate did not let us to be together. Let's say it fate from now on, there is nothing beyond the fate. My fate is this insofar. (*Ben onu defalarca sevdim. Defalarca aşık oldum. Ama kader birleşmemizi istemedi. Kader diyelim artık, kaderden öte yol yok. Benim de kaderim buraya kadarmış.*)". (C.)

As can be seen, C. blames his destiny, and ends the destiny by killing himself; therefore, it may be claimed that he feels angry about the destiny.

Hopelessness. Hopelessness emerged as another theme under the negative emotions category. The segments indicating helplessness, desperation and a lack of means or hope were coded as hopelessness. For example, B. writes to his wife, "Isn't it funny that you left me desperate and alone; me, the one who said just one week ago 'there is a solution for everything'. (*Ne komik değil mi bir hafta önce her şeyin bir çaresi var diyen beni çaresiz ve yalnız bıraktın.*)". Likewise, E. states, "Tell Murat and Nazlı that their father has gone helpless. (*Murat'a ve Nazlı'ya baban biçare gitti deyin.*)", with an underline in the second part of the sentence which declares an emphasis of hopelessness, as shown. Moreover, A. declares:

> When I am going, I do not have any desires or anticipations. […] Otherwise, I could not stand my life as a corpse, pining away day by day. I did not want you to see it. […] I don't have the power to leave everything aside and start life

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again from nothing. (*Giderken, hiçbir arzum yok, beklentim yok. [...] Diğer türlü, gün ve gün eriyip gitmemi, ceset gibi yaşamamı kaldıramazdım. Bunu siz de görmeyin istedim. [...] Her şeyi bir kenara bırakıp, sıfırdan hayata başlamaya gücüm yok.*) (A.)

Similarly, H. declares a lack of power just as A. by saying, "I was hopeless; I had no power for standing the poverty. […] Poverty left me helpless, it compelled me. (*Çaresizdim yoksulluğa dayanacak gücüm kalmadı. [...] yoksulluk beni çaresiz bıraktı mecbur bıraktı*)". When the extracts were investigated, it seemed like some of the cases were in a kind of unbelief of change and development, which may be an indicator of hopelessness. Accordingly, G. states, "I gave up struggling for life. (*Ben hayatla mücadeleden vazgeçtim.*)", in a similar way to A. Furthermore, F. claims, "What can I do? There is no way for me to straighten out. (*Ne yapayım benim düzeleceğim yok.*)". Not being able to change himself is also observed in J.'s statements when he says:

I have striven a lot, I tried a lot but it is of no use, no use. Does this, what I am doing has a name? I don't know. Believe me, it is not something new, I have tried to change myself for years. No, it doesn't get better, this is different. [...] I always had hope but it failed yesterday. (*Çok uğraştım çok şey denedim ama olmuyor, olmuyor. Bu yaptığımın bir adı var mı ben de bilmiyorum. Yeni bir şey değil inan ki, ben yıllardır kendimi değiştirmeye çalıştım. Yok, düzelmiyor, bu farklı. [...] Hep ümidim vardı ama dün boşa çıktı.*) (J.)

A lack of means or hope may be inferred from what J. declares. In addition, C. indicates his hopelessness by writing:

Perhaps, I am not suitable for this life, I don't know. Yet, the life oppressed me very badly. No matter how I tried hard, nothing worked out in the way I wanted in this life. […] I knew that it would be painful, but I did not have any other choice. (*Belki de ben bu hayata göre değilim bilmiyorum. Ama hayat üstüme çok yüklendi. Ne kadar çaba sarf etsem de hiçbir şey istediğim gibi olmadı hayatta. [...] Acı çekeceğimi biliyordum ama artık başka çare kalmamıştı.*) (C.)

Furthermore, in his text messages with his girlfriend, K. exhibits his hopelessness about the probability of marriage with Bahar by saying:

I swear I had enough of living like this, everyone is married and happy but we are always like this. It hurts, I want to be with you, I cannot stand to be apart from you. […] I am pining away, Bahar, I cannot stand this. […] I am yours, yours, but your family won't allow this anymore, this is for sure, there's nothing to do. *(Yemin ederim artık bıktım böyle yaşamaktan, herkes evli mutlu ama biz hep böyleyiz. Canım yanıyor artık hep seninle beraber olmak istiyorum, dayanamıyorum sensizliğe. [...] bittim artık Bahar dayanamıyorum. [...] Seninim seninim ama sizinkiler vermez artık o garanti yapacak bir şey yok.)* (K.)

Anxiety. Anxiety emerged as another sub-theme under the negative emotions theme. The segments indicating bodily expressions of anxiety, nervousness, concern or worry were coded as anxiety. Not all the cases indicated those signs of anxiety, but some of the statements in particular cases were so salient; therefore, anxiety was accepted as a sub-theme. For example, A. states, "[…] but I cannot breath. Besides I do not feel that I am alive. (*[…] ama nefes alamıyorum. Zaten yaşadığımı hissetmiyorum.*)" The first segment was coded as anxiety, because it seemed like a bodily expression of anxiety. The second part was also coded as anxiety because it may be interpreted as a worry related to being dead or alive. Moreover, in J.'s suicide note there were so many examples of anxiety extracts as can be seen below:

One drop of tear, some blood… Hopefully, this will be easy. (Tell me about it.) […] I feel suffocated, my brother. I am also a bit afraid. For my health. While I am writing this moment, the pen doesn't stay in my hand. My hands have been trembling like a leaf lately. They do not allow me to do anything. And yeah, I also have a brain. That is another issue. It will hit one day, I know. I won't let this happen. What would I do at the hospital? […] You know my handwriting is beautiful, but I am nervous. […] I also had this disorder, my love. My brain keeps breaking off. What would I do at the hospital? […] And my hands' trembling has increased. I also have fungus. […] I am having difficulties while writing these. My hands and feet are trembling. My little one, my health is not in good condition. I know. (*Bir göz yaşı, biraz kan… İnşallah kolay olacak. - Siz bana sorun.- […] Ben çok bunaldım abi. Biraz da korkuyorum. Sağlığımla ilgili. Ben şu anı yazarken kalem elimde durmuyor. Elim artık son zamanlarda lapır lapır titriyor. Herhangi bir iş yapmama da izin vermiyor. Ha bir de*

beynim var. O ayrı bir dert. Vuracak bir gün biliyorum. Buna müsaade etmem. Ben hastanelerde ne yaparım. [...] Yazım aslında güzeldir ama bilirsin gerginim. [...] Biraz rahatsızlık da vardı aşkım. Beynim kopup kopup gidiyor. Ben hastanelerde ne yapardım. [...] Hem ellerimin titremesi de çoğaldı. Mantarım da var. [...] Ben bunları yazarken çok zorlanıyorum. Elim ayağım titriyor. Yavrum sağlığım pek de iyi değil. Biliyorum.) (J.)

In the passage above, the statements of J. from different parts of his note are shown. I think that those statements mostly represent his concern and worry about his health. Moreover, the bodily expressions of anxiety and nervousness may be inferred from the passage.

4.1.2 Perceptions.

4.1.2.1 Theme I: Perceptions related to self.

The first theme which emerged under the perceptions category is *'perceptions related to self'*. Two sub-themes under the *'perceptions related to self'* theme were detected: *Grandiose/perfect self-perception* and *weak/inefficient self-perception*.

Grandiose/perfect self-perception. One of the sub-themes of 'perceptions related to self' theme is grandiose/perfect self-perception. The segments indicating an exaggerated self-importance, a lack of empathy, a need for admiration and superiority, an approach to others with disdain or putting self into a place of judge were coded as grandiosity or perfect self-perception. In fact, anything which brings narcissism to mind was coded by this sub-theme, including the manipulations or the urge control of the other.

Grandiose and perfect self-perception was observed in various cases, in different shapes. One of the versions of grandiose/perfect self-perfection was thought to be linked with an exaggerated self-importance. For example, A. in his suicide note states, "Becoming a bad doctor and doing harm to those many who expected to be healed by me weren't something that I could do. […] I know, me going away like this is not something you deserve. (*Kötü bir doktor olup benden şifa bekleyen onca*

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insana, böyle bir kötülük yapamazdım. [...] Biliyorum, benim gidişim hak ettiğiniz bir şey değil.)". Especially the parts stating "those many who expected to be healed by me" and "me going away like this is not something you deserve" were coded as exaggerated self-importance and grandiosity. Similarly, G. shows an inflated self-importance while he says, "When I am going I thought that the ones I love the most (my wife and my daughter) should not feel sorrow or suffer, so I said that three of us should go altogether while leaving the life. (*Giderken en sevdiklerim (karım ve kızım) sonra üzülmesin sıkıntı yaşamasın diye hayattan ayrılırken üçümüz birlikte gidelim dedim.*)". This segment was also coded as love due to the usage of word "love"; however, when checked carefully it was noticed that G. put himself first and thought that his wife and daughter would feel more sorrow and suffer more when he was gone rather than being killed. Due to the lack of empathy and self-centeredness, this segment was thought to represent a grandiose self-perception. Another example of exaggerated self-importance was noticed in K.'s one of the facebook shares where he writes by using uppercase as shown, "I NEVER TRY HARD TO TAKE REVENGE... MY BIGGEST REVENGE IS BEING WITHOUT ME. EACH DAY YOU BEING WITHOUT ME IS YOUR PINING ANYWAY. (*ASLA İNTİKAM ALMAK İÇİN UĞRAŞMAM... BENİM EN BÜYÜK İNTİKAMIM BENSİZLİKTİR. BENSİZ KALDIĞIN HER GÜN SENİN ZATEN BİTİŞİNDİR.*)". In addition, in his text messages with his girlfriend he says: "You don't text me at all. The more you do like this, this is not good, in my opinion, I will not feel sorry for myself, but (I will feel sorry) for you. (*Hiç mesaj atmıyorsun. Sen böyle yaptıkça iyi bir şey yapmıyorsun bence, ben kendime üzülmem sana (üzülürüm).*)". Those expressions may bring an inflated self-esteem to mind. Another important point in this expression was that the last sentence was incomplete; indeed, I tried to complete it by adding the part which says "I will feel sorry" in order to make it more comprehensive.

Another version of grandiosity was observed as the need for admiration. For example, H. defines himself as a "proud, honourable, self-respecting, merciful, upright" father, which may show his wish to be seen as a perfect father and to be admired as a father. Moreover, in his notebook, L. notes down some sentences in

English, which may indicate his need to be admired by the others, such as "The best writer (friend, leader, person, father) of the world." and "I am often praised for my tidiness.". Furthermore, there is a motivational Turkish sentence which may represent his ideals about himself, like "You need to be decisive, courageous. (*Kararlı olmalısın, cesaretli.*)". Additionally, superiority which requires high levels of strength or power was thought to be another version of grandiose/perfect self in the notes. For example, F. says, "Maybe God ameliorates me in the after-life. (*Belki Allah ıslah eder öbür tarafta.*)". By the usage of the word "maybe", F. gives an impression that even God cannot solve the problem with himself, so he despises God's power whereas he puts himself somewhere superior. In parallel, E., in his text messages to his father, writes, "Plant God in front of me, I will still kill myself. (*Allah'ı al gel karşıma, ben canıma kıyacağım.*)". In this example, E. attracts attention to his own power by disdaining the power of God, in a similar way to F. Likewise, J. states, by using uppercase as shown, "WE DIED... MARBLE ALSO DIES, OH GODS, TAKE US. (*ÖLDÜK... MERMER DE ÖLÜR, EY TANRILAR ALIN BİZİ.*)". The usage of "we" here may be thought as J.'s perception of grandness. In addition, he resembles himself to marble which is a material known with its toughness and strenght. In the last part of the sentence, by using an imperative type of language, J. makes himself a superior being compared to Gods. Furthermore, L. states, "Obstacles on my way can never stop me. (*Yola çıkan taşlar beni asla durduramaz.*)", as if he signifies his power in front of the obstacles.

An approach to others with disdain may be counted as another branch of grandiosity. For example, in his text messages to his girlfriend, K. uses a directive and an insulting way of language by stating:

> Shut up, shut up, I cannot deal with you, I cannot fight with you now, do not needle, what I mean to say is you do what has been happening. [...] That's it, there is no reason, I don't want to get married, I cannot marry you by force. [...] Do not say anything to your mother and others. That maniac will fight with you otherwise. (*Sus sus senle uğraşamam, şimdi kavga yapamam senle, laf sokma ben sana olanı yap demek istiyorum.[...] Öyle işte nedeni yok evlenmek istemiyorum, senle de zorla evlenemem. [...]Annen gile bir şey söyleme, o manyak kavga eder yoksa seninle.*) (K.)

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In addition to an exaggerated self-importance, a lack of empathy, a need for admiration and superiority, and an approach to others with disdain, the cases were also observed to be putting themselves into a position similar to a judge, by their statements. The position of a judge may be thought as a position which encloses power, supremacy and authority; therefore, it may be linked with grandiose/perfect self-perception theme. I think that the best example for the judge position is from B.'s suicide note where he says, "If you regret the things you did, give me your blessings. Pray to God because you won't have a high position. (*Yaptıklarından pişman olursan şayet, hakkını helal et. Dua et çünkü çok iyi bir makamın olmayacak.*)". In addition, he states, "I am offering you a life now, which you can live the way you want. (*Dilediğin gibi yaşayacağın hayatı sana sunuyorum şimdi.*)". Those statements may be interpreted as B.'s perception of himself as a judge who decides what his wife's end will be like. Moreover, A. writes for his family, "You deserve the best about everything. (*Siz her şeyin en güzelini hak ediyorsunuz.*)". In a similar way, F. states, "It is better I die than I live. (*Ölmem yaşamamdan daha hayırlı.*)". In those expressions, both A. and F. are thought to be in a perception that their position is the enactor position, just like a judge.

In the suicide notes, another issue linked with the grandiose or perfect self-perception theme may be the manipulations. A good example may be from D.'s suicide note where he confesses about his debts and claims:

> My wife doesn't know anything about this. She doesn't know anything. I explained her the message I got from the bank two days ago in a different way. -I told that I had taken loan for tender court-. There is no such a thing. (*Eşim bunların hiçbirini bilmiyor. Hiçbir şeyden haberi yok. İki gün önce bankadan gelen mesajı ona başka türlü anlattım. -İhale mahkemesi için kredi çektim dedim-. Böyle bir şey yok.*) (D.)

In this passage, D. describes how he deceived his wife which may be counted as a version of manipulation. Moreover, in his suicide note, J. describes how he tricked his mother by saying, "I sent my mom away from home telling her my friend was coming. There is no such a thing, I said that to achieve my purpose. (*Annemi*

evden gönderdim arkadaş gelecek diye. Yok öyle bir şey amacımı yerine getirmek için öyle dedim.)". Another example from J.'s note may be the passage below:

I have lived as the professor of life for 15 years, day by day. I was not able to make people believe by telling my actual salary. I said I get 3500 TL and they believed. Even though I showed my payroll. (*Gün gün yaşamanın profesörü olarak yaşadım 15 yıldır. Ben gerçek maaşımı insanlara söyleyerek hiç inandıramadım. 3500 lira alıyorum diyordum inanıyorlardı. Bordromu gösterdiğim halde*.) (J.)

Not only the confessions of former manipulations but also the manipulations at the moment of writing the suicide note were realized during the analysis. For example, J. states, "In case a bad lot says something, I know that there are my siblings who will defend me. (*İt köpek bir şey konuşursa biliyorum ki beni savunacak kardeşlerim var*.)". By this expression, it may be possible that J. directs or manipulates his siblings in order to defend himself against the people who would talk about him with a bad content.

Weak/ inefficient self-perception. The second sub-theme of 'perceptions related to self' theme was weak/ inefficient self-perception. The segments indicating powerlessness, incapability or 'not being able to', worthlessness and an inefficient self-perception linked with an upward comparison were coded as weak or inefficient self. For example, A. writes about his powerlessness by stating, "Otherwise, I could not stand my life as a corpse, pining away day by day. I did not want you to see it. (*Diğer türlü, gün ve gün eriyip gitmemi, ceset gibi yaşamamı kaldıramazdım. Bunu siz de görmeyin istedim*.)". This statement may also give information about his wish to hide his weak self from the others. He adds, "I don't have the power to leave everything aside and start life again from nothing. (*Her şeyi bir kenara bırakıp, sıfırdan hayata başlamaya gücüm yok.*)". Moreover, he mentions his incapability by saying, "I was not able to do the other way, I really couldn't, forgive me. (*Diğer türlüsünü beceremedim, yapamadım, affedin*.)". Furthermore, A. compares himself to his father and says, "I have never been able to be as strong as you have. (*Ben senin kadar güçlü olamadım*.)". Another example for weak/ inefficient self-perception may

be from L.'s suicide note to the girl whom he loves, while he says, "As you said, I am not worth to be cared about. (*Senin de dediğin gibi takmaya değmez biriyim*.)". This expression of L. was coded as worthlessness. Moreover, C. states:

> This life is not for me, I get this eventually even if it is late. […] In fact, life is beautiful, living is beautiful, but, as I said, this is not for me. […] Perhaps, I am not suitable for this life, I don't know. (*Bu hayat bana göre değil, geç de olsa bunu anladım. […] Hayat güzel aslında, yaşamak güzel ama söyledim ya bu hayat bana göre değil. […] Belki de ben bu hayata göre değilim bilmiyorum.*) (C.)

After a questioning, C. decides that he is not suitable for this life, which may represent his perception of incapability related to adapting this life. Furthermore, F. describes his feeling about his inefficiency related to changing his behaviors by saying, "You will say I made you pay my own debts it again. What can I do? There is no way for me to straighten out. (*Yine taktın giderken diyeceksiniz. Ne yapayım benim düzeleceğim yok*.)". Moreover, H. states, "My human side was good but my financial side was scumbag. (*İnsanlığım kişiliğim iyiydi ama maddi yönüm şerefsizdi*.)". In this expression, H. mentions a positive side of himself but also he points a negative side of himself. Even though finance is not a side of his personality, he uses the expression of "my financial side" after mentioning his human side; therefore, this expression is coded as weak/ inefficient self-perception. Furthermore, J. states, "Kale family, with its each member, is special. I might disrupt this situation. […] Take care of my mother. I am the one who is stubbing her in the back again. (*Kale ailesi bütün fertleriyle çok özeldir. Bunu belki ben bozacağım. […] Anneme iyi bakın ona yine en kötü kahpeliği ben yapıyorum*.)", which may be evaluated as another example of weak/ inefficient self-perception.

4.1.2.2 Theme II: Perceptions related to other.

The second theme under the perceptions category is *'perceptions related to other'*. Two sub-themes under the perceptions related to other theme were detected: *Ideal other* and *negative other*.

Ideal Other. The first sub-theme under the perceptions related to other theme was ideal other. This sub-theme may be defined as the perceptions of the cases related to other marked with glorification, respect and idealization. Good examples for this sub-theme may be found in J.'s suicide note. For example, while he writes for his mother, he says, "I am kissing your hands. […] But understand me and show your holy greatness once again. (*Ellerinden öpüyorum. […] Ama beni anla ve o kutsal büyüklüğünü bi daha göster.*)". Specifically, 'kissing hands' may be evaluated as a manifestation for respect in Turkish culture. In addition, J.'s usage of 'holy greatness' may bring minds the ideal other. Moreover, for his wife J. writes, "You have been my prophet. My blood, my soul, my wife. (*Sen benim peygamberimdin. Kanım, canım, karım.*)". The usage of the word 'prophet' here may remind the adjectives such as great, ideal, respectable and legendary, which may be linked with ideal other. In fact, in different parts of J.'s suicide note, this ideal other may be observed to become different people, such as Cemal uncle, Tufan, Tuğba or all the members of Kale family. He states:

> Cemal uncle, our elderly, our father, I have endless respect for you. […] Tarık, you, my other half. My elder brother, my idol. […] Tuğba, self-sacrificing Tuğba, you deserve the respect in the highest level. Your hands and feet are to be kissed, I bow respectfully before you. […] I am requesting from you not to argue with anyone or no accident happens. This is what suits us. With my love and regards. Live long KALEs. (*Cemal amca, büyüğümüz, atamız sana saygım sonsuz. […] Tarık, sen ki benim canım yarısı. Bana idol olan ağabeyim. […] Tuğba, fedakar Tuğba, sen saygıların en büyüğünü hak ediyorsun. Elin ve ayağın öpülür önünde saygıyla eğiliyorum. […] Sizden ricam kimse ile bi şekilde tartışma ya da takaza çıkmasın. Bizlere yakışan budur. Saygı ve sevgilerimi sunuyorum. Allahınıza kurban KALE'ler.*)

Moreover, the same sub-theme may be observed in different parts of A.'s suicide note in which he glorifies his brother, mother and father respectively. For his brother, A. writes, "You are a very strong and talented person. (*Sen çok güçlü, çok yetenekli birisin.*)". After that, he glorifies his mother by saying, "The noble woman who gave birth to me with her own desire out of nothing; who fed me and raised me; who has always been behind my back. I kiss your hands. (*Hiç yoktan, kendi*

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arzusuyla beni dünyaya getiren, besleyip büyüten, her zaman arkamda olan yüce kadın. Ellerinden öperim.)". In addition, for his father, he writes, "The great man who fought against any difficulty in his life, who never gave up fighting against these difficulties. (*Dünyada her zorluğa göğüs germiş, mücadeleyi bırakmamış olan adam.*)". In those expressions, A.'s perception related to his family members is thought to be marked with glorification and linked with ideal other.

Negative other. The second sub-theme under the perceptions related to the other theme was negative other. This sub-theme may be defined as the perceptions of the cases related to the other linked with negative expressions mostly marked with blame, insult and anger. For example, B. writes to his wife, "I think you are not as innocent as you think you are. (*Bence sen kendini bildiğin kadar masum değilsin.*)". Likewise, in his text messages to his father, E. states, "Virility is not calling your son and saying 'I fucked your ass or I will let others fuck your ass.' […] You are a man, you will fuck my ass. Come on and do it. (*Erkeklik oğlunu arayıp da senin götünü siktim, senin götünü siktirecem demekte değil. […] Erkeksin ya götümü sikeceksin ya, gel sik.*)". In both of the expressions, negative other is noticed with the marks of blame, insult and anger. B. despises his wife's innocence and her self-perception about this issue, whereas E. insults his father's virility.

The negative other was not only pointed as a person but also referred as a non-human being in the suicide notes. For example, C.'s negative other in his note was thought to be the life or destiny, due to the fact that he states, "Yet, the life oppressed me very badly. […] But faith did not let us come together. Let us call it faith. My faith has come to an end. (*Ama hayat üstüme çok yüklendi. […] Ama kader birleşmemizi istemedi. Kader diyelim artık, kaderden öte yol yok. Benim de kaderim buraya kadarmış.*)". Similarly, J. points the world as the negative other while he says, "Fuck you world. (*Bu dünyanın amına koyim.*)". Another example was from L.'s notes that he wrote in his notebook, in which he states, "The nonsense function of education... (*Eğitimin saçma işlevi…*)"; therefore, L.'s negative other seems to be the education.

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4.1.3 Functions.

4.1.3.1 Theme I: The functions related to blame.

The first theme under the *functions* category is the functions related to blame. Under this theme, there are two sub-themes; namely, *the need to be cleared of responsibility or blame* and *the need to clear other of responsibility or blame (No-blame)*.

The need to be cleared of responsibility or blame. The first sub-theme under the functions related to blame theme is the need to be cleared of responsibility or blame. This sub-theme has aroused due to the expressions of apology or wishes of blessings and of obtaining the religious purity. In addition, any kind of explanation, which contained the meaning of 'Do not blame me.' or the justification of the act of suicide, was realized to be going under this sub-theme. For instance, A. indicates his apology by stating, "Please, forgive me. (*Ne olur beni affedin.*)", in his suicide note. In addition, F. writes to his sister, "Sister, please forgive me for dying at your home. (*Evinde öldüğüm için beni affet abla.*)". Moreover, J. apologizes from various people in his suicide note by saying:

> My son should forgive me the most. […] He is a very emotional guy. He should forgive me the most. […] My siblings, my nephews and nieces, my aunts, my elderly and younger ones, forgive me. […] What else can I say, I apologize to you all. But I hope they will understand me. […] I apologize to you a million times. Whatever I did, I did it for you and your mother, my most precious ones. Everything had to be the best for you. People make mistakes in their lives, I must have made many mistakes too. Because of this, you two, forgive me. (*Beni en çok oğlum affetsin. […] Çok duygusal bir çocuk. Beni en çok o affetsin. […] Kardeşlerim, yeğenlerim, yengelerim, büyük ve küçüklerim affedin. […] Başka ne diyeyim, herkesten özür diliyorum. Ama beni anlayacaklarını ümit ediyorum. […] Senden sonsuz özür diliyorum. Ben ne yaptıysam, en değerli varlığım sen ve annen için yaptım. Her şey sizin için iyi olmalıydı. İnsanlar hata yapar hayatta, ben de bir çok hatalar yapmışımdır. Bu yüzden ikiniz de affedin beni.*) (J.)

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Another version of this sub-theme was marked with the wishes of blessings and of obtaining the religious purity. Those blessings were interpreted as a way for the cases to clear themselves from the responsibility in the eyes of God, so it has a religious side in their discourse. For example, after blaming harshly his wife and himself, B. writes to his wife: "Please give me your blessing about this issue. (*Bu konuda hakkını helal et lütfen.*)". Moreover, C. states, "I give my blessings to all of you. I wish you all would give your blessings to me too. (*Herkese hakkım sonuna kadar helal olsun. İsterim ki herkes de bana hakkını helal etsin.*)". Likewise, G. writes, "Give me your blessings. […] I give my blessings to you. (*Hakkını helal et. [...] Benim hakim size helal olsun.*)". Furthermore, in his note, which he wrote behind a hospital barcode, I. states, "Gökhan, my son give me your blessings… Hakan, you too give me your blessing. (*Gökhan oğlum hakkını helal et… Hakan sen de hakkını helal et.*)". Besides blessings, another religious expression in which responsibility or blame is shifted to others, even to the God, is noticed in H.'s suicide note, where he says, "My kids and wife are at your peril and you are at God's peril. […] You are at everyone's peril and everyone is at God's peril. (*Yavrularımın eşimin günahı sizin boynunuza sizin de günahınız Allah'ın boynuna. […] Sizin günahınız herkesin boynuna, herkesinki de Allah'ın boynuna.)*".

Another version of this sub-theme was observed as the explanations which contain the meaning of 'Do not blame me.' or the justification of the act of suicide. For example, H. states, "Who, as a father, would want to leave his three kids orphan? […] I tried as much as possible not to let you be deprived within the bounds of possibility. (*Hangi baba 3 yavrusunu yetim bırakmak ister? […] Elimden geldiği kadarıyla imkan çerçevesinde sizi mahrum etmedim.*)". In those statements, H. may be trying to give the message 'Do not blame me' to his kids. Similarly, E. says, "I am paying my dues with my death. (*Ben canımla ödüyorum.*)", so he may be giving the same message. In addition to those examples, J. states, "Do not spot me as the bad guy. […] Don't you ever think I am a bad guy. (*Beni kötü adam yerine koymayın. […] Benim kötü bir insan olduğumu sakın düşünme.*)". Although, in his note on a file, he claims, "I am not writing those things in order to clear myself from

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responsibility. (*Ben bunları kendimi aklamak için yazmıyorum*.)", even this part was coded as the need to be cleared of responsibility in his suicide note. In most of the suicide notes, the act of suicide is justified with a sentence, and those extracts were also evaluated under this sub-theme. For example, after giving information about his debts, B. states, "I do not commit suicide because of debts. (*Ben borç sıkıntısı nedeniyle intihar etmedim*.)", and he starts to blame his wife; in fact, he shows his wife as the reason of his suicide. This statement not only subtly contains the 'Do not blame me.' message, but also involves an aim to justify the act of suicide. Likewise, J. states, "[…] and also, I have been missing your grandfather, Ali. […] My love, dying together in life is something that almost does not exist. Thus, I am going. […] I don't get pleasure out of life, my mom. (*Hem ben Ali dedenizi özledim. [...] Ömrüm benim hayatta beraber ölmek yok gibi bir şey. O yüzden ben gidiyorum. [...] Ben hayattan tat almıyorum annem*.)". In those statements, J. explains why he commits suicide as well as he justifies the act of suicide. Moreover, A. states, "As my dad has always said either you want to do the best or you do nothing at all... He has a point. (*Babam hep derdi, ya en iyisini yapmak istiyorsun, ya da hiç yapmıyorsun diye… Haklıydı.*)". In this explanation, A. gives a clue about the motivation behind his suicide, which may be interpreted as his wish to do the best; in fact, it is his justification. Similarly, C. writes, "This life is not suitable for me. (*Bu hayat bana göre değil.*)", and H. states, "I had credit debt to F. bank and G. bank because the money I earned was not enough. (*F.bank'a ve G.'ye kredi borcum vardı. Aldığım para yetmiyordu çünkü.*)". The aim of those explanations were thought to be justifying the act of suicide, so they were considered to be linked with the need to be cleared of responsibility or blame.

The need to clear other of responsibility or blame (No-blame). The second sub-theme under the functions related to blame theme is the need to clear other of responsibility or blame. This sub-theme has aroused due to the expressions related to 'no blame', and the segments of the suicide notes, which imply that the responsibility of the death belongs to nobody, were coded as no-blame. Some of the suicide notes included the statement of "Nobody is responsible for my death. (*Ölümümden kimse*

sorumlu değildir.)". For example, D. and F. have this expression in their suicide notes. Another example is C. who says: "Firstly, I start my words by declaring that nobody is reason for my suicide decision. Nobody is responsible with my death. (*Öncelikle sözlerime hayatıma son vermeme kimsenin sebep olmadığını belirterek başlıyorum. Ölümümden kimse sorumlu değildir*.)". Moreover, H. states repeatedly, "Nobody is the reason. […] Nobody is the reason of my suicide. (*Kimse sebep değildir. […] Hiç kimse intiharımdan sebep değildir*.)". Moreover, he adds, "Never blame my wife as a reason of my suicide. The reason of my suicide is misery and poverty. (*Benim intiharımdan sakın kimse eşimi sebep göstermesin. İntiharımın sebebi yoksulluk, fakirlik*.)". Likewise, J. states "It is not financial, not also spiritual. I am not offended by somebody. […] As I said this event is not linked with Begüm or her family. […] It is nobody's fault. (*Parasal değil, manevi de değil. Kimseye küs filan da değilim. […] Dediğim gibi bu olay Begüm'le ilgili ya da ailesi ile ilgili bir şey değil. […] Kimsenin hatası değil.*)"

Another interesting example was realized in G.'s suicide note in his statement, "I am G., nobody is responsible for the death of myself, my wife, and my daughter. (*Ben G., karım, kızım ve benim ölümümden hiç kimsenin sorumluluğu yoktur.)"*. Here, G. may be implying that not only the suicide but also his thoughts of homicide is on nobody's responsibility. As the researcher, I thought that G.'s statement may also be due to his need to be cleared of responsibility or blame, which is the first sub-theme of the functions related to blame theme. However, due to the emphasis on 'nobody', this extract is given as an example to the need to clear other of responsibility or blame sub-theme.

4.1.3.2 Theme II: Informing others about suicide.

The second theme under the '*functions*' category is '*informing others about suicide*'. This theme mostly emerged in the last messages and the social media shares when compared to the suicide notes. For example, in his text messages with his sister, C. states, "I want to die. I don't want to live like this. (*Ölmek istiyorum ya*

valla yaşamak istemiyorum böyle.)", just after he mentions his problems related to financial issues. Moreover, B. states, "I am in the toilet. Didn't you understand why I sent you? I am going. (*Ben tuvaletteyim, seni niye gönderdiğimi anladın mı? Ben gidiyorum.*)", in his text messages with his wife. Indeed, "I am going" is a way to inform his wife about his suicide, here. Furthermore, in his text messages with his father, E. states, "I am home, now I will shot myself, and the reason is you. […] Bullets are in the magazine. […] I had bullets but I couldn't kill them without pity. (*Ben evdeyim şimdi kendimi vuracağım, sebebi sensin. [...] Mermi ağzında, bekliyorum. [...] Mermim vardı, çocuklara kıyamadım.*)". With those statements, E. not just informs his father about his suicide but also gives information about why he did not shot his children. Additionally, on his facebook account G. informs others about his suicide by writing, "My fellows, relatives, friends, brothers. I think that the time that I should leave this world has come. It is not a time of depression or crisis. It is a decision that I made calmly. (*Dostlarım, akrabalarım, arkadaşlarım, kardeşlerim dünyadan ayrılma zamanım geldi diye düşünüyorum. Bu bir bunalım ya da kriz anı değil, sakin olarak verdiğim bir karar.*)". Moreover, in his suicide note, G. gives information about his suicide to his son by saying, "My son, I give up my live and living. I have decided to take your mom and sister with me and go away. (*Oğlum ben hayattan, yaşamaktan vazgeçtim. Annen ve kardeşini de yanıma alıp gitmeye karar verdim.*)". He also informs the prosecution office by stating, "I am killing first my wife, then my daughter and at last myself with the gun registered to my son's name. (*Oğluma ait ruhsatlı silahla önce eşimi sonra kızımı öldürüp, en son ben intihar ediyorum.*)".

4.1.3.3 Theme III: Punishment.

The third theme under the functions category is punishment. This theme is linked with anger and is observed in two different versions; namely, putting somebody in a difficult position by death and ending the communication as a way of punishment. As an example to the first version, B. in his text messages to his wife says, "I am leaving you a letter. I am leaving you my debts. (*Mektup bırakıyorum,*

sana borçları bırakıyorum.)". Not only he puts his wife in a difficult position financially, but also he makes it difficult for her emotionally. In fact, B. blames his wife as the reason of his death, and B.'s brothers sue her. Consequently, she has to deal with the courts, according to the information given in the case file. Thus, B.'s wish of punishment may be thought to be fulfilled, in a way. Another example is from E.'s text messages to his father whom E. seems really angry with. He states, "I have left a page in order to show my reason of death is my father. […] I am going to make you grief for your deceased child. (*Bir kağıt bıraktım ölümüme sebep babam diye. [...] Evlat acısını sana tattıracağım.*)". In these expressions, it might be seen that E. wants to punish his father. Moreover, punishment as a theme emerges in J.'s suicide note in which there are a number of poems. To illustrate, he says:

> Dilber told me that I don't know how to love
> –What would you know about me, how would you?
> Three Greek Gods, five idols
> I complained about you, you will see
> (*Dilber bana demiş ki, sevmeyi bilmiyorsun*
> *-Sen benim neyimi, ne bileceksin?*
> *Üç Yunan tanrısı, beş tane puta*
> *Şikayet ettim seni, sen göreceksin*) (J.)

In this poem, especially the part which J. says "You will see" gives a message which contains a kind of threat; indeed, it is a threat of punishment by the Gods and idols. Similarly, in his note, K. states, "I don't have any troubles, I am relaxed. You will see now what trouble I have. (*Hiç bir derdim yok, rahatım. Şimdi göreceksin derdimin ne olduğunu.*)".

Another version of punishment was noticed to be punishing the other by ending communication. Ending communication as a way of punishment may be associated with the grandiose self because this way of punishment is marked with depriving others from gorgeous self or the important words of self. For example, in his text messages with his girlfriend, K. states:

If you have any problem with me, let's never talk Bahar. […] Never mind, you will understand when the time comes. […] You know what, do not message me anymore, OK? Tell me not to talk because you are fed up with me, girl, you didn't use to be like this. Now, do whatever you would like to do. If anything happens to you, do not message me, take care. […] I am smashing my sim card now. Goodbye. (*Senin benle bi problemin varsa hiç görüşmeyelim Bahar. […] Boşver zamanı gelirse anlarsın. […] Sana bir şey söyleyeyim mi, artık mesaj atma oldu mu? Görüşmüyek de çünkü sen benden bıkmışsın kızım, sen böyle değildin, şimdi ne yaparsan yap. Bir şey de olsa sana yine mesaj atma bana kib. […] Şimdi hattımı kırıyorum hoşçakal*.)

As can be seen in this passage, K. tries to end the conversation whenever he gets angry with his girlfriend. Likewise, E., who is really angry with his father, states, "Actually, I wouldn't write anything on this piece of paper and would leave this paper empty so that everyone would understand that a person doesn't come to life so easy but… (*Aslında ben bu kağıda hiçbir şey yazmayıp herkes hatasını anlasın bir can bu kadar kolay dünyaya gelmiyor deyip boş bir kağıt bırakıp gidecektim ama…*), in his suicide note, even though a few sentences later he states, "There are so many things I would like to write on this paper… (*Şu kağıda yazmak istediğim o kadar çok şey var ki…*)". Therefore, it may be thought that although E. wants to write so many things in his suicide note, a mechanism holds him back and makes him want to stop the communication. It can be seen in the first extract that he even does not finish his sentence. A similar questioning emerges in C.'s suicide note where he states, "I even don't know why I am writing this letter, I am just writing… (*Bu mektubu da neden yazdığımı bilmiyorum yazıyorum işte…*)". The wish to end the communication in this way may be thought as a type of punishment.

4.1.4 Phantasies.

4.1.4.1 Theme I: Phantasies related to life after death.

The first theme under the *phantasies* category is the *phantasies related to life after death*. The expressions which indicate a belief or thought related to after-life were located under this theme. For example, F. says, "Maybe God ameliorates me in

the after-life. (*Belki Allah ıslah eder öbür tarafta.*)". Moreover, A. writes to his brother, "If there is such a thing as after-life, I will be praying for you. (*Eğer diğer dünya diye bir şey varsa ben hep senin için dua edeceğim.*)". In this statement, it may be said that there is a questioning of after-life. Similarly, J. questions after-life, by saying, "If after-life exists, then we are fucked up, Baboş, we have got nothing good. And if it doesn't exist, then, again, we are fucked up. We won't be able to see anyone we are missing. (*Eğer öbür dünya varsa yarrağı yedik baboş, hiç iyi bişemiz yok. Ha yoksa yine yarrağı yedik. Özlediğimiz kimseyi göremeyeceğiz.*)". In addition, he writes to his wife, *"If after-life exists, I will be waiting for you again. (Eğer öbür taraf varsa ben yine seni bekleyeceğim.*)". However, in the following pages of his suicide note, J. indicates a belief rather than questioning:

> Aunt Melek, with my respect, I will give your greetings to my uncle. […] My dear aunt, I am going to miss you. If you prepare börek (a pasta like bakery with cheese parsley filling), I may walk around there. […] You were my everything Begüm. It will be the same on the other side, too. […] If you ever miss me, call out J., I will hear you.[…] When you all gather, put a glass for me too. […] (*Melek Yenge saygılarımla amcama selamlarını söylerim. […] Halacığım seni özleyeceğim. Su böreği yaparsan, belki dolaşırım oralarda. […]Sen benim her şeyimdin Begüm. Bu öbür tarafta da böyle olacak. […] Özlersen olur ya J. diye seslen ben duyarım. […] Hep bi araya geldiğinizde bana da bi kadeh koyarsınız.*) (J.)

In this passage, it may be thought that J. believes in another side in which he can stay here in the world, or "walk around" here, or "hear" the sounds from the world. In addition, he thinks that he will be seeing the other people who are dead and give "greetings" to them. Staying in the world also emerges in C.'s suicide note, where he says, "I told you I would be always with you, watching you but you wouldn't be able to see me. From now on, I will be always with you. (*Sana söylemiştim hep senin yanında olucam, seni izlicem ama sen beni göremeyeceksin. Artık hep senin yanındayım.*)". Moreover, the belief in seeing the other people who are dead also observed in G.'s facebook share where he states that he is going to commit suicide. He says, "It is a new beginning. I think that I am going to meet with my mother, father and brother. (*Yeni başlangıç, annem, babam ve ağabeyime*

kavuşacağım diye bakıyorum.)". In addition, he evaluates the death as the start of an eternal life, by stating, "As I am going to my new life, the eternal after life, I will be keeping you and this letter in my mind. (*Ben yeni yaşamım olan ölüm sonrası sonsuzluğa giderken son anda bile sizi ve mektubu düşünüyor olacağım.*)". Furthermore, in his text messages with his girlfriend, K. states, "Now, I will love you without you. (*Şimdi ben sensiz de seveceğim.*)". All of those expressions are evaluated as the phantasies of the cases related to life after death.

4.1.4.2 Theme II: Phantasies related to control after death events.

The second theme under the *phantasies* category is the *phantasies related to control after death events*. The expressions which indicate an urge to control the events which may occur after the death of the cases were located under this theme. This theme has three sub-themes such as 'the last wills and requests', 'directives, instructions and advices', and 'the control of other's emotions'.

Last wills and requests. This sub-theme is defined as the last wishes and the requests of the cases which they want to become true. For example, C.'s last will is to announce his death to the girl with whom he fell in love. He states, "Somehow, my family, my friends and my beloved ones will hear about my death. I would like one more person to be informed. (*Zaten duyulacaktır ölümüm ailem, çevrem ve sevdiklerim tarafından. Bir kişiye daha haber verilmesini istiyorum.*)". Likewise, H. wants to announce his death to others by writing:

> I am requesting my friends, whom I met 30 years ago, to attend my funeral. Let Ezgi know, who works at F.bank M. P. branch office. Let her inform her parents about my death. […] Let the people who love me and whom I love know about my death. (*30 yıl önce tanıdığım dostlarım cenazeme gelmelerini isterim. F.bank M. P. şubesinde çalışan Ezgi var haberi olsun. Öldüğümden anne babasına haber versin. […] Benim sevdiklerim insanlar beni seven insanlar haberi olsun öldüğümden.*) (H.)

Moreover, entrusting somebody to others is a common code among the suicide notes. For example, E. indicates his last will by saying, "My only wish is that you look after my kids very well and don't let them be dependent on someone else. (*Tek isteğim çocuklarıma iyi bakın onları kimseye muhtaç etmeyin yeter.*)". In addition, G. expresses his last will by saying, "I entrust him to you and Furkan. Please look after my son. (*Onu sana ve Furkan'a emanet ediyorum. Lütfen oğluma sahip çık.*)". H. also entrusts his children to others by stating, "I am writing this to my police. I am requesting this letter to be given to charity organizations and philanthropic institutions. Maybe they will look after my 3 kids. (*Bunu polisime yazıyorum. Bu mektubu hayır kurumlarına ve yardım kurumlarına vermelerini rica ediyorum. Belki 3 yavruma sahip çıkarlar.*)". Moreover, A. writes to his mother, "Please, look after my brother when I am gone. Love him on my behalf. (*Ne olur ben yokken abime iyi bak, onu benim yerime de sev.*)", and writes to his father, "Take care of mom and brother. Take care of yourself. (*Anneme ve abime iyi bak. Kendine dikkat et.*)". Furthermore, F. states, "Take good care of yourself everyone. (*Herkes kendisine iyi baksın.*)". This form of requests may be linked with considering others. A good example of considering others and the wish to control other's actions may be from J.'s suicide note because he states:

> Will you please give up smoking, take care of yourself. Do not play a trick with the cards when playing hoşkin in the coffeehouse. [...] You are Can's uncle, keep an eye on him. Devrim is Can's aunt (Teach this to Can). Don't let Begüm feel her loneliness. You are Baboş, Baboş. (Drink for me when you drink). [...] You are the man baboş. Would you grow a moustache for me? (*Senden ricam sigarayı bırak dikkat et kendine. Kahvede de hoşkin oynarken kağıt ayarlama. [...] Can'ın amcasısın, ona göz kulak ol. Devrim Can'ın halası (Can'a bunu öğret). Begüm'e yalnızlığını hissettirmeyin. Baboşsun Baboş. (İçtiğinde 1 de bana iç). [...] Sen adamın dibisin baboş. Sen benim için bi bıyık bırakır mısın.*) (J.)

In addition to announcing their death to others, entrusting somebody to the others or considering them, some of the cases want from others to pay their debts. Normally, the issues related to paying debts were evaluated under the directives, instructions and advices sub-theme due to the usage of the language. However, in the

case of F. it is in a shape of request and last will. In fact, F. mentions to his testament by claiming, "Take good care of mom. My will… my elder sister Songül and Fidan. I have some debt of 2000 liras, pay them. (*Anneme iyi bakın. Vasiyetim size, Songül ablama ve Fidan'a. 2000 lira borcum var onları verin.*)".

Another request was thought to be associated with protecting the physical integrity after death. To illustrate, B. writes to prosecution office, *"I know it is a legal procedure; however, I am requesting not to have an autopsy. (Yasal bir zorunluluk olduğunu biliyorum ama bana OTOPSİ yapılmamasını önemle rica ediyorum.)"*. A similar request emerges in G.'s suicide note, where he says:

> Please do not perform autopsy on our bodies and do not let our bodies wait because of related procedures. I am requesting to be buried next to each other and my daughter between my wife and me if it is not against our religion. (*Lütfen cenazelerimizi otopsi ve benzeri işlemlerle bekletmeyiniz. Cenazemizin yan yana defin yapılmasını ve dinen sakıncası yoksa kızımızın aramıza diliyorum.*) (G.)

The rejection of autopsy may be also evaluated under the grandiose self-perception sub-theme if the wish to protect physical integrity is taken into consideration. However, in those expressions it was thought that there is a request and a phantasy to control after death events so they were evaluated under this sub-theme. Briefly, all of those testaments, last wills and requests were thought to be associated with the phantasies related to control after death events.

Directives, instructions and advices. The second sub-theme under the phantasies related to control after death events theme is directives, instructions and advices. This sub-theme was differentiated from the last wills and requests sub-theme by the evaluation of the language because the current sub-theme was remarked with the usage of an imperative style of language. In addition, the cases give information associated with the directives, which gives basis to the instructions. In addition, some of the expressions sound like advice. An example for directives and instructions may be found in B.'s suicide note where he states, "Z. Bank Credit Card:

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around 5,000 TL. I took a cash advance loan. Ask and pay that debt too. (*Z. Bank Kredikartı: 5.000 civarı taksitli nakit avans çekmiştim. Onu da öğren kapat.*)".

Another example of directives and instructions may be found in J.'s suicide note:

> Mom, let Begüm read this, let them sell the house and pay my debts if there is any. Also, tell her to apply the bank for your retirement. There is Umut, Begüm knows him. He will help with those issues. They should get their salary. There are prints of my debts and credit loans in my belt bag and in my coat's pocket. Give them to Begüm. (*Anne Begüm'e de okut bunu, evi satıp borçlarım çıkarsa ödesinler. Aynı zamanda bankaya emekliliğin için başvursun. Umut var, Begüm tanıyor. O yardımcı olur o konularda. Maaşları bağlansın. Benim bel çantamda ve montumun cebinde borç ve kredilerle ilgili dökümler var. Onları Begüm'e ver.*) (J.)

A similar way of giving directions and the related instructions may be found in G.'s suicide note. He gives directions not only for credits and debits, but also for determining the features of the graves belonging to him, his wife and his daughter, by stating:

> You will find two deeds registered to me in Elmadağ. One of them (both of them are land properties) belongs to A. E. Also, the properties in Akyurt and Yüzyıl belong to me. […] if possible, let three of us rest in cemetery of nameless and leave our grave as it is without building our graves. My first request from you is to withdraw the money from my life insurance and make sure you pay the instalments we need to pay registered to M. Y. (*Adıma Elmadağ'da 2 adet tapu bulacaksın. Bunun biri (ikisi de arsa) A. E.'ye aittir. Ayrıca Akyurt ve Yüzyıl'da olan arsalar benim. […]bizim üçümüzü mümkün olursa belediye kimsesizler mezarlığına defin yap ve bize mezarlık yaptırma. Senden öncelikle istediğim hayat sigortalarımı paraya çevir ve M. Y. adına alıp taksite koyduğumuz senetlerin ödenmesini sağla.*) (G.)

Furthermore, C. gives instructions and directions in order to inform his sister in terms of the place of his death, in his text messages. He wants to be found after he kills himself in woodland so he states:

> When you leave Gölbaşı and go towards AŞTİ, you will see those stores on the right. […] There is this green wire fence. There is my backpack, which I had with me that day, towards the end of the fence on the ground. Around 100

meters into the forest, I am there. Come and find me. I don't want to stay hanged here for long. You got it. (*Bu Gölbaşı'ndan çıkınca AŞTİ'ye doğru giderken sağda alışveriş mağazaları var ya. […] O mağazaların arkasında bir tel örgü var yeşil. O tel örgülerin bitimine gelmeden tellerin dibinde sırt çantam var o günkü. Biraz içeriye ormana doğru 100 metre falan içeride oradayım. Gelin beni alın. Burada fazla asılı kalmak istemem. Anladın.*) (C.)

Another example for the phantasies related to control after death events by giving directions and instructions may be seen in E.'s suicide note and his last text messages. For example, he states, "Read each and every message on my phone. (*Telefonumdaki mesajları tek tek okuyun.*)", in his suicide note. Moreover, in his text messages with his father, E. says:

I have left a page in order to show my reason of death is my father. You will read it after my death. Well, you don't come to this house, but today you will, for my funeral. […] Don't come to my funeral dad, don't. (*Bir kağıt bıraktım ölümüme sebep babam diye. Okursun ölünce. Hani sen bu eve gelmiyordun ya, bugün geleceksin, cenazeye. […] Benim cenazeme gelme baba, gelme.*) (E.)

Some of the expressions in the suicide notes sound like advice rather than directive because they contain guidance or a direction for the other. To illustrate, I. states, "My daughter, study and pass your test, promise you will get your father's grave constructed. (*Kızım derslerine çalış sınavını kazan, babanın mezarını sen yaptıracan bana söz ver.*)". In addition, those statements of G. to his son sound like advice:

My son, first of all trust your uncle Ferhan and Furkan and I want you to act on their advice and shape your future accordingly. […] My son, you are not able to do merchandise, find a job with a stable salary. The most important thing in life is the family. Appreciate the value of your wife. (*Oğlum öncelikle Ferhan ve Furkan amcana güven ve onları dinleyip hayatına yön vermeni istiyorum. […] Oğlum sen ticaret yapamazsın en kısa sürede kendine sabit maaşlı bir iş bul ve çalış. Dünyada en önemli varlık ailedir. Eşinin değerini bil.*) (G.)

Moreover, J. suggests a name for the new born of the family, which may be counted as an advice. In addition, he wants Yavuz to change his team by writing, "I

called the boy = CESUR= I said my job. Oh, whatever, I am going anyhow. It is just a suggestion. Yavuz, Yavuz my lad, change that team now. (*Ben oğlana = CESUR= demiştim işim. Aman bırakın nasılsa gidiyorum. Öylesi bi öneri. Yavuz, Yavuz koçum benim, şu takımını değiş artık.*)". Furthermore, J. gives advices to his son, as in the passage below:

> Promise me my son. I want you to get educated very well. Do not give on the things you want in this life. Study at one of the good universities. […] Behave well to your mom, do not lie, be respectful and faithful to your grandparents, uncle, and aunt. Visit your grandmother, too, OK? Visit your uncles. […] Find a girlfriend OK? […] My son, don't prejudge anyone. Don't talk behind. And do not tell family secrets to anyone. […] Read whenever you have spare time, solve puzzle, OK? Love poetry, protect your mother my son. (*Sen bana bi söz ver oğlum. Çok iyi okumanı istiyorum. Hayatta istediğin şey için hiç vazgeçme. Güzel üniversitelerde oku oğlum. [...] Annene iyi davran, yalan söyleme, dedenlere, dayına, teyzene hep saygılı ve bağlı ol. Babaannene de git gör tamam mı? Amcalarını gör oğlum. [...] Kendine bi kız arkadaş bul olur mu?" [...] Oğlum benim, hayatta kimseye karşı önyargılı olma. Kimse hakkında konuşma. Ve ailelerimizin sırlarını kimseye söyleme. [...] Her boş zamanında kitap oku, bulmaca çöz olur mu? Şiiri sev, anneni koru oğlum.*) (J.)

All of those directives, instructions and advices were thought to be associated with the phantasies of the cases related to control after death events.

The control of other's emotions. The last sub-theme of the phantasies related to control after death events is the control of other's emotions. It was noticed that most of the cases try to control other's emotions associated with their suicide, by neutralizing or evoking feelings. Some of the cases try to neutralize other's emotions. For example, A. writes to his family, "I am getting rid of all my pain… Please take it like this. (*Acılarımdan kurtuluyorum… Ne olur böyle kabul edin.*)". Therefore, it may be thought that he wants to neutralize his family's feelings after his death. Another example may be found in G.'s suicide note where he says to his son, "Don't get mad at anyone. (*Hiç kimseye kızma.*)". It may be said that G. wants to control or neutralize his son's anger, after his death. Moreover, E. states, *"Don't cry for me, and don't come to my grave. (Bana sakın ağlama, mezarıma da gelme.)"*, in his text messages

with his father; and he writes to his mother *"Don't cry for me, nobody should. (Bana ağlama, kimse ağlamasın.*)", in his suicide note. It seems like E. tries to neutralize, control or suppress the emotions of others, after his death. Likewise, K. says, "Look after yourself very well, OK, I don't want you to shed a tear for me, goodbye, I am going. (*Kendine iyi bak oldu mu, gözünden bir damla yaş bile akmasını istemiyorum benim için, hoşçakal ben gidiyorum.*)". Furthermore, J. writes, "As I said, this is not about Begüm or Begüm's family. Don't you ever have unpleasantness. (*Dediğim gibi bu olay Begüm'le ilgili ya da ailesi ile ilgili bir şey değil. Sakın sonunda bir tatsızlık yaşamayın.*)". It is thought that J. tries to neutralize his family's anger towards his wife, after his death.

On the other hand, I thought that some of the emotions were tried to be provoked in the suicide notes. For the effort of evoking positive emotions, A.'s suicide note can be a good example because A. writes to his mother, "Please, look after my brother when I am gone, love him on my behalf. (*Ne olur ben yokken abime iyi bak, onu benim yerime de sev.*)". Indeed, he wants that the love of her mother towards himself is transferred to the brother when A. dies. Besides those positive emotions, negative emotions were also tried to be evoked, in my opinion. To illustrate, J. states, "People will talk after this incident, Baboş. I don't give a fuck. My brother will give as good as they get. (*Baboş bu olaydan sonra ağzı olan konuşacak. Hiç sikimde değil. Benim kardaşım gereken cevabı verir.*)". Here, it may be said that J. tries to annoy his brother about the behind talks after his death and wants his brother to stop those people. Moreover, as a matter of their own anger, some of the cases want to make others suffer. For example, B. writes to his wife, "I am leaving you a life, which you can live the way you want, now let us see if you will like it or not. As for me, you won't like it. (*Dilediğin gibi yaşayacağın hayatı sana sunuyorum şimdi bakalım yeni hayatını beğenecek misin? Bence beğenmeyeceksin.*)". He wants his wife to be unsatisfied with her life. Even though it sounds a bit differently, J. tries to evoke emotions in his mother related to suffer by stating, "My dear Mom, first of all, I would like to apologize for making you suffer once more. Maybe this will be the biggest one. […] Maybe what I do now is ill

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waiting for dead men's shoes. (*Sevgili Anneciğim, öncelikle sana bir acı daha yaşatacağım için özür diliyorum. Belki bu acıların en büyüğü olacak. [...] Belki bu yaptığım seni ölmeden mezara gömecek.*)". Similarly, K. texts to his girlfriend, "Look, if one day I pass away, I hope, you will not be able to stand my absence. (*Bak bir gün inşallah ölür gidersem benim yokluğuma sen de dayanamazsın.*)". All of those statements were thought to be linked with the phantasies related to control after death events, specifically the emotions of the others which they would feel.

4.2 Summary of the Semantic Level Findings

The semantic level thematic analysis of the data revealed four main categories with themes and sub-themes. Those main categories were named as *'emotions', 'perceptions', 'functions'* and *'phantasies'*. There were two themes under the *'emotions'* category; namely, *'positive emotions'* and *'negative emotions'*. *'Perceptions'* category revealed also two themes, which are *'perceptions related to self'* and *'perceptions related to others'*. There were three themes of the *'functions'* category; specifically, *'the functions related to blame', 'informing others about suicide'* and '*punishment'*. In terms of *'phantasies'* category, there were two themes; namely, *'phantasies related to life after death'* and *'phantasies related to control after death events'*. In this chapter, the sub-themes under those themes were explained with examples of extracts from the suicide notes.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATIONS

'The object that aggressivity chooses for its primitive death games is in fact some toy or scrap which is biologically indifferent.'

(Jacques Lacan)

In this part of the study, the findings from the primary level analysis are interpreted and discussed with the help of the literature. In other words, a secondary (latent) level analysis is provided in this section. Braun and Clarke (2006) states, "a thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations" (p. 13). Moreover, this type of analysis is established upon the "constructionist paradigm" (Braun, & Clarke, 2006). As a clinical psychologist, I try to focus on the unconscious processes which mean that my attention is generally on the underneath of the surface.

It has been an intrinsic question mark for me from the beginning of the study: "Why those people left suicide notes behind?" According to the literature, the most important function of leaving a suicide note is considered as a way to communicate (McClelland et al., 2000; Sanger, & McCarthy Veach, 2008). I think that the communication by means of a suicide note may be associated with the Other, in Lacanian terms, because those people used words of a specific language in their suicide notes which were addressed to the other particular people. On the other hand, those people who completed suicide terminated the communication without receiving an answer from the recipients. Hence, Lacanian 'acting out' and 'the passage to the

act' can be queried here in order to better understand the positionings of the note leavers'.

From a Lacanian point of view, an infant is born into a predetermined universe of discourse or language; therefore, Lacan evaluated "the Other *as* language" (Fink, 1995, p. 5). In other words, meaning is predetermined by the words of others so as the wishes or desires; consequently, language brings about the alienation of the person from the essence of his being but also it allows us to communicate. Congruently, Fink (1995) mentioned two types of talk; namely, 'ego talk' and 'some other kind of talk' (p. 3). The former is linked with the conscious thought whereas the latter is associated with unconscious and Lacan's Other. In fact, Lacan states, "the unconscious is language" (as cited in Fink, 1995, p.8). According to him, the language is associated with the symbolic order which is defined as the period of life in which the child goes through the linguistic communication, enters into intersubjective relationships and accepts the law (Homer, 2005). In this sense, suicide may be counted as passage to the act (*passage à l'acte*) which is defined as "an exit from the symbolic network [language]" and "a dissolution of the social bond" (as cited in Evans, 2006, p. 140). This term refers to the "impulsive acts, of a violent or criminal nature, which sometimes mark the onset of an acute psychotic episode" (Evans, 2006, p. 139). Acting out, on the other hand, is defined as "a symbolic message addressed to the big Other" (Evans, 2006, p.140). Soleim (2012) differentiated acting out from the passage to the act by stating, "while the latter is an attempt at separation, the former can be read as an appeal that reaffirms the attachment to the Other". In the current study, the cases try to address a message to the recipients by writing suicide notes before their death; in other words, they do not entirely exit from the language at first glance, and the social relationships are not totally dissolved at this phase. However, it should be borne in mind that the suicide act is prohibited by the law, and accepting the law is also an ingredient of the symbolic. This makes it questionable whether writing a suicide note should be evaluated as an acting out or not. In addition, if the act of writing a suicide note is due to convey a message or to communicate, it may be claimed that it is a one-way

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communication. Although communication is viewed as "sending and receiving messages" or "a dynamic process of exchanging meaningful messages" (Steinberg, 2007, p. 39), the suicide notes of the people who completed suicide, or the suicide act itself, reflects a one-way, linear direction which means the note-leaver sends a message but blocks the incoming message and does not receive a message, due to the nature of death. It may be possible that the person who writes a suicide note fills in the gaps in his/her mind or phantasy. In fact, phantasy is associated with the imaginary order which is known as the pre-linguistic period of life marked with illusions and phantasy images (Homer, 2005). My aim in this part of the study is to elaborate the semantic level findings progressively in a latent level with a psychoanalytic stance, and to find an answer to the question of *'What underlies the primary level findings of this study?'* Specifically, what attracts my attention is the mental representatives of the note-leavers in terms of their relations with the Other. Therefore, I conducted a Lacanian analysis on the primary level findings with the question: '*How are the mental relational interplay of emotions of the subject related the Other in the suicide notes?'* By this research question, I tried to interpret the findings from a Lacanian point of view, and I re-evaluated the extracts (signifiers) by focusing on what may be underneath the surface.

5.1 Findings of the Secondary (Latent) Level Analysis

When I re-examined the findings from the semantic level analysis and the extracts one by one, I came up with three main latent themes; namely, *'ambivalence of emotions (aggressivity)', 'issues related to separation'* and *'issues related to castration'.* I will discuss those latent themes in detail in this section.

5.1.1 Ambivalence of emotions (Aggressivity).

The emotions emerging from the semantic level analysis of the suicide notes were thought to be double-edged; in fact, the cases express both their positive and negative feelings. A former research, which was related to the interpersonal nature of

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suicide, indicated that positive relationships and positive emotional statements are more prevalent than the negative ones in the suicide notes (Sanger, & McCarthy Veach, 2008). Although it was not the case for the current study, still positive emotions emerged as a semantic theme, with the sub-themes of love, gratitude/thankfulness and relief. In terms of the negative emotions, the feelings associated with blame such as guilt, shame, sadness and anger are emerged in the notes. In addition, hopelessness and anxiety were the remaining sub-themes of the negative emotions. However, I thought that those emotions may be in need of a better exploration because although in the semantic level analysis they were appeared as clear constructs, in the latent level analysis it may be possible for them to have different meanings.

Panksepp stated, "Most of emotional processing, as of every other psycho-behavioural process, is done at an unconscious level" (as cited in Johnston, & Malabou, 2013, p. 188). Likewise, Antonio Damasio asserted that most of the emotions are unconscious distinctively from the feelings (Damasio, 1999). He differentiated emotions as 'primary' and 'secondary' emotions, and claimed that "primary emotions are innate" whereas "secondary emotions are acquired" (Griffiths, 1997, p. 103). He identified six primary emotions which are all connected to the biology; namely, surprise, anger, fear, sadness, disgust and happiness; on the other hand, the secondary emotions such as jealousy, envy, guilt, shame and pride are thought to be linked with socialization (Damasio, 1994). However, from a Lacanian point of view, it can be questioned whether the emotions are unconscious or not. Indeed, according to Lacan, what is repressed is not the affect but the idea. Hewitson (2010) explained this thought of Lacan by stating, "What happens is rather that the link between the affect and the repressed idea is broken and the affect re-attaches itself to a new idea that is not repressed."

Due to the inconsistent nature of emotions within the notes, I tried to re-establish the links between the note-leavers' affects and the ideas by analysing the extracts one by one. Some of the emotions in this study such as love,

gratitude/thankfulness and hopelessness were thought to be ambivalent in their nature; therefore, during the latent analysis, I realized that "ambivalence of emotions" may be a latent theme for this study. In Totem and Taboo, Freud (1913/2004) explained ambivalence as "the ascendancy of opposing trends" comprising both a wish and a counter-wish (p. 42). He (1913/2004) stated that "in almost every case where there is an intense emotional attachment to a particular person we find that behind the tender love there is a concealed hostility in the unconscious" (p. 85). This is what Freud referred as the common instance for the ambivalence of emotions.

From a Lacanian point of view, it can be claimed that aggressivity is the mainstream condition underlying the emotions of the note-leavers. According to Lacan, aggressivity can be differentiated from aggression due to the fact that aggression is based on violent acts whereas aggressivity is an umbrella term which integrates not only the violent acts but also the loving ones (Evans, 2006). According to Evans (2006), Lacan's definition of aggressivity resembles Freud's conceptualization of ambivalence which is based on "the interdependence of love and hate" (p. 6). Indeed, according to Freud love and hate are indistinguishable (as cited in Quinodoz, 1997). Congruently, Fink (2000) stated that "love and hate" are "intimately related through the essential ambivalence of all affect" (p. 170). Lacan names it as *hainamoration* which is translated as "lovehate" (Wolf, 2015).

When I re-evaluated the love extracts, I have seen that they are not just standing for love. For instance, J. states, "My brothers, I love you all very much. Think about the fire that I am in now; I hug you with a many times more than this heat. (*Ağabeylerim hepinizi çok seviyorum. Şu an ki nasıl bir ateş içindeyim, onun kat kat sıcaklığıyla hepinizi kucaklıyorum.*)". Although this segment was coded as 'love' in the semantic level, the latent level analysis designated a very different picture. This extract from J.'s suicide note reminded me a similar example which can be seen in Menninger's work where he mentions a case who kills himself by hugging a hot stove. Menninger (1938) evaluates this case as a psychotic suicide and explains

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the behaviour as "the existence of a pathological intense wish to be loved" due to the inner coldness. Congruently, the expression of love in suicide notes may be due to the need to elicit love from others toward self. From a Lacanian point of view, it can be interpreted as the 'narcissistic-specular-love'; in other words, it may symbolize the love for one's own image or an urge to make oneself loved (Recalcati, 2012). On the other hand, considering that fire may hurt a person, this way of hugging which J. describes may reflect a blend of love and hate, or a wish to hurt besides love, an intrinsic anger towards his brothers. Likewise, love in the suicide notes can be paired with an inclination to hurt. For example, in the case of G., love becomes the reason of the thoughts of murder:

> When I am going I thought that the ones I love the most (my wife and my daughter) should not feel sorrow or suffer, so I said that three of us should go altogether while leaving the life. (*Giderken en sevdiklerim (karım ve kızım) sonra üzülmesin sıkıntı yaşamasın diye hayattan ayrılırken üçümüz birlikte gidelim dedim.*) (G.)

It should also be considered that Freud distinguishes hate from aggressivity by associating hate with reality and the subjectification. In addition, according to Lacan, aggressivity is not compulsorily equated with hate (Recalcati, 2012), in fact, hate and ravage are located in the real (Wolf, 2015). The real, in Lacanian terms, is beyond the symbolic (language), and it is the place of symbiosis where the separation did not take place and there was not the lack (Rigel, Batuş, Yücedoğan, & Çoban, 2005). Congruently, Freud associates love and hate with the loss of the object and separation. Both of those emotions are claimed to seek to "reabsorb" the lost object; in fact, love seeks to reabsorb the object by "abolishing the object's separate existence" by assimilating it, whereas hate accomplishes the same function by refusal of the separation (Recalcati, 2012).

Similarly, when the extracts for gratitude/thankfulness were examined carefully, it was thought that it is not the whole story. Sanger and McCarthy Veach (2008) also indicated that the expression of gratitude is a theme in the suicide notes,

and interpreted this finding as an indicator of positive relationships. In fact, gratitude is thought as a positive emotion which may be counted as an important psychological resource of well-being (Bono & Froh, 2009). Nevertheless, it is thought that if there are that much interconnectedness and gratitude, why did those people kill themselves? That's why this sub-theme should be further investigated. A good example for this issue takes place in A.'s suicide note where he states: "The noble woman who gave birth to me with her own desire out of nothing; who fed me and raised me; who has always been behind my back. I kiss your hands. (*Bir tanecik annem… Hiç yoktan, kendi arzusuyla beni dünyaya getiren, besleyip büyüten, her zaman arkamda olan yüce kadın. Ellerinden öperim.*)". At the end, A. kills himself violently, and demolishes his mother's desire, too. Therefore, the gratitude/thankfulness was thought to function as a mask for anger or hostility in those suicide notes. This situation may also be evaluated as an ambivalence of the emotions. In fact, the expression of aggressivity may be an abrupt anger as well as an urge to intimidate (Burns, 2000). According to Lacan, this ambivalence occurs due to the subject's encounter with the Other. Recalcati (2012) explains Lacan's thoughts on this type of ambivalence related to thankfulness and hostility for the Other due to its role as a "rescuer" who "cannot be assimilated" by stating,

> The Other who comes to rescue the subject, who hears the subject's desperate cry, is not only the Other of satisfaction but also the hostile Other, inasmuch as this Other appears against the backdrop of an irreducible discontinuity. Here we touch on a profound ambivalence in the constitution of alterity: the subject comes into the world only thanks to the presence of the Other as rescuer, capable of transforming the infant's anguished cry into a humanized demand for recognition. But since it cannot be assimilated into the subject's being, the Other's presence inevitably becomes, at least in part, a hostile presence (p. 160).

Hopelessness was detected to be one of the most commonly used label or code while annotating the suicide notes (Desmet, & Hoste, 2013). Indeed, constructs such as hopelessness and depression are counted as "stable and fairly robust predictors" of the suicidal pattern of behaviour (Reinecke, & Franklin-Scott, 2005, p.31). I thought that hopelessness may also be related to anger or aggression. In fact, Miller (1985)

evaluates hopelessness in terms of a kind of resistance which blocks the communication in psychotherapy, indicating a certain amount of rage and aggression. He states that by constantly talking about his hopelessness, the patient leaves the therapist in an inefficient position which leads to anger in the therapist, as a countertransference. These feelings of the therapist are evaluated as the patient's projection of his own anger or rage to the therapist. Moreover, Miller (1985) evaluates hopelessness as a defence against the wishes of murder and a narcissistic resistance. Similarly, the cases were thought to pass their ideas of inefficiency or the feelings of hopelessness to the others in their suicide notes. Since, "I was hopeless" may also give the message of "You could not help me". A good example among the extracts in which this message is directly given may be from B.'s suicide note, "Isn't it funny that you left me desperate and alone; me, the one who said just one week ago 'there is a solution for everything'. (*Ne komik değil mi bir hafta önce her şeyin bir çaresi var diyen beni çaresiz ve yalnız bıraktın.*)". In fact, this extract sounds like blame rather than hopelessness, and it was thought that this extract integrates high levels of aggression. However, it may also indicate love or an urge to intimidate besides anger or aggression due to the fact that B. needs his wife in order to be able to feel hopeful. Therefore, we can state that ambivalence of emotions is noticeable here, too.

As discussed above, aggressivity can be thought as the foundation of the note-leavers' emotions such as love, gratitude/thankfulness and hopelessness. In fact, the extracts belonging to those emotions were thought to co-exist with anger or hate as well as an urge to intimidate. Moreover, the discussion reveals that both anger and hate are the modes of real and are linked with symbiosis according to the Lacanian approach. Nevertheless, aggressivity, which is evaluated as the main situation within the extracts of the suicide notes, is placed into the mirror stage and the imaginary order.

The mirror stage is linked with the formation of *'I'*. Lacan (1949/1977) claims that the child with an array of gesticulations realizes the association between

the movements in the mirror image and the reflected environment; in fact, the mirror imitates the people and the things around him as well as the body of himself. Before this experience, the infant has a sense of *fragmented body,* which is described as the perception of the body as separate parts and pieces rather than a whole (Mitchell & Snyder, 1997). This primordial form of the body achieves a unity and becomes a whole in front of the mirror. According to Lacan, a sense of self is developed by the child in the mirror stage; in fact, the unity of the body represents "the mental permanence of the *I*" (Lacan, 1949/1977, p. 504). The image of coherence in the mirror constitutes the first representation of *ideal-ego* which is an imaginary projection (Swales, 2012). Imaginary, in Lacanian terms, is associated with the "dual relation between the ego and the specular image" (Evans, 2006, p. 84). However, due to the gap between the fragmented body (disintegrated inner self) and the coherent specular reflection (ideal-ego), the infant starts to feel rivalry towards his own image, and an aggressive tension arises between the infant as a subject and the mirror image (Evans, 2006). This tension is resolved when "the mirror stage comes to an end" as Lacan says "by the identification with the imago of the counterpart and the drama of primordial jealousy" (1949/1977, p. 507). However, the identification with the mirror image shelters both aggression and eroticism, and this "erotic aggression", which is an important feature of narcissism, becomes the fundamental ingredient of all future manner of identifications. The characteristic feature of narcissism indicates a transition from excessive self-love to excessive "narcissistic suicidal aggression (*agression suicidaire narcissique*)" (Evans, 2006, p. 123). Furthermore, the transition from a fragmented body image to a united (*orthopaedic* with Lacanian terms) body creates alienation (Lacan, 1949/1977). In the mirror stage, the ego is constituted onto a misunderstanding and the "subject becomes alienated from himself" (Evans, 2006, p. 118). Lacan (1949/1977) summarizes this part in his writing named as "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in the Psychoanalytic Experience" as:

> In the light of this conception, the term primary narcissism, by which analytic doctrine designates the libidinal investment characteristics of that moment,

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reveals in those who invented it the most profound awareness of semantic latencies. But it also throws light on the dynamic opposition between this libido and the sexual libido, which the first analysts tried to define when they invoked destructive and, indeed, death instincts, in order to explain the evident connection between the narcissistic libido and the alienating function of the *I,* the aggressivity it releases in any relation to the other, even in a relation involving the most Samaritan of aid. (p.507)

To sum up, the ambivalence of the emotions in the suicide notes can be explained by Lacanian mirror stage in which the infant feels both love and aggression toward his specular image.

5.1.2 Issues related to separation.

According to the literature so far, we may assume that there is a problem related to separation. In fact, Freud associated love and hate with the loss of the object and separation. Both of those emotions are claimed to seek to "reabsorb" the lost object; in fact, love seeks to reabsorb the object by "abolishing the object's separate existence" by assimilating it, whereas hate accomplishes the same function by refusal of the separation (Recalcati, 2012). Similarly, in terms of the gratitude/thankfulness, the Other was mentioned as a "rescuer" who "cannot be assimilated" and elicits both gratitude/thankfulness and hostility (Recalcati, 2012). Moreover, hopelessness may also be evaluated as an indicator of an urge to intimidate as well as an urge to separate. According to Fink (1997), both in case of psychosis and perversion, the subject has not undergone separation.

According to Freud, the *fort/da* game is a child's working through of the separation or the mother's absence by taking the control (Chanter, 2008). This game, which was played by Freud's grandson who was one and a half year old, is played by throwing a spool and pulling it back with the words of *fort* (gone) and *da* (there) (Iversen, 2007). On the other hand, Lacan's interpretation of the *fort/da* game contains the entrance of the language (symbolic order) into the scene and the *Spaltung* (splitting) of the subject with alienation, rather than dealing with the

mourning of the mother's absence; and the spool or reel is evaluated as *'object-petit-a'* in Lacanian terms (Elsner, 2017). Iversen (2007) explains Lacan's ideas on fort/da game by stating, "the child, already separated from his mother, caught up in the net of language and subject to law, just manages to hang on to this reminder, this piece of the real that resists symbolization" (p. 65). In fact, *object-petit-a* is claimed to be a remainder, a left-over of real after the entrance of the language, and it is the cause of desire which is related to the lack (Evans, 2006). On the other hand, in *'La Famille'*, which is one of the oldest writings of Lacan, he interprets the *fort-da* game in terms of a desire for death. He associates the 'loss of the mother' to the 'loss of self' (Chaitin, 1996). Indeed, Chaitin (1996) explains Lacan's thoughts on fort-da game by stating:

> The game of fort/da is the reproduction of the malaise of weaning, an attempt to overcome the deprivation of separation by actively reproducing the trauma, in which the subject appears twice, once as the one who has the object, once as the one who has renounced it. (p. 76)

The interruption of the symbiotic relationship between mother and the child is claimed to leave "a permanent trace in the child's psyche" (Evans, 2006, p. 120). According to Lacan, when the sublimation of imago of mother's breast to the social relationships is not possible, it becomes lethal. He claims that "in abandoning himself to death, the subject seeks to find the imago of mother again" (as cited in Rudinesco, 1997, p. 145). Accordingly, the issues related to separation may be interpreted as the cases' struggle for finding the imago of the mother.

As aforementioned, Soleim (2012) distinguishes acting out from the passage to the act with the issues related to separation by stating, "while the latter is an attempt at separation, the former can be read as an appeal that reaffirms the attachment to the Other". In terms of the former, the note-leavers were thought to make an investment for the eye of the Other by writing a suicide-note; which may designate an urge to escape from persecution anxiety as will be described in the following part. Indeed, the re-analysis of the primary level analysis supported this idea. Likewise, the

secondary level analysis indicated that the note-leavers may have an illusion of omnipotence. Congruently, 'the issues related to separation' is thought to have two sub-themes; namely, 'the investment for the eye of the Other as an urge to escape from persecution anxiety' and 'illusion of omnipotence'.

5.1.2.1 The investment for the eye of the Other as an urge to escape from persecution anxiety.

The first latent sub-theme under the 'issues related to separation' was thought to be 'the investment for the eye of the Other as an urge to escape from persecution anxiety'. While I was trying to answer the question, "Why those people left suicide notes behind?", I thought that the person who writes a suicide note may think that he may have a last opportunity to influence how other people see him. Congruently, the re-analysis of the findings from the primary level analysis supported this idea. The interpretations in this part indicates 'a wish to be purified' and 'a wish to be seen' by the note-leavers which may be evaluated as an investment for the eye of the Other (persecutor) for the sake of relieving the feelings of anxiety associated with persecution. In fact, being seen, observed or watched by the Other was thought to be an important point which attracted my attention in the suicide notes. A good example here may be a statement written into different parts of L's notebook, saying, "A stranger is watching". This statement may be evaluated in the scope of Melman's (1994) definition of paranoia in which he mentions "the presence of a persecutory look" (p. 144).

In this context, I think that the findings associated with blame related themes designate a picture of 'a wish to be purified'. Besides, being purified or affirmed may be an important element in understanding the phenomenon of suicide; indeed, Lacan evaluates suicide as an act induced by the desire, "a desire for death he [subject] affirms himself for others" (Mikhailova, 2005). Both by blaming themselves and the others the note-leavers were thought to have an urge to purify themselves in the eyes of the Other. In terms of the former, the statements of "sorry" for forgiveness or the

apologies were thought to have a function to get clear of the responsibility of their actions and to get rid of the blame or punishment. Similarly, by putting the blame on the others, the note-leavers may be struggling to preserve the purity that they wish to have. A good example here may be from E.'s suicide note where he states, "Yet, everyone should realize their own mistakes and regret them. I am paying my dues with my death. (*Ama herkes hatasına yansın. Ben canımla ödüyorum.*)". The statement of "paying my dues" here was thought to reflect a wish to be purified. Moreover, according to the semantic level analysis, the most salient theme under the functions category was the 'functions related to blame' with two sub-themes; namely, 'the need to be cleared of responsibility or blame' and 'the need to clear others of responsibility or blame (No-blame)'. In the first sub-theme the note-leavers give a message like "Do not blame me", whereas in the second sub-theme they say "I do not blame others, so you should not, too". Both of those themes may be interpreted as a wish to be purified in the eyes of the Other; either by declaring the innocence of themselves or by being benevolent or forgiver for the possible mistakes of the others. An interesting example here may be from G.'s suicide note where he states, "I am G., nobody is responsible for the death of myself, my wife and my daughter. (*Ben G., karım, kızım ve benim ölümümden hiç kimsenin sorumluluğu yoktur.*)". If G.'s plans related to murdering his wife and daughter are taken into account, I think it can be claimed that G. refuses the accusations related to this issue with a wish to get rid of responsibility. Moreover, the justifications in which the note leavers explain their reasons to commit suicide were thought to have the same function due to the fact that those justifications transfer the blame to somebody else or to some other reason aside from themselves. Furthermore, I thought that the perceptions related to self and others may serve a similar function with blame. By showing themselves as weak/inefficient with the statements such as "I was not able to" or "I was incapable of", the note-leavers may be trying to escape from taking responsibility of their actions. The same function may be obtained by idealizing or devaluating the others. In fact, praising the ideal other may bring about the forgiveness of the Other toward the note-leaver. In the same direction, by

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devaluating the others and putting the blame on them may provide the note-leaver with the revenue of purity in the eyes of the big Other. My evaluation related to those findings is that the note-leavers may be experiencing a significant amount of anxiety associated with a delusion of persecution, the clearest example of which shows itself as 'entrust' in the suicide notes.

Lacan claims that the recognition or approval in the gestures of the parent who holds the baby before the mirror stage, or in front of the mirror, is the cause of the libidinal investment at this stage (as cited in Fink, 1997). Indeed, the imaginary order is rewritten by the symbolic emphasizing the style of the language used by the parents in front of the mirror. Aggressivity and rivalry of the imaginary order turns into "ideals, authority figures, law, performance, achievement, guilt, and so on" in the symbolic order (Fink, 1997, p. 89). The ego-ideal which is a symbolic introjection develops when the child introjects the Other's look at himself, which means that the child starts to see himself in a similar way to how others see him (Swales, 2012). While conducting the analysis, initially, I thought that the note-leavers may have strong ego-ideals, or oppressive superegos with Freudian terms; however, later on I decided that it is nothing more than mimesis which provides an exclusion from persecution. Indeed, I thought that there is not an actual introjection or identification in Oedipal sense, rather there is a condition in which the subject takes a shape in accordance with the Other's look in order to conceal the inner emptiness.

In this sense, I thought that the perceptions of the note-leavers may be affected by the Other's look due to the inner emptiness. In fact, the perceptions of self (Specular I) and others in the suicide notes were observed to be dyadic just like the note-leaver's emotions. Both self and others were conceived as either perfect or inadequate by the cases. In terms of themselves, the perceptions of the note-leavers changed between grandiose/perfect self and weak/inefficient self. Similarly, their thoughts about others were two-edged because they perceived others either as ideal others or negative others. Thus, I can infer that the ambivalence, "the ascendancy of

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opposing trends", is in effect also for the perceptions of the note-leavers. The constant -upward and downward- move of the worth of self and others reminds me Kilborne's (2012) interpretation of Lewis Carrolls's book *Alice in Wonderlands*. In his book named as "Disappearing Persons: Shame and Appearance", Kilborne (2012) states:

> In Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice falls down the well, reaches the bottom, and attempts to change her size by drinking the contents of a bottle marked "Drink Me". She feels herself shrinking. "What a curious feeling," she exclaims. "I must be shutting up like a telescope." In the light of the dialectics of looking (i.e. imagining others seeing and not seeing), the image of a telescope makes *very* good sense. And in case the reader does not get the point, Carroll has Alice then decide to eat a cake in order to assume her "normal" size. "Curiouser and curiouser!" cried Alice, "Now I'm opening out like the largest telescope that ever was. Good-bye feet." Thereafter there is no way Alice can "fit in," being always either too large or too small (p. 9).

What Kilborne emphasizes here is Alice's perception of shrinking and expanding of her psychic size in the eyes of others, and the maladjustment of her to the world that she is in due to her identity confusion. Similarly, in the suicide notes, it is visible that the cases shrink or expand psychically, and they do not have a clear sense of their own worth. A good example for shrinking in the eyes of the other may be from L.'s suicide note, in fact, he writes to the girl he loves, "As you said, I am not worth caring about. (*Senin de dediğin gibi takmaya değmez biriyim.*)", and then he kills himself. Even in the same suicide note the self-worth alters and the cases shrink and expand consecutively. To illustrate, A. states, "I don't have the power to leave everything aside and start life again from nothing. (*Her şeyi bir kenara bırakıp, sıfırdan hayata başlamaya gücüm yok.*)", as an indicator of his weak/inefficient self-perception. After a few sentences he writes, "Becoming a bad doctor and doing harm to those many who expected to be healed by me weren't something that I could do. (*Kötü bir doktor olup benden şifa bekleyen onca insana, böyle bir kötülük yapamazdım.*)", as an indicator of his grandiose/perfect self-perception. This may demonstrate how his perception about his efficiency constantly changes. I think that A.'s self-worth depends strictly on the Other's look; indeed, he states, "As my dad

has always said either you want to do the best or you do nothing at all... He has a point. (*Babam hep derdi, ya en iyisini yapmak istiyorsun, ya da hiç yapmıyorsun diye… Haklıydı.*)". It may be interpreted as A.'s a striving for perfection, in the roots of his ego-ideal; however, I think that those statements of A. demonstrate identity confusion rather than his ego-ideal, when evaluated as a whole.

In addition to "a wish to be purified", the note-leavers were also thought to have "a wish to be seen". For example, I thought that the grandiose self-perceptions of the note-leavers which were marked with exaggerated self-importance or a need for admiration may be interpreted as a wish to take part in the eyes of the Other. Congruently, the theme named as 'informing others about suicide' may be interpreted as a wish to be seen. Specifically, it is a wish to let the others know about the one's death, as H. states, "Let the people who I love and who love me know that I died. (*Benim sevdiklerim insanlar beni seven insanlar haberi olsun öldüğümden*)". Although suicide is an act implemented secretly - all of the cases killed themselves privately, while nobody else is watching, according to the information in the files -, the note-leavers wanted to let other people know about their death is caused by suicide, and they wanted to be found after dying. It reminded me the game of hide-and-seek. Due to the private nature of their suicide, the cases were thought to be the ones who hide, which may shelter inside a phantasy of disappearing. In addition, they wait to be found, which may designate a wish to be seen. For example, before hanging himself in a woodland, D. states, "Come and find me. I don't want to stay hanged here for long. (*Gelin beni alın. Burada fazla asılı kalmak istemem.*)", in his text messages with his sister after giving the directions to his death place. On the other hand, this situation may also be related to the note-leaver's phantasy of controlling after death events, as described in the previous chapter. I thought that the extracts which contain "You will see" may also indicate a wish to be seen. During the primary level analysis, those expressions were coded as punishment extracts due to their context; however, it may also be interpreted as "I want you to see". To illustrate, K. states, "I don't have any troubles, I am relaxed. You will see now what trouble I have. (*Hiç bir derdim yok, rahatım. Şimdi göreceksin derdimin ne*

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olduğunu.)". This extract may be considered as K's wish from his girlfriend to see his troubles and difficulties; in fact, a wish to be seen.

I think that a wish to be seen, or a wish to find a place in the eyes of the Other, may indicate an urge to answer the Lacanian question: "Who am I in the eyes of the mOther?". Congruently, Kilborne's (2012) interpretation of *Alice in Wonderlands* continues with those statements:

> Alice is doomed to being conspicuous and, to those around her, "not-us." In the same way, the Wonderland creatures are, for her, doomed to being "not-me." She cannot recognize herself in them and they cannot recognize themselves in her. This unrecognizability, this anxiety over never being able to imagine oneself through the eyes of others, drives the entire book. With the aid of absurdity Carroll warms us up to his uneasy magic, and makes identity confusion more palatable. As Alice struggles to "find" herself in those around her, her very attempts become absurd. When the Caterpillar asks insistently, "Who are you?" the question appears outlandish, nightmarish, and impossible to answer (p. 9).

Consequently, the wish to be seen as well as the wish to be purified may be evaluated as a sign for the note-leavers' inner emptiness. Indeed, we may say that they need to be defined by the Other in a solid and a pure way in order to get rid of any punishment or persecution. In other words, they may be in need of escaping from persecution by catching the eye of the Other from a right angle in which the subject perceives himself as good. I thought that this might be the reason why the cases make an investment for the eye of the Other. Nevertheless, I also thought that this investment may contain an imaginary direction because the note-leavers' attributions to the definitions related to themselves sound like inconsistent and phantasmic. Considering this issue, I thought that the emotions within the suicide notes may be based on a misunderstanding due to their imaginary nature. They might be evaluated as illusions or phantasies based on the Specular I. In fact, the emotions emerging from the suicide notes can be better grasped by Ragland's (2015) passage below:

> Yet people usually prefer stagnation of the imaginary illusions of love – idealizing or blaming others – rather than knowing what or why they love. Or

that their loves hide a quest to know who they are in terms of what the Other wants of them. Although we desire in the name of love, with its co-extensive side of hate, most of us – and Lacan includes himself – do not desire to know who and what we are, have been, or will be. We do not desire to be humbled by recognition of alien forces that control us. Rather we act out of the Other, relating to others by guilt, blame, aggression, thwarted ideals – by affects (p. 54).

In terms of the emotions in the suicide notes, I have similar opinions to Ragland (2015); in other words, I think that the affects or emotions in those notes may be evaluated as imaginary tools for escaping from persecution anxiety. They may also be evaluated as acting out for an appeal of the Other's look or glance.

5.1.2.2 Illusion of omnipotence.

The second latent sub-theme under the 'issues related to separation' is 'the illusion of omnipotence'. In Freud's definition of primary narcissism, it was claimed that the infant is self-sufficient and in an omnipotent and 'oceanic' feeling in which his ego is boundless and is not a separate being from the environment, as if he is united with God (Steiner, 2008). Therefore, omnipotence may be defined as being capable of managing everything with an almighty and unlimited power. From a Lacanian point of view, omnipotence can be understood as a feature of the pre-Oedipal dual relation, in addition to the Other's omnipotence (Evans, 2006) which will be discussed in this section in company with envy. Mainly the secondary analysis of the 'phantasies' category made me consider this latent sub-theme as a sub-division of the 'issues related to separation'.

As discussed above, the nature of communication by a suicide note requires a blockage of the incoming message, and it may be possible that the person who writes a suicide note fills in the gaps in his/her mind or phantasy which belongs to the imaginary. This blockage was also observed vividly within some of the suicide notes. For example, C. states, "I even don't know why I am writing this letter, I am just writing. (*Bu mektubu da neden yazdığımı bilmiyorum yazıyorum işte.*)" as if he is

indecisive about communicating. Moreover, E. says, "Actually, I wouldn't write anything on this piece of paper and would leave this paper empty so that everyone would understand that a person doesn't come to life so easy but… (*Aslında ben bu kağıda hiçbir şey yazmayıp herkes hatasını anlasın bir can bu kadar kolay dünyaya gelmiyor deyip boş bir kağıt bırakıp gidecektim ama…*)", which may be interpreted as a wish to block the conversation (*with words*). This expectation of E. resembles the communication between an infant and the mother, without words which may indicate a phantasy of symbiosis without the castrating effect of the language. In addition, the imaginary nature of the communication may be inferred from the extracts.

According to the findings of the primary level analysis, two themes emerged under the phantasies category; namely, 'phantasies related to life after death' and 'phantasies related to control of after death events'. The former encapsulated after-life statements which implied eternity or which were in the form of questioning after-life. I think that this theme may be evaluated distinctly from Islam or the other religious beliefs because from a psychoanalytic point of view it is thought that religion is a by-product of anxiety. Indeed, Freud (1967) suggests that religion has a psychotherapeutic mission which eliminates the psychological needs such as the disposal of neurosis or wish-fulfilment (as cited in Slone, 2004). Moreover, he states that religion provides psychological relief by sweeping away the thoughts related to "the dissonance one feels about human mortality", "powerlessness over the forces of nature", and "repressed sexual desires" (Slone, 2004, p. 21). Therefore, I think that the emphasize of eternity in the suicide notes may be due to the denial of human mortality. Congruently, Freud states that "the unconscious does not believe in its own death; it behaves as if it were immortal" (1915, as cited in Akhtar, 2011). Congruently, from a Lacanian point of view, immortality can be evaluated as a fantasm (phantasy) (Freeland, 2013). Moreover, Fayek (1981) declares that the notion of death is a "narcissistic wound" because there is a rejection to think about one's own death; in fact, it is not harmonious with the omnipotence of the ego (as cited in Akhtar, 2011, p. 98).

According to the primary level analysis, 'phantasies related to control of after death events' was the second theme under the 'phantasies' category. There were three sub-themes under the 'phantasies related to control of after death events'; namely, 'last wills and requests', 'the directives, instructions and advices' and 'control of others' emotions'. In terms of last wills and requests, entrusting the beloved ones to the others was one of the issues. I thought that 'to entrust' may be related to a fear of threat; maybe a threat in terms of persecution as mentioned above. However, I will discuss this issue in terms of castration and the Law in detail in the following pages. Another request was thought to be associated with protecting the physical integrity after death. To illustrate, B. writes to prosecution office, *"I know it is a legal procedure; however, I am requesting not to have an autopsy. (Yasal bir zorunluluk olduğunu biliyorum ama bana OTOPSİ yapılmamasını önemle rica ediyorum.)"*. This request of B. may be evaluated as his wish to remain as Gestalt after his death, which may be understood as an urge to escape from fragmentization. In addition, it may be evaluated as an urge to escape from castration. In terms of the extracts under 'the directives, instructions and advices' sub-theme, I thought that the cases try to control the after death events as if they are in a denial of death; in fact, they give an impression as if they are continuing to invest others. I thought that the best example of this denial may be from J.'s suicide note where he states, "I called the boy = CESUR= I said my job. […] Yavuz, Yavuz my lad, change that team now. (*Ben oğlana = CESUR= demiştim işim. [...] Yavuz, Yavuz koçum benim, şu takımını değiş artık.*)". I thought that this extract gives the impression that J. is not going to die, so it may be evaluated as a phantasy of immortality which may be linked with an illusion of omnipotence. In fact, I thought that his wish to control other's actions may signalize a break from reality:

> Will you please give up smoking, take care of yourself. Do not play a trick with the cards when playing hoşkin in the coffeehouse. […] You are Baboş, Baboş. (Drink for me when you drink). […] You are the man baboş. Would you grow a moustache for me? (*Senden ricam sigarayı bırak dikkat et kendine. Kahvede de hoşkin oynarken kağıt ayarlama. [...]Baboşsun Baboş. (İçtiğinde 1 de bana iç). [...] Sen adamın dibisin baboş. Sen benim için bi bıyık bırakır mısın.*) (J.)

On the other hand, 'the control of other's emotions' may be associated with aggressivity as well as an illusion of omnipotence. In fact, the imperative usage of language in some of the extracts was thought to have an aggressive tone. For example, when E. states, "Don't cry for me, and don't come to my grave. (*Bana sakın ağlama, mezarıma da gelme.*)", in his text messages to his father, I thought that he reveals his aggression towards his father by despising the worth of his crying. In a way, he despises his father whereas he aggrandizes himself. Nevertheless, in another extract he states, "Well, you don't come to this house, but today you will, for my funeral. […] Don't come to my funeral dad, don't. (*Hani sen bu eve gelmiyordun ya, bugün geleceksin, cenazeye. [...] Benim cenazeme gelme baba, gelme.*)". I thought that this statement may be a good example for ambivalence of E.'s emotions toward his father, besides the illusion of omnipotent control of father's actions after his death. In fact, according to Freud the phantasy takes its roots from aggressive drives (Bakır, 2008). Moreover, in Lacanian terms, phantasy is linked with the defence against castration (Evans, 2006).

Above all, I think that the cases try to control the others or the events after their death by requests, manipulations (as mentioned in the grandiose/ perfect self-perception sub-theme), or by ordering, governing, deciding as if they have an omnipotence over the events or the people. From a Lacanian point of view, it resembles an infant's efforts to take the counterpart (*Specular I*) under control. Indeed, according to Lacan, "an imaginary sense of mastery" is obtained by identification with the *Specular I* (Evans, 2006, p. 118). Congruently, Evans (2006) states that the ideal ego functions as "an ever-present attempt to regain the omnipotence of the pre-Oedipal dual relation" (p. 84).

In terms of the latent analysis, another issue which is linked with omnipotence was thought to be envy in relation with the Other's omnipotence. This emotion was not clearly observed during the primary level analysis of the suicide notes, which may be due to the latent nature of envy but actually Kilborne (2014) links envy with various emotions and concepts which are the findings of this study

such as shame, anxiety, hopelessness, sorrow, hostility, anger, the feelings of inadequacy and omnipotence in addition to the inclinations of comparison and rivalry. Basically, envy is evaluated as a shameful emotion because it is forbidden, and the forbidden is hidden (Kilborne, 2014). Therefore, I thought that it may be useful to elaborate envy here.

5.1.2.2.1 Envy and Other's omnipotence.

Basically, envy is defined as an emotion which is revealed when an individual lacks what another person has, and either desires it or wishes that the other person did not have it (Parrot & Smith, 1993). From a Lacanian point of view, envy is associated with the mirror stage (Matveeva, 2013). As aforementioned, Lacan claims that the recognition or approval in the gestures of the parent who holds the baby before the mirror stage, or in front of the mirror, is the cause of the libidinal investment at this stage (as cited in Fink, 1997). According to Matveeva (2013), the infant realizes that the parent's glance (or gaze) is attentive to the Specular image, not to the infant so envy arises for the infant. In addition, she explains this process by stating,

> The child sees a "complete" image of himself in the mirror that appears idealized and craves what this "little other" has that is capable of attracting the attention and ultimately love of the parent whom Lacan labels as the "Big Other" (p. 4).

Congruently, Recalcati (2012) states the inconsistency between the subject and the ideal image results in an envious aggression. Indeed, he claims that the impotence in front of the complete and the self-sufficient Other results in a narcissistic wound and feelings of envy. According to Henseler (2012), "the otherness of the other, which is experienced as threatening, the impossibility of incorporating him either by identification or by idealization, gives rise to hatred or envy." (p. 204); therefore, envy is also associated with issues related to separation. Moreover, Recalcati (2012) links envy with the Other's jouissance. In fact, the envious subject is the one who is

excluded from the Other's jouissance. Exclusion here may bring minds the paranoia; indeed, in the case of paranoia the subject feels that he is excluded, exceptional and the only one who deserves to be loved so he feels jealousy (Melman, 1994). On the other hand, the resemblance between the subject who envies and the envied object brings about the "narcissistic structure of aggressivity"; in other words, the "specular I" is both loved and hated at the same time (Recalcati, 2012).

After realizing that the emerging feelings in the suicide notes point out envy, I decided to go back to the data and check for those latent feeling. When I investigated suicide notes again, this feeling became more apparent even though it was hard for me to see at the beginning. For example, A. states, "My one and only father, the great man who fought against any difficulty in his life, who never give up fighting against these difficulties. I have never been able to be as strong as you have. (*Bir tanecik babam.. Dünyada her zorluğa göğüs germiş, mücadeleyi bırakmamış olan adam.. Ben senin kadar güçlü olamadım.*)". In addition, he writes to his brother, "You are a very strong, very talented person. (*Sen çok güçlü, çok yetenekli birisin.*)". On the other hand, he declares his powerlessness in his suicide note. I think that A.'s implicit comparison of himself with the male members of the family (his father and brother) may reveal his ideal ego which is associated with being strong and powerful. Therefore, we may mention a gap between the subject and his ideal ego, in this case. This gap might have led to envy due to the fact that A. lacks what his father and brother has. Moreover, B. writes to his wife, "I am fascinated whenever you announce yourself as innocent and convince yourself to believe this. Why didn't you teach this to me? (*Kendini her seferinde masum ilan ederek buna da kendini inandırmana hayranım. Bunu neden bana öğretmedin?*)". It is thought that B. may be envious of his wife's innocence or her ability to convince herself to believe her innocence. Congruently, E. may be envious about his father's virility; G. may be feeling it for his brother, Mehmet, to whom he can no longer stand. In addition, J. may be comparing himself with the other members of his family and concluding that he lacks, when he says, "Kale family, with its each member, is special. I might disrupt this situation. (*Kale ailesi bütün fertleriyle çok özeldir. Bunu belki ben*

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bozacağım.)". Furthermore, K. states in his text messages to his girlfriend, "Everybody is married and happy but we are always like that? (*Herkes evli mutlu ama biz hep böyleyiz.*)". K. may be envious about the people who get married and are happy. Lastly, the passage below is taken from L.'s notebook may be investigated in terms of envy:

> Relationships in our country is (*are*) getting better by time passes. My father says (*that*) the generation of them were marrying each (*other*) with blind date. Their parents cared so much (*about*) their children's marriage. But our generation is more different than them. Couples can meet in cafes, internet, party, school, outside.. The new generation go out with each other, break up with each other. But old generations hadn't.

In this passage, L. compares, his generation with his father's generation in English, most probably for an English homework assignment. He concludes that his generation is in a better position when compared to his father's generation. However, it is known from the case file that L. kills himself after he had problems with dating. It may be interpreted as a distortion of the reality due to his feelings of inadequacy in terms of dating. The distortion may be related to phantasies of omnipotence or the envy due to the Other's omnipotence. According to Lacan (1964),

> Envy is usually aroused by the possession of goods which would be of no use to the person who is envious of them […] by the image of a completeness closed upon itself […] the idea that the petit a […] may be for another the possession that gives satisfaction. (as cited in Chaitin, 1996, p. 76).

The *objet-petit-a* is claimed to be a remainder, a left-over of real after the entrance of the language, and it is the cause of desire which is related to the lack (Evans, 2006). In addition, the passage to the act is related to "a total identification with the object (*objet petit a*), and hence an abolition of the subject" (Evans, 2006, p. 172). In the passage above, Lacan's usage of "the image of completeness closed upon itself" may bring omnipotence to minds. It may be understood as the omnipotence of the Gestalt image on the mirror. On the other hand, Lacan refers to the Other's omnipotence in two distinct ways as the mOther's omnipotence and

omnipotent imaginary father. The former is associated with the infant's vulnerability in front of the omnipotent mother, who is in charge of deciding whether or not to gratify the infant's needs (Evans, 2006, p.202). Evans (2006) explains mOther's omnipotence by stating;

> In the first time of the Oedipus complex, then, the child realises that both he and the mother are marked by a lack. The mother is marked by lack, since she is seen to be incomplete; otherwise, she would not desire. The subject is also marked by a lack, since he does not completely satisfy the mother's desire. The lacking element in both cases is the imaginary PHALLUS. The mother desires the phallus she lacks, and (in conformity with Hegel's theory of DESIRE) the subject seeks to become the object of her desire; he seeks to be the phallus for the mother and fill out her lack. At this point, the mother is omnipotent and her desire is the law. […] Yet the child's real organ (whether boy or girl) is hopelessly inadequate. This sense of inadequacy and impotence in the face of an omnipotent maternal desire that cannot be placated gives rise to anxiety. Only the intervention of the father in the subsequent times of the Oedipus complex can provide a real solution to this anxiety. (p. 155).

According to Lacan, the omnipotent Other may also be the 'imaginary father', 'the father of the primordial horde'. In terms of psychosis and perversion, Lacan says that the symbolic father is reduced to the imaginary one (Evans, 2006). With its roots from phantasy, the imaginary father is an omnipotent figure who brings about the privation of the mother. Evans (2006) defines privation "as a lack in the real of a symbolic object (the symbolic phallus)"; in other words, "the female's lack of a penis" (p. 177). The imaginary father may take the shapes either 'the ideal/God-like father' or 'the terrifying/ cruel father' (Evans, 2006). An example for the former may be A.'s statements for his father; whereas an example for the latter may be E.'s statements that he wrote for his father.

In the primary level analysis, I stated that in the suicide notes, the others are perceived as either ideal others or negative others. The first sub-theme of the perceptions related to others theme is 'ideal others'. Kilborne (2014) states that the feelings of shame bring about a dependency to the phantasies or the calculations associated with how one is viewed by the others. This dependency originates

idealizing the others by attributing them some characteristic features which they are not able to have, due to the pursuit of a cure for own inadequacy, limitedness, imperfection and the feelings of isolation. This may be why J. writes to his wife, "You have been my prophet. My blood, my soul, my wife. (*Sen benim peygamberimdin. Kanım, canım, karım.*)". On the other hand, the idealization aggravates the feelings of vulnerability, which leads to defenses linked with narcissism and paranoia (Kilborne, 2014). Therefore, devaluation is the other end of the idealization. Congruently, the second sub-theme in the suicide notes related to the perceptions of others is 'negative others'. According to Kilborne (2014), envy is closely associated with devaluation because envy contains distrust toward pleasure and a pleasure in terms of the other's pain. In addition, Kilborne (2014) resembles the feelings of envy and shame to the feelings of a person who is in a room full of mirrors with distorted images of self.

Recalcati (2012) states, "the envious become incapable of enjoying the gift of life" (p. 168). Congruently, Recaltci (2012) claims that, in Seminar VII, Lacan clearly linked envy to the hate for life; indeed, he explains Lacan's thoughts on this issue by stating:

> Lacan writes, hate is the hate of God, hate for the Creator. It is the hate for the Other who deprives the subject of the object of desire, inflicting the symbolic cut of castration on the subject, but it is also hate for the Other who offers no sufficient ontological guarantee of being: it is hate for the absence of the Other (p. 175).

5.1.3 Issues related to Law.

As aforementioned, the suicide act is prohibited by the law so I assume that it cannot be counted as a part of the symbolic. On the other hand, both the literature and the findings of this study brought me to 'the issues related to law'. In fact; I think that the issues related to law comes to light with a discussion of the issues related to separation. Congruently, I think that the note-leavers' investment for the eye of the Other may be evaluated as mimesis or manipulation which aims to alleviate a

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punishment or criticism from the Other and indicates a struggle to escape from persecution. Indeed, "the wish to be purified" may be interpreted as a wish for approval, and "a wish to be seen" may be an indicator of a wish for recognition. In both situations, the subject can be excluded from being castrated. Moreover, the illusion of omnipotence may be evaluated as an escape from or denial of castration.

According to the Lacanian approach, the Law is not bound up with legislation, and it can be defined as "the fundamental principles which underlie social relations" (Evans, 2006, p. 101). In this context, communication can be thought as a manner of social relationship so the Law is interrelated with the linguistics, according to Lacan. The language is associated with the symbolic order which is defined as the period of life in which the child goes through the linguistic communication, enters into intersubjective relationships and accepts the law (Homer, 2005). In addition, father is the one who imposes the Law during the Oedipus complex; therefore, the paternal function can be evaluated as a symbolic function. In other words, it is the 'Name of the Father (*Nom-du-Père* in French)', which stands for "No!" or the prohibition of the father, that separates the child from the mother's desire (Fink, 1997).

According to Lacan, the Oedipus complex is a transition from the imaginary to the symbolic, and it consists of three "times" (Evans, 2006). The first one is the pre-Oedipal triangle which involves the child, mother and phallus. The child notices that desire of the mother is something beyond himself, indeed, it is the imaginary phallus; therefore, the child "tries to be the phallus for the mother" (Evans, 2006, p. 23). Therefore, it is the time that the child notices that the mother is marked by a lack just like himself and that the desire of the mother is the law. The second time of the Oedipus complex integrates the imaginary father who prohibits the child's dual relation with the mother. In addition, in this phase the privation takes place, which means the father's deprivation of mother of the phallus. In addition, he brings about the mother's respect for the law, so the child sees the imaginary father as a rival in terms of the mother's desire. In the third time, the real father intervenes with the

child's efforts to be the phallus of the mother. In fact, the child recognizes his father as the one who has the phallus so the child has to give up trying to be the phallus. It is where the castration takes place, according to Lacan. In addition, the child's identification with the father originates at this phase.

From a Lacanian point of view, there are two types of identification; namely, imaginary identification and symbolic identification (Evans, 2006). The former belongs to the mirror stage and symbolizes the infant's identification with the specular image. In fact, it is the time when the child realizes mother's lack and wishes to be the phallus for the mother, as discussed in the former pages. The other potential subjects or structures which may be the object of the mother's desire are perceived as rivals just like the specular image on the mirror so aggressivity and alienation emerges for the child. In this context, the child is afraid of an imaginary castration because the child's only way to catch the mother's eye and present himself can be through the specular images due to the fact that it is the pre-linguistic period of life. Therefore, 'the primary identification' takes place and the *'ideal ego'* emerges. The *ideal-ego* is defined as a product of the *mirror stage* and related to the *specular image*; indeed, "it is a promise of future synthesis towards which the ego tends, the illusion of unity on which the ego is built" (as cited in Evans, 2006, p. 53). It is connected with imaginary projection, omnipotence and the symbiotic relationship, and is the basement of all future identifications (Evans, 2006). On the other hand, the symbolic identification is related to the formation of the *'ego ideal'* by the identification with father, and symbolizes a transition to the linguistic period of life. The *ego-ideal,* which is a symbolic introjection, is defined as "the signifier operating as ideal, an internalized plan of the law, the guide governing the subject's position in the symbolic order, and hence anticipates secondary (Oedipal) identification" (as cited in Evans, 2006, p. 53). Lacanian symbolic castration is associated with this period of life.

Evans (2006) states, "Lacan follows Freud in arguing that the superego is formed out of this Oedipal identification with the father" (p. 132). The superego is

related to prohibition, ideal and law (Perelberg, 2015). In fact, according to Freud, identification with the father is claimed to provide the development of superego which emerges as an evaluator of the ego's actions, and is a structure which symbolizes moral and social rules (Clair, & Wigren, 2004). I realized a punitive tone in the suicide notes. At the beginning, by interpreting the findings from a Freudian point of view, I thought that the note-leavers may have an oppressive superego. I think that the instances of extracts from the notebook which belongs to K. fits well to here. In this high school notebook, I realized that there is a plans and program section almost in each paper. The content of those schedules are thought to be very strict, and the language used toward self is imperative like, "Start the model tests" or "Don't waste your time". He even schedules how many hours of a day he would be sleeping. In addition, I thought that his expectations from himself (*ideals*) are really high; for example, he says, "The best writer (friend, leader, person, father) of the world". From a Lacanian point of view, those statements of K. may be evaluated as a requirement of his ego ideal at first glance. In addition, it may be claimed that K.'s high expectations from himself may represent a sublimation of his sexual desires to success. In fact, Evans (2006) describes Lacan's differentiation between superego and ego-ideal by claiming:

> The superego is an unconscious agency whose function is to repress sexual desire for the mother, whereas the ego-ideal exerts a conscious pressure towards sublimation and provides the coordinates which enable the subject to take up a sexual position as a man or woman (p. 52)

Although Freud does not make such a differentiation, he claims that shame emerges as a result of the inharmoniousness between ego and ego ideal (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1975). Correspondingly to what Lacan states about the sexual positions above, Tükel (2015) explains Freud's ideas in terms of the fact that feminization lacks the harmony with the ego ideal for a male (Tükel, 2015). As a matter of fact, this brings my mind E.'s suicide note in which he insults his father's virility after his father swears him. He states aggressively, "You are a man, you will fuck my ass. Come on and do it.". These swear words puts E. into a feminine position so he might

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have been ashamed of this feminization. In Freudian terms, it may also be claimed that E. had a phantasy to be in a feminine position. In fact, Freud states ego ideal is related to homosexual libido as well as the narcissistic libido; therefore, when the ideal (being a male) does not come true, the homosexual libido is released with guilt and anxiety (Tükel, 2015). On the other hand, from a Lacanian point of view, "the subject's relationship with the phallus" designates the sexual position (Evans, 2006, p. 181). A subject can own a sexual position only by means of castration which implies an entrance to the symbolic. Congruently, Evans (2006) states, "the different modalities of refusing castration find expression in the various forms of perversion" (p. 24). On the other hand, defense against castration may also be an indicator for paranoia (Melman, 1994). In addition, according to Freud, paranoia is a defense against homosexuality (Fink, 1997).

According to me, the note-leavers' punitive tone not only operates for themselves but also for the others by the roots of blaming or punishing. The examples of the extracts belonging to the blame sub-theme under the emotions category and the punishment sub-theme under the functions category can be checked in order to understand the harshness of this tone toward self and others. In addition, under the functions category, blame emerged as no-blame (neither for the owner of the note nor the others who are the recipients). Nevertheless, not blaming someone may give the impression that the person gets stuck in the blaming position in his mind. As Melman (1994) declares, "Freud's article on negation shows that 'not-a' is equal to the truth of 'a'.", and he exemplifies it by stating "If I say I am not thinking about my mother, that means I am thinking about my mother" (p. 138). A good example for this may be from E.'s suicide because he says "I don't blame anyone" at the beginning of his suicide note, whereas he finishes it by stating, "The only reason for my death is my FATHER.". Similarly, J. repeatedly declares that his wife is not responsible for his suicide. Those repetitive expressions may attract attention to his wife as the guilty one who should be blamed, even though he states exactly the opposite. According to Kellerman (2013), when investigating the psychological aspect of blame, a psychoanalytic understanding of superego is important because

"the more intense and serious the blame, the more intense and severe the superego". As aforementioned, superego is associated with Oedipal Complex, and it is an outcome of identification with the father (Evans, 2006). Indeed, the Oedipal Complex for the males, in Freudian terms, is explained as losing the mother as the sexual object, and identifying with the father due to the castration anxiety (Freud, 1933, as cited in Westen, 1985). From a Freudian point of view, castration anxiety is defined as the anxious feelings arising due to the expectation of punishment or criticism from the masterful other (father) toward the child because of his incestuous desires. On the other hand, Lacanian castration is not related to the "actual penis", instead he links it with the "imaginary phallus" (Benyamini, 2012). It is "the symbolic lack of an imaginary object" (Evans, 2006, p. 23). According to him, "castration means that *jouissance* must be refused so that it can be reached on the inverted ladder (l'échelle renversée) of the Law of desire" (as cited in Evans, 2006, p. 23). Moreover, Lacan places superego into the symbolic order (Evans, 2006); however, the findings of this study have an emphasis on the imaginary nature of the note leavers' communication styles. In addition, due to the fact that the suicide act is prohibited by the law, I think that it cannot be counted as a part of the symbolic. Therefore, I thought that it would be important to reconsider the issues related to identification and the superego. Hence, I think that it may be useful to turn back to the data files and reconsider the extracts with the company of the literature.

In terms of requests and last wills in the suicide notes, entrusting the beloved ones to the others was remarkable. For example, F. states, "Take good care of mom". The need to entrust, by its nature, may signalize a perception of 'threat'. In the previous part, I evaluated it as a threat of persecution. On the other hand, this threat may be evaluated, from a Freudian point of view, as the prohibition of incest (or symbiosis) by the threat of castration. In fact, Oedipus complex is associated with the 'prohibition of incest' and the 'emergence of the Law' (Chiesa, 2007, p. 29). The passage below, taken from G.'s suicide note, may be a good example for this issue:

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Please do not perform autopsy on our bodies and do not let our bodies wait because of related procedures. I am requesting to be buried next to each other and my daughter between my wife and me if it is not against our religion. (*Lütfen cenazelerimizi otopsi ve benzeri işlemlerle bekletmeyiniz. Cenazemizin yan yana defin yapılmasını ve dinen sakıncası yoksa kızımızın aramıza diliyorum.*) (G.)

G.'s last wish is to be buried by his wife and his daughter. The remarkable point here may be his wish to take the daughter to the middle. This may bring incest to the minds. Nonetheless, he adds that "if it is not against our religion", which may be interpreted as the emergence of Law; indeed, God is a permanent father figure for Freud (Slone, 2004) and the Name-of-the-Father is the primary signifier of Law according to Lacan (Evans, 2006). In addition, G. rejects the autopsy so another remarkable point may be his wish to protect his physical integrity after death. Similarly, B. writes to prosecution office, "I know it is a legal procedure; however, I am requesting not to have an autopsy.". This statement of B. may indicate a wish for cliquishness due to a grandiose self-perception as well as his wish for a Gestalt, rather than a fragmented body, which also points a narcissistic stance. In fact, according to Reich (1960), grandiose self emerges as a reaction to the anxieties related to castration and paranoia (as cited in Behrendt, 2015). Nevertheless, the important point here may be the wish to preserve the illusion of omnipotence in addition to the denial of the fact that suicide and murder are also prohibited both by the legal and religious rules. Therefore, we may assume that although there is an imaginary threat for castration, the cases try to be excluded from it either by manipulations or by denial as in the case of perversion. We may also assume that it is a refusal of the castration as in the case of psychosis.

According to Lacan, the superego has a complicated relationship with the Law. In fact, the Law has a function of preventing disintegration; on the other hand, the hegemony of the superego results in destruction (Evans, 2006). Evans (2006) explains Lacan's idea related to this issue by saying, "The superego arises from the misunderstanding of the law, from the gaps in the symbolic chain, and fills out those gaps with an imaginary substitute that distorts the law" (p. 202). Congruently, the

findings of this study may indicate that the cases try to escape castration by either denial or by refusal in order to preserve the illusion of omnipotence. In fact, the cases go beyond the pleasure principle and kill themselves by a stance against the symbolic system which prohibits the suicide. On the other hand, there is an impression of internalizing the rules as in the examples of superegotic or punitive expressions. In fact, I think that the note-leavers may be taking a stance as a judge in order to get rid of castration. Congruently, during the primary level analysis, it was realized that in addition to an exaggerated self-importance, a lack of empathy, a need for admiration and superiority, and an approach to others with disdain, the cases were also observed to be putting themselves into a position similar to a judge, by their statements. The position of a judge may be thought as a position which encloses power, supremacy and authority; therefore, it may be linked with grandiose/perfect self-perception theme. As aforementioned, according to Reich (1960), grandiose self emerges as a reaction to the anxieties related to castration and paranoia (as cited in Behrendt, 2015). Congruently, Melman (1994) states that the subject takes the place of the Other in the case of paranoia, due to the exclusion. I think that the judge position may be a representative for taking the place of the Other. In addition, those grandiose representations of self, including the judge position, may indicate the note-leavers' investment in the Gestalt Specular I, whereas weak/inefficient self-perception may be a representation of the fragmented body of the mirror stage. As aforementioned, a sense of *fragmented body* can be described as the perception of the body as separate parts and pieces rather than a whole (Mitchell & Snyder, 1997). In narcissism, for example, the patients may experience both the fear of castration and the fear of disintegration (Behrendt, 2015), which may be linked with the Lacanian fragmented body.

I think that the best example to the judge position is from B.'s suicide note where he says, "If you regret the things you did, give me your blessings. Pray to God because you won't have a high position. (*Yaptıklarından pişman olursan şayet, hakkını helal et. Dua et çünkü çok iyi bir makamın olmayacak*.)". In addition, he states, "I am offering you a life now, which you can live the way you want.

(*Dilediğin gibi yaşayacağın hayatı sana sunuyorum şimdi.*)". Those statements may be interpreted as B.'s perception of himself as a judge who decides what his wife's end will be like or his perception as the persecutive Other. Moreover, A. writes for his family, "You deserve the best about everything. (*Siz her şeyin en güzelini hak ediyorsunuz.*)". In a similar way, F. states, "It is better I die than I live. (*Ölmem yaşamamdan daha hayırlı.*)". In those expressions, both A. and F. are thought to be in a perception that their position is the enactor position, just like a judge. I think that in some of the cases this position of judge is represented as being greater than the God. A good example here may be from E.'s message to his father where he says, "Even if you make God stand against me, I will still kill myself. (*Allahı karşıma diksen kendimi öldürecem*)". The subject refuses the castration therefore, it may be claimed that the *name-of-the-Father* is declined or denied for the sake of being mother's desired object. In fact, by leaving the symbolic order, I think the note-leavers try to escape from castration and the ambiguity of the words.

Congruently, the Lacanian castration is related to loss, limit and an acceptance of being finitude (Boothby, 1991). The phantasies of the note-leavers, on the contrary, indicate an illusion of omnipotence and a belief in immortality. Besides, by taking a position similar to a judge the cases may be trying to hold a place analogous to the persecutor or try to become the one who castrates. In fact, death is a limitation against the existence or immortality in a Heiddegerian sense (Harris, 2017), and the note-leavers put a termination to their existence by killing themselves. In other words, the cases try to accomplish the paternal function. From a Lacanian point of view, both for the psychosis and the perversion, the main aim is to accomplish the paternal function.

Benyamini (2012) states, "there must first be a prohibition that can be transgressed for the sake of pleasure" (p.2), and he attracts attention to the compelling nature of the desire which commands to surpass the limits. For some of the cases in this study, I thought that they forced the limits until their suicide. In terms of gambling and the limits, Filou (2009) claims, "challenging the limits in

gambling equates and substitutes for the challenge to the father for possession of the mother" (p. 64). Congruently, in his suicide note, D. states:

> I started live betting two years ago. My purpose was to make money but I lost. The more I lost, the more I gambled. I took loan from banks and at the end of two years; I was not able to pay my debts. The ambition to make money led me to lose more money. (*Bundan iki yıl önce canlı iddia oynamaya başladım. Amacım para kazanmaktı fakat kaybettim. Kaybettikçe daha çok oynadım. Bankalardan kredi çektim ve böylece iki yılın sonunda borçlarımı ödeyemez duruma geldim. Para kazanma hırsı çok para kaybetmeme sebep oldu.*) (D.)

D.'s urge for gambling and challenging the limits may be associated with his overwhelming sexual excitement and his desire for incest. According to Lacan, every drive has the features of striving for its own death, bringing repetition, trying to go beyond the pleasure principle with an aim to have a sense of *jouissance* which is basically defined as "painful pleasure". More specifically, the pleasure principle, which is a symbolic law, is linked with prohibition, whereas *jouissance* is about crossing the prohibition and is on the side of real (Evans, 2006). In fact, according to Nasio (1998), suicide occurs when the subject transgresses the threshold of the *Other's jouissance*.

5.2. Summary of the Latent Level Findings

The re-analysis of the semantic level findings yielded three main latent themes; namely, *'ambivalence of emotions (aggressivity)', 'issues related to separation'* and *'issues related to castration'*. The *'issues related to separation'* theme takes its roots from the latent sub-themes which are *'the investment for the eye of the Other'* and *'illusion of omnipotence'*. The *'illusion of omnipotence'* was thought to have a component as *'envy and Other's omnipotence'*. The latent level findings are summarized in *Figure-1* below. Those findings yielded a diagnostic discussion which revolves around psychosis and perversion.
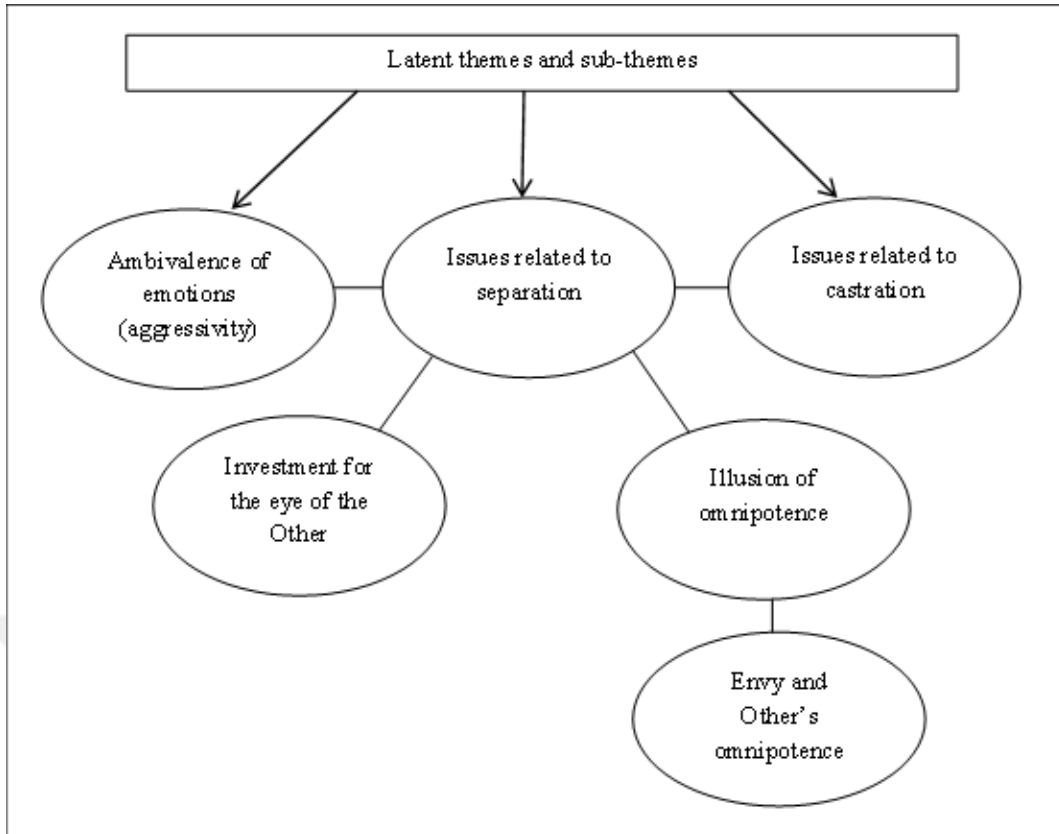
Figure 1: **Latent level findings**

CHAPTER 6

GENERAL DISCUSSIONS

'*Aggressivity gnaws away, undermines, disintegrates; it castrates;*
it leads to death.''
Jacques Lacan (1948)

In the previous research, the analysis of suicide notes have been carried out by two main approaches namely, 'nomothetic' and 'idiographic' approaches. The former is associated with quantitative research and focuses on the generalizability, whereas the latter is a requirement of the qualitative research and designates in-depth analysis of the cases (Leenaars, 2002). The main purpose of the current study was to investigate suicide notes, text messages and social media shares of the people who killed themselves, by using a qualitative method. This way of approach has been chosen because the idiographic nature of the qualitative method is thought to be the most suitable way to conduct research on the suicide notes. Menninger (1938) asserted that one should focus on the "unconscious purposes" rather than the statistical analysis and conscious motives in order to understand the phenomena of suicide, due to the fact that it is "a very complex act and not a simple, incidental, isolated act of impulsion, either logical or in-explicable" (p.23). Suicide as a complex phenomenon is hard to be understood by using scales or numbers. On the other hand, the qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to deeply examine the matter in the suicide notes; in fact, the aim of the qualitative research is to evaluate a social phenomenon within its context deeply and fully, and making a thick description (Hays & Singh, 2012). Twelve documents obtained from the Public Prosecution office were analyzed with the main research question which is *"How are the note*

leavers' experiences in relation to others?". The secondary research question was, '*How are the mental relational interplay of emotions of the subject related the Other in the suicide notes?'* The first question was tried to answer with a semantic level analysis whereas the second one required a more latent level of analysis. Accordingly, the first part of the analysis integrated the surface level meanings of the data; therefore, it was like a re-organization of the data in terms of signifiers. On the other hand, in the second part, I tried to focus on the unconscious processes with a curiosity of what is underneath of the surface.

In the same direction with the first research question, the semantic level thematic analysis of the data revealed four main categories with themes and sub-themes. Those main categories are named as *'emotions', 'perceptions', 'functions'* and *'phantasies'*. There are two themes under the *'emotions'* category; namely, *'positive emotions'* and *'negative emotions'*. *'Perceptions'* category revealed also two themes, which are *'perceptions related to self'* and *'perceptions related to others'*. There are three themes of the *'functions'* category; specifically, *'the functions related to blame', 'informing others about suicide'* and '*punishment'*. In terms of *'phantasies'* category, there are two themes; namely, *'phantasies related to life after death'* and *'phantasies related to control after death events'*. As mentioned before, the emerging categories, themes and sub-themes are considered to have some concurrences, in other words, the boundaries between them were fluid in a way. It was thought that this situation may be due to the complicated nature of the act of suicide. The structures of the categories, themes and sub-themes have been changing throughout the study due to the nature of the qualitative inquiry. Instead of trying to verify a particular theory, the usage of the inductive and interpretative thematic analysis allowed the themes to emerge during the semantic level analysis.

In the second part of the study, the notable findings from the primary level analysis were discussed with a comparison to the prior research and the Lacanian theory, and a latent level of analysis was conducted. In fact, Braun and Clarke (2006) states that "a thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of

the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations" (p. 13). In this phase, I tried to focus on the unconscious meanings of the primary level findings in order to find an answer to the question: '*How are the mental relational interplay of emotions of the subject related the Other in the suicide notes?*' Congruently, I figured out that there are three main latent themes among the findings; namely, *'ambivalence of emotions (aggressivity)'*, *'issues related to separation'* and *'issues related to castration'*. The *'issues related to separation'* theme takes its roots from the latent sub-themes which are *'the investment for the eye of the Other as an urge to escape from persecution anxiety'* and *'illusion of omnipotence'*. The *'illusion of omnipotence'* was discussed in conjunction with *'envy and Other's omnipotence'*, in Lacanian terms. What I extracted from those latent themes can be summarized as: The note-leavers reveal a kind of subtle or vivid ambivalence in their emotions, which is named as 'aggressivity' or *hainamoration* in Lacanian terms. On the other hand, some of the emotions may be interpreted as acting out for an appeal of the Other's look or glance, as well as imaginary tools for escaping from persecution anxiety. The act of leaving a suicide note behind, besides the extracts remarking 'a wish to be purified' or 'a wish to be seen', supported my ideas on the note-leavers' investments for the eye of the Other. Moreover, I thought that some of the expressions which imply eternity or boundless control in the suicide notes may stand for an illusion of omnipotence. Correspondingly, the Other's omnipotence is thought to be envied by the note-leavers. In fact, both the investment for the eye of the Other as an escape from the persecution anxiety and the illusion of omnipotence sub-themes are thought to be associated with issues related to separation. I think that the sub-themes of the issues related to separation theme may indicate a problem with separation; in fact, they may imply a failure of separation as in the cases of psychosis and perversion. Furthermore, the latent themes and the data itself, cumulatively, brought me to the issues related to castration and the Law. What I observed in the suicide notes was an endeavour to escape from castration by means of the expressions in the suicide notes and the suicide act itself.

Émile Durkheim is considered as a pioneering suicidologist from the sociology realm. Even though his study did not focus on the suicide notes and his method of research was based on a positivist approach rather than a qualitative inquiry, I think that his findings may be helpful to elaborate the findings of the current study. Durkheim (1897/1952) investigated suicide from a sociological point of view by conducting statistical analysis, and developed his theory on suicide which integrated social elements as the causes. According to him, 'integration' and 'regulation' within the society are the main determinants of the act of suicide. The former is associated with social bonds whereas the latter is related to law. Therefore, I think that the findings of the current study such as the issues related to separation and the issues related to the Law may be evaluated as parallel constructs to Durkheim's findings. Moreover, Durkheim (1897/1952) proposed four categories which indicated the types of suicide; namely, egoistic, altruistic, anomic and fatalistic suicides. The egoistic suicide was defined as the suicide which arises from low levels of integration within the society whereas the altruistic suicide was claimed to be resulting from over-integration. Congruently, the issues related to separation in this study revealed a conflict in terms of separation and a complicated nature in terms of the social bonds. Nevertheless, I guess, within a more individualistic scope, the two edges in Durkheim's findings may represent a fixation or a negation, in Freudian terms, by taking into account the difference of the approaches between the psychology realm and the sociology realm. In my opinion, those two edges may also be evaluated as a result of the aggressivity. Furthermore, according to Durkheim (1897/1952), the magnitude of regulation in a society may be linked with suicide; in fact, he defined anomic suicide as the result of weak regulation whereas fatalistic suicide as the consequence of over-regulation. As aforementioned, the magnitude of regulation may be evaluated together with the issues related to Law. Congruently, those two ends may be evaluated as a fixation, a negation or an outcome of aggressivity, too.

Another important issue which Durkheim (1897/1952) pointed out was gender difference in terms of the suicide rates. He stated that suicide is a more

common phenomenon among males when compared to females, and explained this situation as a consequence of females' better positioning in social integration as well as their immunity to suicide. As aforementioned, the data of the current study consisted of the suicide notes belonging only to males with an aim to provide homogeneity. Besides, it was due to the fact that the majority of the suicide notes that I could reach were belonging to males. This may be a representative of the current situation in terms of the frequencies as well as a coincidence. In terms of gender, Freud (1925) mentions the anatomical differences between a male and a female, whereas Lacan focuses on sexual positions (as cited in Evans, 2006). Freud claimed that a subject's being in a male or a female position is an outcome of the Oedipal complex and the identification with a specific gender; on the other hand, according to Lacan, the sexual position is determined by the subject's relationship with the phallus; indeed, "the assumption of a sexual position is fundamentally a symbolic act" (as cited in Evans, 2006, 181). In the previous section, I discussed that some of the cases may be in a condition of feminization so the sexual position becomes ambigious. Moreover, the imaginary nature in the notes rather than a symbolic one may present a supportive element for this idea. Thus, the cases may not be evaluated as if they are in a sexual position. Besides, we cannot make a comparison in terms of gender from the data of this study which belongs only to men. On the other hand, the previous literature indicates that women write their suicide notes by using more present tense verbs, more insight words and referring more to the self; whereas they integrate less hostile emotions, directive messages and responsibility (Black, & Lester, 2003; Lester, & Leenaars, 2015; Lester, Haines, & Williams, 2010). Those findings may yield different conclusions for the female note-leavers; indeed, they may reveal a difference in terms of the issues related to separation. Due to the fact that this study points out a pre-Oedipal phase when there was not an assumption of a sexual position; my interpretation at this point would be a probability of the disparity in terms of mother-daugher and mother-son attachments which may result in different issues related to separation. What I mean here is that a type of attachment or investment from the side of the mother to the infant. I guess, this may also underlie

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the condition of better positioning of the females in terms of social integration, as Durkheim (1897/1952) asserted. In terms of the cultural context, the findings of the current study may reveal a very close bonding between the mother-son diad. In addition, they may indicate either a very harsh or a very submissive father figure who cannot provide the separation of the child from the mother and cannot bring the Law. The conception of a harsh father may be understood in terms of the end points of patriarchal system in Turkey. In fact, in the extreme versions, this system may bring about weak father-son alliance as well as higher rates of penis envy among the women, which may result in accepting the son as a phallus or as an extension of self.

The current study was conducted on a data which integrated suicide notes, last messages, social media shares and the writings on a notebook. At the beginning of this study, a deep and long understanding in terms of the differences and similarities between the note leavers and non-note-leavers were provided. Most of the literature in the scope of this type of studies was carried out with a quantitative approach, and indicated that the demographic differences between the people who leave notes and who do not are inconsistent and contradictory (Olson, et al, 2011; Tewksbury, et al. 2010; Girdhar, et al., 2004; Callanan, & Davis, 2009; Demirel, et al., 2008; Cha´vez-Herna´ndez, et al, 2006). I thought that the non-note-leavers perfectly fit to Lacan's definition of the passage to the act, whereas leaving a note may reveal question marks. In this study, I tried to answer those question marks in terms of cases' relationships with the Other. In this part of the study, I tried to provide a diagnostic discussion due to the fact that my subtle aim in this study was to understand suicidal patients' transference relationship with the analyst during the analysis.

6.1 A Diagnostic Discussion

Although the analyses have been a cumulative process, when I put together the findings from the semantic and the latent level analyses, I thought that they may contribute to designate a more comprehensive picture in terms of providing some

insights into the diagnosis of the cases. Therefore, in this part of the study, I will try to provide a discussion related to the diagnosis because I think that the findings of this study, collated with the literature, may yield a chance to interrogate on diagnosis which may contribute to the clinical practice. Indeed, Fink (1997) states that in order to specify how an analyst should handle the transference relationship in the therapy is closely bound up with the diagnosis. Nevertheless, this part, related to diagnosis, integrates my hesitations due to the fact that it requires a considerable amount of clinical experience to make a Lacanian diagnosis. In addition, it is impossible for me to know the note-leavers' history as in the form of anamnesis. On the other hand, I tried to search for the signifiers, and group them in terms of their similarities and differences with the other signifiers. Indeed, according to Parker (2005), in order to conduct a Lacanian analysis, "the organization of the signifiers" should be the primary aim of a study. After that, I tried to search for the latent meanings of those groupings. The latent level analysis brought me to a diagnostic discussion which revolves around psychosis and perversion. In this section of the study, my aim is to compare and contrast my findings with the previous literature and to make an interrogation on the possibility of those diagnoses. Indeed, what I will try here is to discuss my findings in terms of the Lacanian clinical structures. Moreover, I will try to elaborate the condition of writing a suicide note in addition to the developmental roots and relationship with the body in order to clarify a diagnosis.

As aforementioned, suicide may be counted as passage to the act (*passage à l'acte*) which is defined as "an exit from the symbolic network [language]" and "a dissolution of the social bond" (as cited in Evans, 2006, p. 140). The passage to the act, which is a final way to alleviate anxiety, is linked with psychosis in Lacanian approach (Evans, 2006). The subject refuses the castration in psychosis; therefore, it may be claimed that the *name-of-the-Father* is declined or struck out for the sake of being mother's desired object. On the other hand, in the case of perversion, *name-of-the-Father* is denied (*foreclosure*). I have already mentioned that suicide is a prohibited act by the Law. The latent level analysis indicated that the name of the father is declined or denied by the note-leavers for the sake of being mother's desired

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object. In fact, by leaving the symbolic order, I think that the cases try to escape from castration and the ambiguity of the words. Congruently, the Lacanian castration is related to loss, limit and an acceptance of being finitude (Boothby, 1991). The phantasies of the note-leavers, on the contrary, indicate an illusion of omnipotence and a belief in immortality. Lacan claims that phantasy is associated with the answer a child gives to the question: "What does the (m)other want from me?" (Bakır, 2008). The answer to this question determines the individual's clinical structure.

According to Lacan, there are three clinical structures; namely, psychosis, neurosis and perversion. Those clinical structures are differentiated from each other in terms of the phantasies and the manner of self-preservation from the castration (Evans, 2006). For example, in psychosis the person is said to be stuck in the mirror stage so a psychotic lacks the symbolic Other and "suffers from the invasion of jouissance". For a neurotic, on the other hand, the Other uncongenially exists and avoidance of the jouissance is the main matter. In perversion, "the Other must be made to exist", and the perverts try to create limits for the jouissance (Fink, 1997). Evans (2006) states that Lacanian psychopathology is based on the refusal of castration, and due to the fact that "it is impossible to accept castration entirely; a completely 'normal' position is never achieved" (p. 24). Nevertheless, he states that neurosis is more akin to the 'normal' when compared to the other structures although even in neurosis there is still a refusal of castration by means of repression. On the other hand, both for the psychosis and the perversion, the main aim is to accomplish the paternal function. The pervert tries to do it by "staging or enacting the enunciation of the law" whereas the psychotic uses delusional metaphors (Fink, 1997, p.193). I think that by taking a position similar to a judge the cases may be trying to hold a place analogous to the persecutor or try to become the one who castrates. In fact, death is a limitation against the existence or immortality in a Heiddegerian sense (Harris, 2017), and the note-leavers put a termination to their existence by killing themselves. Therefore, I think we can claim that the cases try to accomplish the paternal function. Congruently, in Écrits, while mentioning suicide, Lacan (1966/2006) states,

> The subject says "No!" to this darting game of inter-subjectivity in which desire gains recognition for a moment only to lose itself in a will that is the other's will. The subject patiently withdraws his precarious life from the churning aggregations of the symbol's Eros in order to finally affirm life in a speechless curse (p. 263).

I think that this "No!" in this passage resembles the "No!" of the father. As aforementioned both for the psychosis and the perversion, the main aim is to accomplish the paternal function in order to bring about the separation from the mother's desire. The pervert structure uses disavowal whereas in the psychosis there is foreclosure. The disavowal, which is known as *Verleugnung* in Freudian terms, is defined as a kind of defence in which the subject rejects to become aware of the reality associated with a traumatic perception (Evans, 2006). Lacan marks perversion with disavowal, and claims that it is "always accompanied by a simultaneous acknowledgement of what is disavowed" (Evans, 2006, p. 44). In other words, in perversion the castration is both recognized and denied. In fact, the perverts acknowledge that the mOther has a lack; however, they deny lack is the cause of desire in the mOther (Evans, 2006). On the other hand, foreclosure (*Verwerfung* in Freudian terms) is claimed to be the essence of psychosis. It is a "primordial refusal" to the Name-of-the-Father, and it is defined as "the specific mechanism of psychosis, in which an element is rejected outside the symbolic order just as if it had never existed" (Evans, 2006, p. 65). Nevertheless, Fink (1997) states that the distinction between disavowal and foreclosure "is not something that the clinician can see directly; it is not perceptually available" (p. 77); therefore, I think that it is impossible for me to situate whether the cases use disavowal or foreclosure. In addition, it is not possible for me to know the histories of the cases as in the form of anamneses in this study. On the other hand, by focusing on the condition of writing a suicide note, the developmental roots springing from those notes, the cases' relationships with their body and their sentence structures in the notes, I can try to make an understanding of the findings in the context of diagnosis with the help of existing literature.

6.1.1 Writing a suicide note.

As aforementioned, it has been an intrinsic question mark for me from the beginning of the study: "Why those people left suicide notes behind, if they want to escape from the ambiguity of the words?" At the beginning of the study, I questioned whether it is an acting out or not. However, what Fink (1997) states in terms of the "literary production" while he mentions a case named as Roger may suggest an idea for us here:

> Roger mechanically goes to his sessions with his fist therapist for two years, bringing the therapist mountains of writings: he meticulously writes down his dreams, types them up, memorizes them, and recites them by heart in his sessions. (This sort of profilic "literary" production is an extremely common feature in psychosis.) (p. 104).

Moreover, Lacan states that "the discursive products characteristic of the register of paranoia usually blossom into literary productions" (Lacan, 1975; as cited in Whitworth, 2015, p.234). Withworth (2015) claims that when the *Name-of-the-Father* is declined, the imaginary father who is a brutal, malevolent, envious and castrating one arises, especially in the images and the delusional metaphors of the psychotic patient; which reveal themselves in the patient's creative, artistic and literary productions. Indeed, the delusional metaphor compels the patient to write down about himself repeatedly by using 'letters' in order to get rid of fragmentation and stay functional. Concordantly, while mentioning the psychotic case example named as Roger, Fink (1997) states that the patient "feels a bit safer when he writes things down, as writing seems to fix or freeze meaning to some extent" (p. 107). He adds that the words and the meaning drift in a purposeless manner in case of psychosis due to the fact that the signifier is not tied to the signified by the *name-of-the-Father.* On the other hand, in terms of speech Roger says:

> Words frighten me. I have always wanted to write, but couldn't manage to put a word on a thing… It was as though the words slipped off things… So I thought that by studying the dictionary from A to Z and writing down the words I didn't know, I would possess them all and could say whatever I wanted (p.107).

In case of psychosis, the patients feel as if they are possessed by language (Fink, 1997). Maybe that's why there are various vocabularies integrating words and their meanings from different languages in L.'s notebook who was one of the cases in this study.

Abensour (2013) links the literary production in the psychosis with the curiosity about the "mystery of the act of creation" (p. 126). Congruently, Walker (1998) resembles the writings of Schreber who is a psychotic patient to "the act of giving birth" (p. 64). The former here may bring the God to the minds whereas the latter directly refers to the mOther. In fact, I think that the former may be associated with the "illusion of omnipotence" while the latter may be linked with the "envy and the Other's omnipotence" in terms of this study's findings. Furthermore, the contents of the suicide notes integrate a definition of self and the Other as indicated in the primary level analysis. I think that what those definitions mean in conjunction with the existence of the suicide notes may be understood with Abensour's (2013) passage below:

> An astonishing questioning that lies at the very heart of that production – sometimes takes the form of a mirror image of the creator searching for his or her identity, sometimes it is the reflection of the process of creation by representing the artist and his or her avatars, or again it may be, in contemporary literature, like a work of art that mirrors itself and ends up by losing its own image through the interplay of construction/deconstruction (p. 126).

6.1.2 Developmental roots and the body.

In 1938, Lacan describes death drive as a desire to turn back to the cohesion and harmony with the mother's breast before the oedipal struggle. Due to the fact that he links death drive to the pre-oedipal phase, it can be said that "the imaginary order" was the location for the death drive at the beginning for Lacan (Evans, 2006). The imaginary order is known as the pre-linguistic period of life which is marked

with illusions and fantasy images; and it is closely linked with the mirror stage and identification (Homer, 2005). Lacan firstly mentions suicide within his writing on the family complexes; specifically, the weaning complex which is linked with the feeding relationship and the death drive. The link between the weaning complex and suicide is declared as the "appetite for death" which may turn into the condition of "nonviolent suicide", the examples of which are "anorexia, drug addiction (by mouth), or gastric neuroses" (Lacan, 1938/n.d, pp. 21-22). The interruption of the symbiotic relationship between mother and the child is claimed to leave "a permanent trace in the child's psyche" (Evans, 2006, p. 120). According to Lacan, when the sublimation of imago of mother's breast to the social relationships is not possible, it becomes lethal. He claims that "in abandoning himself to death, the subject seeks to find the imago of mother again" (as cited in Roudinesco, 1997, p. 145). Furthermore, Lacan makes an association between the mother and death by claiming that the "burial practices" symbolizes "a return to the mother's womb" (Lacan, 1938/n.d, p. 22). Therefore, it can be claimed that suicide may be an effort to turn back to the symbiotic relationship, to the real, where the separation from the mother did not take place and there was not the lack; in fact, it may be interpreted as a desire to go beyond the symbolic (language). Congruently, in Écrits, he (1966/2006) states:

> This suicidal tendency—which represents in my opinion what Freud sought to situate in his metapsychology with the terms "death instinct" and "primary masochism"—depends, in my view, on the fact that man's death, long before it is reflected (in a way that is, moreover, always so ambiguous) in his thinking, is experienced by him in the earliest phase of misery that he goes through from the trauma of birth until the end of the first six months of physiological prematurity, and that echoes later in the trauma of weaning. It is one of the most brilliant features of Freud's intuition regarding the order of the psychical world that he grasped the revelatory value of concealment games that are children's first games. Everyone can see them and yet no one before him had grasped in their iterative character the liberating repetition of all separation and weaning as such that the child assumes [assume] in these games (p. 152).

Nevertheless, Lacan's definition of death drive changed throughout the time. In 1946, he claimed that the death drive is related to the suicidal inclination of

narcissism. In 1950s, he placed the death drive in "the symbolic order" by claiming that it is related to repetition (as cited in Evans, 2006). The symbolic order is defined as the period of life in which the child goes through the linguistic communication, enters into intersubjective relationships and accepts the law (Homer, 2005). It is connected to some of the most important Lacanian concepts such as the Other, Oedipus complex, unconscious, signifier and the death drive. Death, absence and lack are situated in the symbolic order; indeed, Lacan says that "the death drive is the only mask of the symbolic order" (Lacan, 1954/1988). According to him, every drive has the features of striving for its own death, bringing repetition, trying to go beyond the pleasure principle with an aim to have a sense of *jouissance* which is basically defined as "painful pleasure". More specifically, the pleasure principle, which is a symbolic law, is linked with prohibition, whereas *jouissance* is about crossing the prohibition and is on the side of real (Evans, 2006). Accordingly, it was thought that suicide occurs when the subject transgresses the threshold of the *Other's jouissance*, and the manner (by hanging, knife, gun, poison, etc.) or the type of the suicide (hysterical, melancholic, schizophrenic, etc.) determines the place of *jouissance* (Nasio, 1998). The real is beyond the symbolic (language), and it is the place where the separation did not take place and there was not the lack (Rigel, Batuş, Yücedoğan, & Çoban, 2005). According to Lacan, the death drive, *jouissance* and the real are associated with each other (Homer, 2005). He states that *jouissance* "is the path towards death" (Lacan, 1969-70, p.17; as cited in Evans, 2006). *Jouissance* is claimed to be "the attraction towards death, going beyond the pleasure principle and encountering the real" (Kim, 2015, p.113). According to Tura (2012), the Lacanian psychoanalysis describes death within those three dimensions. He states that death is real because it can be clarified scientifically, physically and biophysically. However, the death is not just a biological phenomenon; in fact, sociologically, it is understood as the other's death, and it is an ideological, discursive object for rituals, so death is symbolic. In addition, our imagination of it, the imaginary death, always takes its roots from symbolic and real death.

In the current study, during the latent level analysis, I tried to interpret the primary level findings from a Lacanian point of view, and most of the themes signalized issues related to the Lacanian mirror stage which takes place between the first 6-18 months of life. Indeed, the ambivalence of emotions and aggressivity as well as the issues related to alienation and separation (investment for the eye of the Other, illusion of omnipotence, envy and Other's omnipotence) are deeply discussed within this stage, by Lacan. Moreover, as aforementioned, the mirror stage is associated with the imaginary order; therefore, it symbolizes the pre-Oedipal dual relationship (Evans, 2006). According to Tura (2013), when considered broadly, the Lacanian mirror stage and the pre-Oedipal dual relationship coincide with Freud's '*anal period*', Mahler's *'separation-individuation stage'*, Kohut's period of '*grandiose self*', and the process in which Kernberg puts his ideas on '*ambivalence and splitting'*. Even though the approaches, discourses, terminologies and rationales are very different in terms of their theories, I think that those theoreticians may contribute to this study in terms of marking the developmental period of life which may have an impact on the suicidal behaviours of the cases. In fact, the findings of the secondary level analysis indicate a punitive tone as mentioned in the Freudian anal period; issues related to separation in terms of omnipotence and investment for the eye of the Other similar to the Mahler's re-aproachement period of the separation-individuation stage; a grandiose representation of self as in Kohut's mirror self-object; and ambivalence of emotions just as in Kernberg's thoughts on ambivalence and splitting. According to Tura (2013), this period of life, which he names as the second period of life, is associated with shame and lack because it integrates the contradictions of omnipotence and neediness; rebellion and obedience; love and hate. Tura (2013) states it is the period of "body-I (*beden-ben*)".

Congruently, while analysing the suicide notes, I thought that the grandiose representations of self, including the judge position, may indicate the note-leavers' investment in the Gestalt Specular I which is a reflection of the infants body on the surface of a mirror, whereas the weak/inefficient self-perception may be a representation of the fragmented body of the mirror stage. As aforementioned, a

sense of *fragmented body* can be described as the perception of the body as separate parts and pieces rather than a whole (Mitchell & Snyder, 1997). If we can mention a fear of fragmentation, where can we put A.'s act in which he killed himself by cutting various parts of his body including his throat and throwing himself from the fifth floor? According to Le Breton (1999/2014), the body is fragmentised because of the fact that the subject is fragmentized. In fact, human body may be counted as a castrator with its inhibitory and restrictive nature for an omnipotent structure. By the entrance of the language and the formation of the ego, subject is alienated from his body and drives (Iversen, 2007, p. 7). According to Le Breton (1999/2014), the body is the cruel disease for the desire; the materialized form of the negative side of the person, which has imperfection; and it is the place for death and sickness. As a suitable example, I can mention J.'s suicide note here where he declares his anxiety associated with his health by stating,

> I feel suffocated, brother. I also feel anxious a bit about my health. While I am writing this moment, the pen does not stand still in my hand. My hand shakes very badly in recent times. It does not allow me to work. There is also my mind… It is another problem. I know that it will strike one day. I can not let it happen. What will I do in the hospitals? *(Ben çok bunaldım abi. Biraz da korkuyorum. Sağlığımla ilgili. Ben şu anı yazarken kalem elimde durmuyor. Elim artık son zamanlarda lapır lapır titriyor. Herhangi bir iş yapmama da izin vermiyor. Ha bir de beynim var. O ayrı bir dert. Vuracak bir gün biliyorum. Buna müsaade etmem. Ben hastanelerde ne yaparım.)* (J.)

The body is evaluated as a surplus limb which is required to be extinguished (Le Breton, 1990, as cited in Le Breton, 1999/2014). Congruently, one of my patients, who had suicidal thoughts, was evaluating her body as unclean; in other words, she had a perception of a dirty body. She had been complaining about the 'disgusting smell' on her body (armpit and mouth odor) which she resembled the smell of a dead body. I thought that this may be evaluated as a type of 'delusion' which may indicate psychosis.

Le Breton (1999/2014) states that the body is an alter-ego so a person tries to change the life by changing the anatomy. Piercings, tattoos, plastic surgery or body

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art are evaluated as the person's attempts to change the life. Conformably, another patient of me, who stated that he is going to kill himself after killing his girl-friend, has a huge tattoo on his neck. A further example may be one of my friends who described me how she abandoned her thoughts related to suicide after she buzz-cut her hair. In the current study, it was noticed that some of the cases had tattoos in various parts of their body, as declared in the vignettes section. This information was obtained from the autopsy reports in the files. This data may be interpreted as the cases' perception of their body as an alter-ego. As an example, F.'s tattoo in his forearm saying "Never give up", may be interpreted as his wish to be seen by others as a crusader. Nevertheless, by killing himself he gives up and abandons this alter-ego in addition to abandoning his social bonds and the anxiety of the appearance. Moreover, whatever the method is, the suicide act is fulfilled by an interference with the body. Ingestion of drugs, cutting, jumping, shooting, hanging etc. are all linked with body because it is the place for death, as Le Breton states, which castrates the subject.

According to Recalcati (1999), the issues influencing to the body may be associated with psychosis. He exemplifies it with "the real mortification of the body" and "a kind of total abolition of desire", which may be signalizing suicide. Moreover, he states that in the condition of psychosis the body cannot "incorporate the signifier", instead, it detaches itself from corporation with ("disincorporates from") the signifier. Thus, we may say that the psychotic subject escapes from the ambiguity of the words. Furthermore, Recalcati (1999) states that the jouissance is not localized in the erogenous zones in the case of psychosis. Congruently, Fink (1997) claims that the psychotic's body is invaded by jouissance. Therefore, suicidal acts such as ingestion of drugs, cutting, jumping, shooting, hanging etc. may be related to the psychotic subject's way of castrating himself due to this invasion of jouissance. Indeed, Recalcati (1999) evaluates "the de-vitalization of the body" as "a kind of actuated castration of excessive jouissance". Likewise, he declares that the piercings may be evaluated as the attempts to empty the "body of excessive jouissance". I guess we may suppose that the tattoos of the cases may be serving a similar purpose.

Recalcati (1999) states that in the case of the imaginary-narcissistic relationships, the *Specular I* (ego) takes control and regulates the subject's body, until a mimetic identification is achieved. Congruently, Evans (2006) describes Lacan's thoughts on ego by stating,

> The ego is a construction which is formed by identification with the specular image in the mirror stage. It is thus the place where the subject becomes alienated from himself, transforming himself into the counterpart (p. 52).

In the mirror stage, the ego is constituted onto a misunderstanding and the "subject becomes alienated from himself" (Evans, 2006, p. 118). That is why ego has a paranoiac and narcissistic structure (Evans, 2006). Lacan (1949/1977) summarizes this part in his writing named as "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in the Psychoanalytic Experience" as:

> In the light of this conception, the term primary narcissism, by which analytic doctrine designates the libidinal investment characteristics of that moment, reveals in those who invented it the most profound awareness of semantic latencies. But it also throws light on the dynamic opposition between this libido and the sexual libido, which the first analysts tried to define when they invoked destructive and, indeed, death instincts, in order to explain the evident connection between the narcissistic libido and the alienating function of the *I,* the aggressivity it releases in any relation to the other, even in a relation involving the most Samaritan of aid (p.507).

In accordance with this knowledge related to the developmental roots and the relationship with the body, we may focus on the paranoiac and narcissistic structure.

6.1.3 A narcissistic and paranoiac structure.

The ego is based on a misunderstanding (*méconnaissance in French*) and gives rise to a narcissistic and a paranoiac structure (Evans, 2006). In fact, Lacan claims that the narcissistic structure emerges as a result of the formation of *I* which is based on the identification with the Specular image. According to Lacan, the erotic attraction toward the image is accompanied by an aggressive tendency. The former takes place due to the wholeness of the image, whereas the latter is a result of

comparison of the subject's disintegration to this wholeness. This is what Lacan calls "narcissistic suicidal aggression" (*agression suicidaire narcissique in French*) which gives rise to different types of self-destruction (Evans, 2006). Evans (2006) states, "the narcissistic relation constitutes the imaginary dimension of human relationships" (p. 123).

I think that the cases in this study may indicate the characteristic features of Lacanian narcissism. In fact, the ambivalence of emotions (aggressivity) is one of the important latent themes in this current study, which may be referring to the definition of Lacanian narcissism taking place during the mirror stage. In addition, an exaggerated self-importance, a need for admiration and superiority accompanied by the feelings of powerlessness, worthlessness and inefficiency are thought to be signalling instability in the psychic size just as the comparison of Gestalt and fragmented body in the mirror stage. Moreover, a lack of empathy, an urge to control others by manipulations, putting self into a place of judge and either devaluating or idealizing others may be the indicators of narcissism in accordance with a sense of the contemporary definitions of narcissism. Indeed, some those findings may also be interpreted in Lacanian terms. For example, the urge to control may be associated with the infant's endeavours to take the counterpart (Specular I) under control. Devaluation and idealization, on the other hand, may be arising due to the aggressive feelings in front of the counterpart. Accordingly, the emotions emerged from the data such as love, envy, shame, anxiety and anger are thought to be associated with narcissism and the mirror stage.

The literature indicates that the links between suicide and narcissism has already been established. In addition to Lacan, Freud also mentioned this association. According to the traditional psychoanalytic theory, narcissism arises when an unlimited libidinal energy invested in one's own body rather than an object (Steiner, 2008). In *Mourning and Melancholia*, Freud (1917) claims that in the case of narcissism the object loss may lead to self-annihilation. He states, "the shadow of the objects falls on the ego" (as cited in Stamelman, 1990, p. 52). In fact, shadow is used

as a metaphor for identification here because external objects are to be treated as if they are aspects of self. Identification is strongly linked with introjection because "an identified person seems to be introjected into the self" (Menninger, 1938, p. 33). In addition, identification is associated with the formation of superego. Nevertheless, it is not an identification and superego in an Oedipal sense what I mean here. It may be summarized as: If the child wants to make her mother happy, he can give up what he wants (Tükel, 2015), for the sake of love (from mother to the self). In fact, Freud states that the suicide attempt is "the fulfilment of a punishment and the fulfilment of a wish", and explains it by stating, "turning against [oneself] a death wish which had been directed at someone else" (as cited in Jacobus, 1996, p.118). Congruently, Menninger (1938) names this wish as the "wish to kill" which is located as the first motivational component of suicide, and is associated with identification and introjection. This may explain the murder plans of E. and G. which they mention in their suicide notes. Furthermore, the contemporary psychoanalysts also mention the linkage between narcissism and suicide. For example, Henseler (2012) states, "suicidal crisis (nearly) always arise when a disappointment in a narcissistic object is eliminated by the acting out of a fantasy of fusion with a primary object in a death chosen voluntarily".

Freud links narcissism with autoerotism, and explains it in two types; namely, primary and secondary narcissism. He defines the primary narcissism as a state where there is no object relation. The infant is self-sufficient and in an omnipotent and 'oceanic' feeling in which his ego is boundless and is not a separate being from the environment, as if he is united with God (Steiner, 2008). This symbiotic period of life is also known as the 'normal autism' (Mahler, 1967, as cited in Behrendt, 2015) or 'symbiotic psychosis' (Mahler, 1968, as cited in Ellman, 2010). According to Moncayo (2008), in the primary narcissism there is a "fusion between subject and object, self and other" (p. 5). On the other hand, Freud attracts attention to the fact that the infant is in need of others due to his vulnerability and inadequacy. Thus, the secondary narcissism is claimed to be "a principle motivator for object relations" because the individual needs to return back to the lost circumstances of primary

narcissism due to the need to be loved (Freud, 1914, as cited in Behrendt, 2015). In the secondary narcissism, "the libido that has been directed toward others is withdrawn from objects back into self" (Flanagan, 2008, p.171). Therefore, it may be said that the primary narcissism which is linked with paranoia and projection may be the base for secondary narcissism which is associated with introjection and superego formation, in Freudian terms. On the other hand, Lacan claims that the primordial (primary) narcissism is not something associated with ego-love which arises in the mirror stage, with his terms. Instead, the primordial narcissism is pertain to the imaginary order and linked with Real, whereas the secondary narcissism is placed in the symbolic order (Hurst, 2008).

Congruently, the findings of this study proposed that the cases may be in an illusion of omnipotence – just as described in the case of primary/ primordial narcissism. Moreover, we may claim that the findings imply a fusion between self and the other. The perceptions of self and others in the suicide notes, according to the semantic level analysis, are observed to be dyadic; indeed, both self and others are conceived as either perfect or inadequate by the cases. In terms of themselves, the perceptions of the note-leavers change between grandiose/perfect self and weak/inefficient self. Similarly, their thoughts about others are two-edged because they perceive others either as ideal others or negative others. In harmony with the self-perceptions, the perceptions of others also changes in both ends. The feelings of C. toward life may be a good example here:

> This life is not for me, I get this eventually even if it is late. […] In fact, life is beautiful, living is beautiful, but, as I said, this life is not suitable for me. […] Perhaps, I am not suitable for this life, I don't know. Yet, the life oppressed me very badly. No matter how I tried hard, nothing worked out in the way I wanted in this life. (*Bu hayat bana göre değil, geç de olsa bunu anladım. [...] Hayat güzel aslında, yaşamak güzel ama söyledim ya bu hayat bana göre değil. [...] Belki de ben bu hayata göre değilim bilmiyorum. Ama hayat üstüme çok yüklendi. Ne kadar çaba sarf etsem de hiçbir şey istediğim gibi olmadı hayatta.*) (C.)

As can be seen C.'s opinions toward life is very complicated. He evaluates life as something beautiful, and then it becomes oppressing. In fact, the oppressing feature of life here may signalize a delusion of persecution. If the 'life' here is taken as the Other, the constant change of its value for C. may be claimed. Likewise, his opinions towards himself alter. He states that he is 'not suitable', and then he implies he 'tried very hard' but life rejected giving the things that he wanted. As can be seen, the change in the worth of self and the other is constant and harmonious. Kilborne (2014) states that the feelings of shame bring about a dependency to the phantasies or the calculations associated with how one is viewed by the others. This dependency originates idealizing the others by attributing them some characteristic features which they are not able to have, due to the pursuit of a cure for own inadequacy, limitedness, imperfection and the feelings of isolation. This may be why J. writes to his wife, "You have been my prophet. My blood, my soul, my wife. (*Sen benim peygamberimdin. Kanım, canım, karım*.)". On the other hand, the idealization aggravates the feelings of vulnerability, which leads to defenses linked with narcissism and paranoia (Kilborne, 2014). Therefore, devaluation is the other end of the idealization. According to Kilborne (2014), envy is closely associated with devaluation because envy contains distrust toward pleasure and a pleasure in terms of the other's pain. Kilborne (2014) resembles the feelings of envy and shame to the feelings of a person who is in a room full of mirrors with distorted images of self. Congruently, the investment of the cases for the eye of the Other as in the forms of "a wish to be seen" and "a wish to be purified" may be signalizing a situation where they got stuck in the mirror. Recalcati (1999) explains this situation by stating that there is an "emptiness of being" and a "massive identification" with the ideal image in the case of psychosis. It may indicate that the note-leavers do not have a congruent sense of self and they are in need of being defined by the Other. As Recalcati (1999) says this is a sign for psychosis; in parallel, Fink (1997) declares that for the cases who are psychotic "the overwriting of the imaginary with the symbolic" does not occur so they got stuck in the imaginary order and their ego-ideal cannot be established. Moreover, Fink (1997) adds,

The ego ideal serves to anchor one's sense of self, to tie it to the approval or recognition of the parental Other, its absence leaves one with a precarious sense of self, a self-image that is liable to deflate or evaporate at certain critical moments (p. 89).

The *ego-ideal,* which is a symbolic introjection, is defined as "the signifier operating as ideal, an internalised plan of the law, the guide governing the subject's position in the symbolic order, and hence anticipates secondary (Oedipal) identification" (as cited in Evans, 2006, p. 53). However, for the cases in this study, I have already mentioned my thoughts on the condition that the name of the father is declined or denied by the note-leavers for the sake of being mother's desired object. This means that there may not be a congruent internalization of the law, as in the Oedipal sense. However, I think that the punitive tone which was defined as the 'superego' at the beginning of the study has nothing to do with an Oedipal triangulation; rather, I think that it symbolizes a type of imitation or a "mimetic identification" as Recalcati (1999) names. Therefore, the punitive tone in the suicide notes may be explained with an imaginary compensation which is "an imaginary identification of the narcissistic type with one's fellow man", and it is where the *ideal-I* is located (Recalcati, 1999). I think that the investments for the eye of the Other in the suicide notes may be marked with an imaginary form and may reveal an urge to escape from the persecution anxiety. Imaginary, in Lacanian terms, is associated with the "dual relation between the ego and the specular image" (Evans, 2006, p. 84). Therefore, I think that this imaginary form of investment for the eye of the Other may be associated with *ideal-ego* which is a product of the *mirror stage* and is related to the *specular image*; indeed, "it is a promise of future synthesis towards which the ego tends, the illusion of unity on which the ego is built" (as cited in Evans, 2006, p. 53). The ideal-ego is connected with imaginary projection, omnipotence and the symbiotic relationship, and it is the basement of all future identifications (Evans, 2006).

Nevertheless, narcissism is viewed as a disposition which influences each individual due to the fact that the incest prohibition is for every member of the

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societies; indeed, each member is affected in divergent degrees (Vogeler, 1997). Therefore, I thought that there might be some issues beyond narcissism in those cases. According to Kilborne (2014), narcissism is alike a terrarium which may be counted as a kind of aquarium. In this aquarium there is an environment simulating the needed place for the habituation of reptiles, insects or plants. He states that narcissism resembles a child's rocking himself to sleep in a room because nobody else is in this room except himself. The child creates a new world for himself in order to be protected from the fear or the experience of abandonment. This alienation may bring psychosis to minds. In fact, for Lacan, there is a "self-referential aspect of narcissism" which shelters "paranoid overtones" (Filou, 2009, p. 67). Congruently, the formation of ego is associated with paranoiac structure in Lacanian terms. Freud also associates narcissism with psychosis where he mentions schizophrenia as the 'narcissistic neurosis'. He states,

> The question arises: What happens to the libido which has been withdrawn from external objects in schizophrenia? The megalomania characteristic of these states points the way. This megalomania has no doubt come into being at the expense of object-libido. The libido that has been withdrawn from the external world has been directed to the ego and thus gives rise to an attitude which may be called narcissism. (Freud, 1914, as cited in Strachey, 1914).

Recalcati (1999) makes a differentiation between schizophrenia and paranoia by stating that the jouissance "returns investing the body of the subject" in the case of the former, whereas the jouissance specifying itself "with the locus of the Other" and causing the subject to be pursued by the Other in the case of the latter. I think that the findings, in general, may be depicting a picture of paranoia in this study. However, I will try to proceed from general to specific; therefore, initially, I will try to evaluate the cases in terms of psychosis which is an umbrella term for both paranoia and schizophrenia; and then I will try to focus on paranoia specifically.

Psychosis, in general, takes its roots from foreclosure which results in being stuck in the imaginary order, and may cause hallucinations, an invasion of jouissance, a deficiency in the control over the drives, feminization, the lack of a

question, language disturbances such as an inability to establish new metaphors (due to the lack of paternal metaphor) or an interruption in the sentences and neologism (Fink, 1997). Some of those hallmarks are thought to be concordant with the data and the findings. For example, Fink (1997) claims that the imaginary order dominates the relationships in psychosis; in fact, the ruptures in their relations usually occur with "rivals, competitors, or lovers" who are around their own age. Congruently, in some of the suicide notes (for example C., J, K. and L.), romantic love is declared. Romantic love is one of the situations in which the object (the Other) is idealized and narcissistic libido is shared with this object (Tükel, 2015). In the cases of break-up (separation) or not being able to come together, the individuals may be feeling a great deal of pain and anger due to the libido investment and to the illusion of omnipotence so they may be making a transition toward devaluation. Indeed, from a Freudian point of view, suicide is "turning against [oneself] a death wish which had been directed at someone else". The statements of B. which he wrote to his wife may provide a good example for those aggressive tendencies. In fact, B. blames his wife harshly for leaving him alone and through the end of his suicide note he states, "Love my kids so much that they will not take after me. (*Çocuklarımı çok sev ki bana benzemesinler.*)". As aforementioned, it may address an ambiguity of the emotions or ambivalence, in addition to his urge to kill his wife who may be introjected, from a Freudian point of view. On the other hand, it may signalize a lack of sense of self besides a great deal of investment for the eye of his wife, most probably as a substitute for the specular I. We may also mention a delusion of passion here, by considering the situation from a Lacanian sense. In fact, Lacan (1966/2006) makes a connection between narcissism and paranoia, as a branch of psychosis, when he mentions the case of Alceste in Écrits by claiming that Alceste may have "a delusion of passion" rather than love due to the fact that his love for Celimene integrates an expectation of being loved back. In fact, it is not just an expectation due to the fact that when he was asked "You think then that she loves you?", Alceste states "Heavens, Yes! I wouldn't love her did I not think so." (p. 142). Those types of delusions may be evaluated as paranoid overtones. Moreover, the punitive tone in the

poems of Alceste is evaluated by Lacan as "suicidal aggression of narcissism" rather than "self-punishment" (Lacan, 1966/2006, p. 143). Similarly, the punitive tone and the expressions of romantic love in the suicide notes may be evaluated as the cases' narcissistic suicidal aggression rather than a sign of superego. On the other hand, the expectation of punishment or fear of castration from the Other may be evaluated as a delusion of persecution.

Lacan declares that fear of castration is not sufficient for assuming a patient as psychotic; in fact, the language should be examined. He states that "there must be language disturbances" (as cited in Fink, 1997, p. 96). According to Fink (1997), "language shapes us: it shapes our thoughts, demands and desires" (p. 86). The psychotic is stuck in the imaginary so "the overwriting of the imaginary by the symbolic" fails. It leads to aggressivity, jealousy and rivalry. Fink (1997) claims that "the psychotic has the sense of being possessed by a language that speaks as if it were coming not from inside but from outside" (p. 87), and in the psychosis there is "a confusion between self and other, a difficulty in determining who is speaking" (p. 90). It is said that the psychotics are not able to create new metaphors. Moreover, their sentences are interrupted and the forms of the words are twisted in order to create new words. Congruently, Lacan (1966/2006) marks the characteristic features of language in case of madness by stating,

> Let us follow this path in order to study the significations of madness, as we are certainly invited to by the original forms that language takes on in it: all the verbal allusions, cabalistic relationships, homonymic play, and puns that captivated the likes of Guiraud. And, I might add, by the singular accent whose resonance we must know how to hear in a word so as to detect a delusion; the transfiguration of a term in an ineffable intention; the fixation [figement] of an idea in a semanteme (which tends to degenerate into a sign here specifically); the lexical hybrids; the verbal cancer constituted by neologisms; the bogging down of syntax; the duplicity of enunciation; but also the coherence that amounts to a logic, the characteristic, running from the unity of a style to repetitive terms, that marks each form of delusion—the madman communicates with us through all of this, whether in speech or writing.

Among the cases in this study, H. is known to be psychotic according to the information obtained from the case file. In H.'s suicide note it was noticed that there is a repetition of the statements such as: "Look after my 3 kids (*Üç yavruma iyi bakın*)"; "The reason for my suicide is neediness and poverty (*İntiharımın sebebi yoksulluktu, fakirlikti.*)"; "You are at everyone's peril and everyone is at Allah's peril. (*Sizin günahınız herkesin boynuna, herkesinki de Allah'ın boynuna.*)". In addition, he repeats the word "orphan" so many times. In this regard, Fink (1997) states that a person with psychosis "reiterates again and again the same phrases; repetition replaces explanation" (p. 101). In his article named as *Minotaure*, Lacan mentions the paranoiac structure also uses "an original syntax" marked with repetition, splitting and multiplication (Iversen, 2007). As an example to those types of original syntaxes, H. states, "The ones I loved people the people who loves me should be aware of the fact that I died. (*Benim sevdiklerim insanlar beni seven insanlar haberi olsun öldüğümden.*)". In addition, a semantic ambiguity of the subject of the sentence may give impression of paranoia as in the example of H.'s following sentence: "I was sadly disappointed after my first suicide attempt, they would understand. (*İlk intiharımdan sonra güvendiğim dağlara kar yağmış, onlar anlamıştır.*)". This statement of H. may shelter a paranoid tone. In rest of the cases, there was not a declaration of psychosis in the case files; nevertheless, I decided to examine them, too. In most of the suicide notes, I realized that there are language disturbances. For example, it is thought that B.'s suicide note contains language disturbances in terms of grammatical connection; for example when he says, "As of you, I didn't ask from you so many things you will understand this one day (*Sen olarak ben senden çok şey istemedim bunu bir gün anlayacaksın.*)". Moreover, in C.'s suicide note, I noticed a disturbance in language in terms of tenses. For example, he states, "From now on, I am always with you (*Artık hep senin yanındayım.*)". Although it is a phantasy related to after death, C. writes as if he is already dead. Furthermore, in E.'s suicide note, there is a repetition of his father's swearword together with a remarkable expression like "4+4+4+4+4+". Indeed, he states, "4+4+4+4+4+ I had 4 bullets. One to my son, one to my daughter, one to my wife

and one to me… (*4+4+4+4+4+ Dört mermim vardı. Biri oğlum, biri kızım, biri karım ve biri de beni…*)". As can be seen, there is a repetition in addition to a discontinued sentence. In I.'s suicide note, I realized a paranoid tone due to the fact that there is an ambiguity in the target in his note on the pill box while he says: "You made Ahmet an enemy of me. (*Ahmet'i bana düşman yaptın.*)". This statement was thought to be fragmentary due to the fact that the identity of the subject is not clear. Furthermore, some of the statements in J.'s suicide note seem to be bizarre. To illustrate, he states, "I am fine, don't worry brother. (*Dert etme iyiyim abi.*)" and continues, "I am fine, I am fine. (*İyiyim abi, iyiyim abi*)". Besides the repetitive nature of the statements, it is also questioned semantically that why a man perpetually declares that he is fine before hanging himself. In addition, even though he declared that he sent his mother from the house in order to kill himself, he states, "My dear beautiful mother, give me permission for just one breath (*Canım benim güzel annem bir solukluk izin ver.*)" in the middle of the suicide note. It is not known whether it is a hallucination or not so it would be speculative to discuss this issue here due to the lack of information. Moreover, in K.'s notebook, there is a statement which says, "A stranger is watching", in various pages. It may also indicate a paranoid stance.

In terms of the use of the language, the most striking suicide note was belonging to A., according to me, because it was written by a careful attention to punctuations and spellings. In fact, it may give rise to a thought as if it is a fair copy of a formerly written note in terms of its organization and order. Besides, this note of A. may give an impression as if he is an obsessive who is questioning whether he is dead or alive. On the other hand, although A.'s suicide note is very steady in terms of his language and his handwriting, his method of suicide (by cutting various parts of his body including his throat and throwing himself from the fifth floor of his own house) is drastic. It is not known when A. wrote this suicide note; however, it may be claimed that his way of passage to the act is vividly aggressive. I think that the characteristic features of this suicide note resemble to what Melman (1994) claims about Rousseau's writings; indeed, he states "Rousseau, because of his paranoia, no

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doubt, wrote in marvellously clear language" due to the fact that "he wants to deal with language" (p. 140). Moreover, if we take into account the fact that suicide is a passage to the act, which may be linked with psychosis, in addition to the knowledge of the stable nature of the clinical structures, I think that we cannot evaluate A. as a neurotic. Indeed, Fink (1997) states "a patient who has a 'psychotic break' at age thirty has always had a psychotic structure – it was simply 'untriggered'" (p. 82). Moreover, Lacan evaluates psychosis as a hole, and he claims when the psychosis is triggered the subject falls into it (as cited in Recalcati, 1999).

Lacan's thoughts on an untriggered psychosis which is defined as "a psychotic structure without onset" underlines the function of the imaginary identification which may postpone the start of the psychosis. According to Lacan, "identification with another person provides the psychotic subject with a mechanism of imaginary compensation" (1954-55/1993, as cited in Redmond, 2013, p. 11). It is bounded up with narcissism due to the fact that Redmond (2013) declares that it is a narcissistic identification within the imaginary axis. Lacan (1954-55/1993) states that this "imaginary compensation" is due to lack of Oedipus complex, "which would have given him [the subject] virility in the form, not of the paternal image, but of the signifier, *the Name-Of-The-Father*" (p. 192). In other words, the imaginary compensation may replace the Name-of-the-Father (Recalcati, 1999). This compensation is claimed to provide stability to some extent; in other words, the psychosis becomes untriggered (Redmond, 2013). Congruently, Redmond (2013) declares:

> An untriggered psychosis may be likened to a broken stool; although minus one leg, a three-legged stool may still function to support a person depending on their weight distribution. However, once the person's weight is shifted above the missing leg, it will collapse, person in tow. Similarly, although imaginary identification functions to keep the person "upright," psychosis may be triggered, which leads to the collapse of this supportive function. (p. 11)

Therefore, it is thought that when "the person's weight is shifted above the missing leg", which may be a correspondent to a specific life event in which the

double is collapsed with a triangulation, the psychotic break occurs (Recalcati, 1999). Fink (1997) declares that the psychotic break may be tied to a collapse in the imaginary identifications or a re-emergence of the "feminine position". According to Lacan, the psychotic break (*déclenchement*) occurs as "the subject's reaction to vital situations" (Lacan, 1975, as cited in Lepoutre, Madeira, & Guerin, 2017). In this sense, it may be claimed that the act of suicide is possibly the place where the psychotic break-down takes place. In the case of A., for example, neurosis can be thought as a function which protects the subject against psychosis. In fact, Recalcati (1999) explains this situation by stating, the psychotic structure may not be noticed by the clinician due to the fact that neurosis functions as "a protection screen against psychosis itself".

As stated above, according to Lacan, there is a "self-referential aspect of narcissism" which shelters "paranoid overtones" (Filou, 2009, p. 67). In addition, the ego, which is an outcome of the mirror stage, is based on a misunderstanding which gives rise to a paranoiac structure in addition to a narcissistic structure (Evans, 2006). Indeed, the link between narcissism and paranoia has already been established by Freud (1914/2015) in his analysis of the Schreber who desires death and tries to suffocate and kill himself in the bathroom several times. The hallucinations of Schreber are declared as turning into a women and becoming the wife of the God in order to save the world. Freud (1914/2015) associates those delusions with Schreber's homosexual desires. While interpreting this case, Freud (1914/2015) claims that paranoia can be placed into somewhere among autoerotism, narcissism or homosexuality. In addition, he attracts attention to the megalomania accompanying paranoid disorder. Indeed, he says that most of the paranoids indicate megalomania, and the megalomania itself may generate paranoia. It is claimed that the libidinal object in the case of paranoia is the ego so paranoia may be evaluated as a fixation in the narcissistic period of life. Lacan, on the other hand, interprets the hallucination of Schreber by a "pseudo-triangular scheme" in which he "unifies himself with the primordial object"; indeed, "Schreber identifies himself with his mother; he does so in order to become the spouse of his father, as symbolized by the hallucinatory God

of his delirium" (as cited in De Waelhens, & Ver Eecke, 2001, p.220). Congruently, Lacan states that a limitless, punitive and monstrous father who establishes relationship with his son onto rivalry and antagonism may be the reason why the Oedipal triangulation could not be provided. This type of father is the imaginary father who puts his son into a feminine position (Fink, 1997). I think that E.'s description of his father fits well with what Lacan says "imaginary father". In fact, E. insults his father's virility after his father swears him. He states aggressively, "You are a man, you will fuck my ass. Come on and do it". These swear words puts E. into a feminine position so he might have been ashamed of this feminization which may also indicate a phantasy to be in a feminine position. I think that this situation may reflect a piece from the powerful patriarchal system which may valid for some of the Turkish families. In those types of families, the fathers may be or may be perceived as limitless, punitive and monstrous just as the imaginary father.

Lacan evaluates paranoia as "the most vivid clinical form of the foreclosure of the paternal function", and it has been his clinical asset for the development of a treatment method for psychosis (Lepoutre, et al., 2017). Congruently, Lacan's doctoral thesis was on the case of Aimée, whose diagnosis was 'self-punishment paranoia' (*paranoïa d'autopunition*). This diagnosis was put forward by Lacan, as a new clinical category. The reason why I want to integrate Aimée here is that her style of self-punishment resembles to the punitive tone of the cases in this study. Indeed, Aimée has a delusion to be persecuted by females who are declared to be her maleficent ideals. It is declared that she wounds an actress with a knife in order to be punished (Lo, 2008). According to Lacan, although it seems to be a plan of murder, it is actually an inclination of suicide due to the fact that Aimée attacks her ideal image (Roudinesco, 1990). The female persecutors are represented by the characteristic features of "vanity, coldness, and abandonment of one's natural duties" whereas Aimée represented herself exactly as the opposite with an "ideal of purity and devotion" (Lacan, 1966/2006, p. 138). However, Lacan (1966/2006) claims; "one can say that the madman believes he is different [autre] than he is." (p. 139). Therefore, the stabbed actress may be constituting Aimée's ideal image and awaken

her feelings of envy. Indeed, Lacan evaluates her imprisonment, which may be a representative of persecution, as the place where "the implosion of the beliefs and fantasies involved in her delusion" takes place (1966/2006, p. 139).

Paranoia, as a branch of psychosis, is evaluated as a defence against castration (Melman, 1994). According to Melman (1994), the structure of the paranoia resembles to the Euclidean geometric figures which have a closed form. When we think about a circle, for example, we can claim that there is "an isolation of what is inside from what is outside" (p.136). Just like a circle, the paranoid generates a certain boundary which distinguishes the inside from the outside. This reminds me of the blockage of the communication by the cases, which was mentioned above. Paranoia may be defined as the sense of "being intruded upon by an other" (p. 137). Melman (1994) associates this thinking style with the Lacanian Gestalt structure of the specular image in the mirror, and he states that every other reflection in the mirror creates a threat for the baby and so everything aside the specular image is devalued. The baby throws outside what is bad and starts to feel threatened by it. On the other hand, the reflection on the mirror with which he identifies himself (*the specular I*) also causes a threat because he is also an other, a stranger. Therefore, the urge to destruct the other is the urge to destruct the ego, in a way. As aforementioned, Freud also states that the suicide attempt is "the fulfilment of a punishment and the fulfilment of a wish", and explains it by saying, "turning against [oneself] a death wish which had been directed at someone else" (as cited in Jacobus, 1996, p.118). According to Lacan, this someone else is the ideal ego or another person who has the characteristics of the ideal ego. When the subject puts the ego into a passion-object position, the ego becomes the persecutory object (Melman, 1994). I think that the wish of the cases to be purified and their endeavours related to escaping from castration depicted in this study are congruent with what Melman declares.

In paranoia, Melman (1994) states, there are three versions of delusions; namely, grandiosity, jealousy and protest. When the subject is excluded from a

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symbolic system, he stays in a position of the Other, the one who is spoken about. According to Melman (1994), this provides the subject with a sort of grandiosity. This situation is very akin to the cases in this study, both in terms of the grandiose self which has already been discussed, and the grandiosity depicted in the phantasy of by being talked about after death. The excluded one is the one who is not castrated; therefore, he is not limited as the other members of the group, which also brings about the feelings of grandiosity. However, this subject also feels jealousy because the love he thinks that he deserves due to his distinctiveness goes to another member of the system. As an example from the cases, A. states "Love him [my brother] on my behalf. (*Onu [ağabeyimi] benim yerime de sev*)". This is where the protest starts. According to Melman (1994), the paranoiac has the signs of humanity based on the thought that "nobody should be the Other". It resembles to the statements of the cases where they say, "Nobody is responsible for my death". This humanity leads in paranoia to the aspects of generosity and sacrifice. Moreover, the excluded one is evaluated as the cause in Melman's thought, which gives rise to the "grandiose ideals" and the feelings of "shame and unworthiness" (p. 142). The categories, themes and sub-themes which emerged in the primary level analysis of this study, such as blame related emotions, grandiose/ perfect self-perception, ideal and negative other are considered to be closely linked with those thoughts of Melman. Moreover, the findings of the latent level analysis such as the issues related to aggressivity, separation and castration fits well with Melman's description of paranoia.

In this part of the study, the findings of the primary and secondary level analysis were discussed with a comparison to the raw data and the existing literature. Briefly, the findings in this study, in harmony with the literature, indicate that the cases may have characteristic features of narcissism and paranoia both of which are the products of the Lacanian mirror stage.

6.2 Conclusions, Limitations of the Study and Recommendations

The initial aim of the current study was to examine the note leavers' experiences in relation to others. In order to accomplish this examination, a primary level analysis was conducted and four main categories were obtained. According to the findings, the note-leavers were thought to feel love, gratitude/thankfulness and relief in terms of their positive emotions whereas they were thought to feel blame related emotions, hopelessness and anxiety in terms of their negative emotions. The second category which was the 'perceptions' revealed that the note-leaver's perceptions related to themselves and the others alter in two ends; namely, grandiose/perfect self-perception or weak self-perception for the former; ideal and negative other perception for the latter. Functions of the suicide notes were considered to be revealing issues related to blaming, punishing or giving information to the others. The last category which was named as phantasies showed that the note-leavers may have a phantasy in terms of immortality and controlling the after-death events. In this phase of the study, I tried to conduct an inductive and interpretative thematic analysis rather than trying to verify a particular theory, and it allowed the themes to emerge during the semantic level analysis.

In the second part of the analysis, my aim was to elaborate the semantic level findings progressively in a latent level with a psychoanalytic stance, and to find an answer to the question of 'What underlies the primary level findings of this study?' Specifically, what attracted my attention were the mental representatives of the note-leavers in terms of their relations with the Other. Therefore, I conducted a Lacanian analysis on the primary level findings with the question: 'How are the mental relational interplay of emotions of the subject related to the Other in the suicide notes?' The secondary analysis revealed three main latent themes; namely, ambivalence of emotions (aggressivity), issues related to separation and issues related to the Law. As a summary, the findings of the latent level analysis indicated that the note-leavers may have problems about separation which was considered as a basis for their substantial investment for the eye of the Other and the illusion of

omnipotence. In addition, the note-leavers' emotions indicated an ambivalence in addition to a fear of and an urge to escape from persecution.

When the findings from the primary and the secondary level analysis were put together and discussed with the existing literature, I thought that the cases may be depicting a picture of narcissism. In fact, the ambivalence of emotions (aggressivity) is one of the important latent themes in this current study, which may be referring to the definition of Lacanian narcissism and the mirror stage. In addition, some of the findings from the primary level analysis such as an exaggerated self-importance, a need for admiration and superiority (grandiose/perfect self-perception) accompanied by the feelings of powerlessness, worthlessness and inefficiency (weak/inefficient self-perception) are thought to be signalling an instability in the psychic size, which is thought to be taking its roots from the comparison of Gestalt and fragmented body in the mirror stage. Moreover, a lack of empathy, an urge to control others by manipulations, putting self into a place of judge and either devaluating or idealizing others may be the indicators of narcissism in accordance with a sense of the contemporary definitions of narcissism. Indeed, some those findings may also be interpreted in Lacanian terms. For example, the urge to control may be associated with the infant's endeavours to take the counterpart (Specular I) under control. Devaluation (negative Other) and idealization (ideal Other), on the other hand, may be arising due to the aggressive feelings in front of the counterpart; besides, those mechanism may be associated with a lack of sense of self and a massive identification as discussed above. Accordingly, the emotions emerged from the data such as love, envy, shame, anxiety and anger are thought to be associated with narcissism and the mirror stage. Those findings are thought to be linked with what Lacan calls "narcissistic suicidal aggression" (*agression suicidaire narcissique in French*).

The links between narcissism and paranoia have already been established by the literature (Freud, 1914/2015; Lacan, 1966/2006). Congruently, I thought that a psychotic, specifically paranoiac, structure may be accompanying narcissism in the

suicide notes. Although escaping from castration is evaluated as an element for Lacanian psychopathology, it can be applied to perversion or neurosis as well as psychosis due to the fact that for the humankind "it is impossible to accept castration entirely" and "a completely 'normal' position is never achieved" (Evans, 2006, p. 24). Although the findings of the latent level analysis yielded a diagnostic discussion which revolves around psychosis and perversion, I concluded that psychosis, specifically paranoia, better grasps the findings in this study. I made this decision after a long and labouring elaboration due the fact that during the latent level analysis some of the fundings such as 'issues related to separation', 'the escape (either in forms of refusal or denial) from the castration', 'the supposed existancy of the imaginary father' and 'the urge to accomplish the paternal function' are common features to both psychosis and perversion. By taking my roots here from Lacanian approach, I tried to make a diagnosis by considering the link between passage to the act and psychosis, initially. Nevertheless, Evans (2006) states, "passage to the act does not, according to Lacan, necessarily imply an underlying psychosis" (p. 140). Besides, I took into consideration the fact that there is a stable nature of the clinical structures, which means that "once a psychotic, always a psychotic" (Fink, 1997, p.82). Moreover, I thought that the general discussion provided above designated a picture more akin to paranoia rather than perversion. Indeed, I guess Lacan's (1966/2006) those statements from Écrits, provided below, may justify my thoughts:

> Of these figures of death, the third [suicide] is the supreme detour by which the immediate particularity of desire, reconquering its ineffable form, refinds in negation a final triumph. And we must recognize its meaning, for as analysts we deal with it. It is not, in fact, a perversion of instinct, but rather a desperate affirmation of life that is the purest form we can find of the death instinct.

What this study provided in terms of supporting my ideas related to a diagnosis of psychosis in the shape of paranoia can be listed as follows:

(a)   If we assume that a suicide note may be counted as a literary production in which the subject tries to define himself and the

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others, it should also be taken into account that those types of productions are very prevalent in cases of psychosis according to the literature (Fink, 1997).

(b)   The findings in this study such as the ambivalence of emotions (aggressivity) and the issues related to separation (investment for the eye of the Other as an urge to escape from persecution anxiety, illusion of omnipotence, envy and Other's omnipotence) are thought to be fitting well with the Lacanian mirror stage which is marked with 'the imaginary order', 'the formation of ego' and 'the narcissistic suicidal aggression'. Here, what we should take into consideration is that the ego is based on a misunderstanding and gives rise to a 'narcissistic' and a 'paranoiac' structure (Evans, 2006).

    i. If we establish our thoughts on the idea that the mirror stage is linked with 'body-I', and consider that the cases' suicidal acts such as hanging, jumping, cutting, shooting or intoxicating themselves are their bodily engagements, we can consent that body is an important element in this study. In addition to those suicidal acts, it should be born in mind that some of the cases in this study have tattoos on their bodies, according to the case files. Those types of engagements with the body may be explained with "a kind of actuated castration of excessive jouissance" (Recalcati, 1999) by means of aggressive acts which may indicate "a deficiency in the control over the drives" (Fink, 1997). Congruently, Lacanian psychoanalysis declares that there is "an invasion of jouissance" and "a lack of control over the drives" in case of psychosis (Fink, 1997).

(c)   The described relationships between the note-leavers and the others may be signalizing an imaginary nature and a lack of ego-

ideal. Indeed, the illusion of omnipotence, a great deal of investment for the eye of the other and a fusion between the self and other, accompanied by idealization and devaluation of the both sides, may depict a picture as if there is a lack of sense of self, which brings about a lack of ego-ideal. Therefore, the punitive tone in the suicide notes may be evaluated as 'a mimetic' or 'primordial' form of identification rather than a proof of Oedipal identification and the formation of superego which point at an entrance to the symbolic order. Conformably, the symbolic fails to overwrite the imaginary in case of psychosis (Fink, 1997).

    i. In the suicide notes, the punitive tone, especially in the form of self-punishment, is evaluated as a fear of persecution as depicting a picture of paranoia. Congruently, Melman (1994) states that the sense of "being intruded upon by an other" is an important element in paranoia.

(d) Considering the language used, it may be said that in some of the suicide notes there are language disturbances marked with repetitive, interrupted, discontinued, bizarre and ambiguous sentences. Indeed, the language in some of the suicide notes lacks the essential structure. Those language disturbances may be a representative for psychosis and paranoia. Congruently, Fink (1997) evaluates language in the psychotic structure as an imitation.

    i. The suicide-notes which do not integrate any language disturbances made me think about the condition of an un-triggered psychosis due to the drastically aggressive nature of their acts, as in the example of A.

(e) The findings of this study such as issues related to separation (as in the forms of an investment for the eye of the Other as an escape

from the persecution anxiety, an illusion of omnipotence, envy and the Other's omnipotence) and the issues related to Law (as in the form of refusal of castration) are thought to be fitting well with Melman's (1994) formulization of paranoia which integrates grandiosity, jealousy and protest.

(f)   The way cases accomplish the paternal function may reflect a delusional metaphor in which they took the place of a feminine creator by literary production (writing a suicide note) and the place of an imaginary father who cruelly takes the life (the act of suicide). In fact, delusional metaphor is evaluated as a way of psychotic patient's accomplishment of the paternal function (Fink, 1997).

As a summary of the conclusions, I may state that the cases in this study depicts a picture which may point at narcissism and psychosis; specifically paranoia. Nevertheless, those findings cannot be generalized to the other cases, as a natural limitation of the qualitative research. In fact, as aforementioned, the aim in the qualitative inquiry is to deeply understand a phenomenon by a limited number of cases and make thick descriptions rather than trying to find out a general truth. As a matter of fact, Stone (1999) claims that four type of people may attempt suicide. The first group consists of the rational people facing an insoluble problem like a fatal illness. For example, a person diagnosed with cancer may attempt suicide. Second group is formed of impulsive people. Stone's examples for this group are young and drunk people. Thirdly, irrational people such as alcoholic, schizophrenic and depressed patients may attempt suicide. The last group which has suicide risk is the desperate people. The attempt of desperate people is stated as cry for help in Stone's book. Congruently, Nasio (1998) states that suicide occurs when the subject transgresses the threshold of the *Other's jouissance*, and the manner (by hanging, knife, gun, poison, etc.) or the type of the suicide (hysterical, melancholic, schizophrenic, etc.) determines the place of *jouissance*. Therefore, even if in this study the act of suicide is thought to be linked with psychosis this does not mean that

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all the cases who commit suicide should be evaluated as psychotics. While making my decision on the diagnosis, it should be born in mind that I took into consideration the fact that suicide is a passage to the act which may signal psychosis. In addition, I took my roots from the knowledge based on the stable nature of the clinical structures. However, my real basis was the findings of this study within the scope of the cases which were integrated as data. I think that we should integrate here the ones who die accidentally while just trying to acting out or the ones who are under the effect of psychoactive drugs. Indeed, Fink (1997) states:

> When the neurotic engages in truly physically aggressive acts, he or she usually has to be drunk or in some other sort of altered state (for example, repeatedly angered by someone, pushed to the limit, sleep deprived, or on drugs); only then are the restraints of conscience lifted sufficiently for the neurotic to take direct action (p. 97).

Interpretations in this study may be evaluated as over-interpretations due to the fact that the data is limited to confidently provide a final answer related to the diagnosis. In addition, as aforementioned, it requires a considerable amount of clinical experience to make a Lacanian diagnosis. On the other hand, I think that it is important to examine those findings in the further case studies which comprise case's history as in the form of anamnesis. In addition, interviews with the families or relatives of the dead people may be helpful to clarify the issues related to diagnosis and obtain a more coherent picture about the phenomenon of completed suicide. If we evaluate psychosis as a state of mind, I mean if we accept that the cases kill themselves after a psychotic break as in the condition of passage to the act, we should also know when or under which conditions the suicide notes were written by the cases, as a necessity of the current study. Even though the information related to timing was provided for some of the last messages and the social media shares, it does not exist for the majority of the suicide notes; indeed, I think the mental state is a more important element when compared to the timing. Nevertheless, the mental state of the people who completed suicide may be evaluated as a black box. Maybe this is why some part of the suicide is still a mystery for the researchers who try to

uncover the exact dynamics of this phenomenon. It may also be a pitfall of the retrospective studies.

6.2.1 Implications for Analysis

Despite all the entanglements caused by those ambiguities, I think that clarifying the diagnosis may be an important step in the prevention studies of suicide. Fink (1997) claims that in order to specify how an analyst should handle the transference relationship in the therapy is closely bound up with the diagnosis. Moreover, he states, "certain aims and techniques used with neurotics are inapplicable with psychosis" (p. 103). In fact, some of them may be risky due to the fact that they may trigger psychosis or bring about suicidal depression. For example, interpretations pointing at the unconscious may be dangerous because a psychotic does not have such a locus. In other words, the psychotic is not aware of the fact that he does not know; therefore, interpretations which bring a meaning may put the therapist into the position of the Other. In this respect, those types of interpretations may interrupt the dual relationship (imaginary axis) by creating a triangulation. In addition, a therapist who pertains himself/herself to a position in which he/she initiates the paternal metaphor for a psychotic patient, it may result in delusions of persecution related to the therapist. Congruently, Recalcati (1999) claims that in the case of untriggered psychosis which seems like neurosis, psychotic break may occur when the neurotic structure is treated. Therefore, while studying with psychotic patients, the aim should be providing or preserving the pre-psychotic imaginary conditions in which the patient was/is stabilized. According to Fink (1997), a cure for psychosis, other than that, does not exist.

According to Recalcati (1999), the stabilization of a psychotic patient may be provided by "an imaginary compensation" because it may compensate the hole associated with the *Name-of-the-Father* by providing an imaginary identification which integrates a narcissistic consolidation. With Lacan's words, it represents "a

series of purely conformist identifications with characters who will give the subject the feeling of what one has to do to be a man" (as cited in Recalcati, 1999). Recalcati (1999) resembles the imaginary compensation to Helene Deutsch's definition of "personalities as if" in addition to Winnicott's "false-self". It may be corresponding to the *Ideal ego*, in Lacanian terms. What may constitute an imaginary compensation in the therapy room may be a "holding" environment with a therapist who takes the place of "a sufficiently good mother" (Recalcati, 1999) and preserves the dual relationship with the patient (Fink, 1997). An approach other than that which integrates a third element interrupting the imaginary couple by separating them may result in a psychotic break. In this sense, Recalcati (1999) explains Lacan's thoughts by stating,

> […] Lacan rigorously defines in the "Post-scriptum" of "On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis," when he states that the encounter with an "A-father"- that is with the encounter in the real with the symbolic leg the subject-stool has always lacked- is what determines the triggering of the psychosis.

Nevertheless, we already know that therapy is a process which ends; in other words, it is not infinite. Congruently, Recalcati (1999) states that "a massive identification" contains the pitfall of "the negative encounter", and it may also lead to a decompensation. Therefore, he suggests two other ways for the stabilization of psychosis; namely, delirious metaphor and substitution. The former provides the patient with a temporary meaning which re-organizes the subject's reality by "an imaginary production" that assumes the triggering. To illustrate, Schreber's delirium in which he thinks that he is the wife of the God may be evaluated as a metaphor for signifying his identification with his mother. According to Fink (1997), the delusional process provides the patient with an explanation related to his cause of being. On the other hand, the substitution provides a subjective mode which impedes the triggering just as the imaginary compensation does; therefore, we may evaluate substitution as a more rational option when compared to the delusional metaphor. Recalcati (1999) associates substitution with a symbolic metaphor in which the

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subject can make "a proper name for itself" which is socially accepted. Moreover, substitution provides the subject with a kind of individuation and an identity or ego independent from the others. In other words, we may claim that substitution is a way that focuses on working through separation. Recalcati (1999) exemplifies substitution with "the production of a body of work". A specific example of substitution, from Recalcati (1999), is about one of his psychotic patients who copies the works of the masters of art. He states, "becoming a 'copyist' of the great masters allowed the subject to progressively attain an effective stabilization of her psychosis". Congruently, according to Fink (1997), while studying with a psychotic patient, the aim of the therapist should be to "help the patient construct an understanding, edify a world of meaning that allows the individual to find a place for him- or herself" by focusing on the imaginary order and trying to make the imaginary "as sturdy and solid as possible" (p. 108).

The findings of this study depicted a picture of narcissism and paranoia in terms of diagnosis for the cases. Correspondingly, a group of questions may arise related to the treatment of a suicidal patient who is diagnosed with narcissism and paranoia, specifically. As aforementioned, from a Lacanian point of view, narcissism is viewed as a disposition which influences each individual due to the fact that the incest prohibition is for every member of the societies; indeed, each member is affected in divergent degrees (Vogeler, 1997). Therefore, I think that it may be more important to focus on paranoia rather than narcissism in the treatment of a suicidal patient with those diagnoses. The highlighted points in terms of psychosis above are also operative for paranoia; considering that paranoia is a branch under the psychosis; that is to say, psychosis is an umbrella term for paranoia. In order to make those highlighted points more concrete, I may mention here the article of Schwartz (2009) who provides a quite deal of information related to the treatment of paranoia in specific. She states that while treating a patient with the diagnosis of psychosis, the analyst should take the place of an active listener who accepts the patient's world view. In addition, she claims, "the analyst will offer words that function as does a third leg on a stool" (p.300). By a case example, she tries to clarify the important

points of treating a paranoid patient who is named as Thomas. He is described as a patient whose father is a dominant, perfectionist, angry and rivalrous man, whereas Thomas' mother is pictured as an over-involved and dissatisfied woman. In terms of transference, Schwartz (2009) states that paranoia may reveal itself in the therapeutic relationship. Indeed, Schwartz (2009) says that the patient has thoughts of persecution from the part of the analyst. This transference also indicates itself in his relationship with his boss, as if he would be persecuted or criticized by his boss. In terms of the treatment of this patient, Schwartz (2009) mentions some structures which are created in the analysis. They are in the forms of 'limit statements' which provide a distance between the patient and the Other. In addition, she mentions their work on the awareness in terms of "the lack in the Other" (p. 307). However, the emphasis in the treatment of Thomas is the creation of a proper name. More specifically; 'naming and knotting' are the main elements in the analysis. For Thomas, this proper name is 'being a successful businessman who makes money'. According to Schwartz (2009), knotting the 'Symbolic, Imaginary and Real' provides an "extra leg to the stool" by creating "a safety net" (p. 310).

To conclude, the diagnostic discussion points at narcissism in addition to a psychotic condition, specifically paranoia, for the cases in this study. Those results should be evaluated as the finger prints because the suicide notes are unique for each individual. However, the current study highlights the important and common issues observed in the data by trying to make a thick description. With the help of a careful examination of the literature, this study indicates the importance of the diagnosis when conducting therapy with suicidal patients who may have a psychotic structure.

6.4 Researcher's Final Reflections

Before ending my thesis, I want to make a reflection of my journey that I've been undertaking throughout the process. My starting point in this thesis was to investigate a phenomenon with a hope in terms of contributing to the literature of suicide; however, it also provided a journey inside me and some answers related to

my own specular I. Although this is my first experience in qualitative research, I know that it is really important and valuable to make the researcher's own processes or progression transparent as much as possible for the ones who read their studies due to the fact that the readers will construct their own realities as a result of the nature of social constructivism.

At the beginning of this study, I was very excited about the topic I have chosen because I had a deep curiosity related to the phenomenon of suicide due to my personal causes which I have already declared. There have been times that I had difficulty in terms of defining my distance between myself and the data; in fact, it became obvious for me when my supervisor helped me to notice that my terminology changes throughout the process. For example, I realized that initially I named the cases as "suicide victims" whereas later on I started to use "self-murderers". After I got aware about this issue, I tried to evaluate my emotions related to the act of suicide and I tried to take a position as a more *unbiased* researcher. In addition, I have had a motivation to prevent suicide as a clinician since the beginning of the study. This may be due to my assumed responsibility or rescuer role that I have internalized as a clinical psychologist. This inclination of mine has already been subjected to refractions during my education as a psychotherapist in addition to the castrating effects of this study, which, I think, contributed to my progress both as a therapist and as a researcher. Moreover, thanks to Ian Marsh's (2010) book named as "Suicide, Foucault, History and Truth", which I had been reading concurrently while making my data analysis, I got the chance to understand that my position to the truth takes its roots from my historical background which integrates a belief in the power of knowledge and a clinical stance oriented by the urge to the investigation of pathology and treatment. Therefore, I realized that while I look into the world through those glasses, there is not an option to be fully 'unbiased' during the analysis. Thus, this thesis is very meaningful for me due to the fact that it made me realize and acknowledge my own lack one more time.

As I have already mentioned, this was my first qualitative study. Although I think that this way of research consumes so much time and energy, it gave me a great deal of enthusiasm due to the fact that I believe that it helped me to progress in my own development both as a researcher and as a therapist. In addition to the qualitative inquiry, Lacanian analysis was a new area for me; in fact, I have tried to learn the essential points of Lacanian approach while conducting this study. I evaluate this situation as an advantage because it gave me the chance to investigate and brainstorm rather than basically applying the concepts to the findings. I feel grateful for learning and to be continuing to learn.

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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Canbolat, Fazilet
Nationality: Turkish (TC)
Date and Place of Birth: 27 March 1987, Ankara
Marital Status: Single
e-mail: fazilet_can@hotmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
BS	METU Psychology	2010
High School	Kalaba High School, Ankara	2005

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2017 October-present	A private instution	Psychotherapist
2017 February- 2017 October	100/2000YÖK Scholarship Psychology Department, METU	Researcher
2014 February- 2016 July	Ipek University, Psychology Department	Research Assistant
2011 November- 2014 February	AYNA Clinical Psychology Unit, Psychology Department, METU	Student Assistantship (Secretary Position)

PUBLICATIONS

Canbolat, F. (2017). Nesne İlişkileri Kapsamında Freudyen Konseptler üzerine bir Literatür Taraması: Oral Saplanımlı bir Histeri Vakası ve Terapi Süreci, *AYNA Klinik Psikoloji Dergisi 4*(2).

Şengül, B.Z., Ünal, E., Akça, S., **Canbolat, F.**, Denizci, M., Baştuğ, G., (2015). Psychometric Properties of the Hypersensitive Narcissism Scale (HSNS) in a Turkish Sample, *Düşünen Adam The Journal of Psychiatry and Neurological Sciences*,28; 231-241.

Canbolat, F. (2014). Haset ve Psikopatoloji İlişkisinin Film Örnekleriyle Ele Alınması. *AYNA Klinik Psikoloji Dergisi 1*(2).

Literatüre göre intihar notları, intihar çalışmaları için önemli araçlar olarak kabul edilmektedir. Tumram ve Ambade (2016) intihar notlarını "kurbanın kendi hayatını sonlandırma niyetini belgelediği notlar" (s. 256) olarak tanımlamış ve bu belgeyi bir mesaj olarak değerlendirmiştir. Chris Thomas'a (1980) göre, antik tarihte ilk olası intihar notu Mısır'daki bir papirüs üzerine yazılmıştır ve notun sahibinin depresif psikoz özellikleri gösterebileceği iddia edilmiştir. Thomas tarafından yorumlanan bu papirüs üzerindeki şiirlerin "dış hakikatten ziyade içsel fanteziyi yansıttığı" öne sürülmüştür (s. 285).

İntihar olgusunu anlamlandırmak için intihar notlarının anahtar olarak kullanıldığı çok sayıda araştırma alanı olmuştur (Ho, Yip, Chiu ve Halliday, 1998). Bu bağlamda yapılan çalışmalar, 'nomotetik' ve 'idiyografik' yaklaşımlar olmak üzere iki ana yaklaşımla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Birincisi nicel araştırma ile ilgili olup genellenebilirliğe odaklanırken, ikincisi nitel araştırmanın bir gereğidir ve vakaların derinlemesine analizini içerir (Leenaars, 2002). Yapılan çalışmaların çoğunda, Leenaars'a ait 'çok boyutlu intihar modeli'ne dayanan istatistiksel analizler kullanılmıştır (Leenaars, 1988). İçerik ve tema analizlerinin yaygın yöntemler olarak kullanıldığı ileri sürülen bu araştırmalarda önceden var olan kategoriler ve sayılar üzerinde çalışılmıştır. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmaların nitel araştırmanın doğasına aykırı olduğu ve yönsemsel bağlamda nicel analiz olarak değerlendirilmesi gerektiği düşünülmüştür. Menninger (1938), intihar olgusunu anlayabilmek için yapılan çalışmaların istatistiksel analizlerden ve bilinç düzeyindeki motivasyonlardan ziyade bilinçdışı dürtüler üzerinde durması gerektiğini ileri sürmüştür, zira ona göre intihar oldukça karmaşık bir eylemdir ve basit, tesadüfi, münferit bir tahrik eylemi olarak değerlendirilemez. Benzer biçimde, Shneidman intihar araştırmalarında hem nitel hem de nicel çalışmaların kullanılması gerektiğini, ancak nitel araştırma metodunun

doğasında yer alan idiyografik yaklaşımın intihar notları üzerinde çalışmak için en uygun yöntem olduğunu ileri sürmüştür (aktaran Leenaars, 2010).

Günümüze kadar, intihar notları üzerine yapılan niceliksel araştırmalarda genel itibariyle intihar notlarının hangi koşullarda bırakılıp hangi koşullarda bırakılmadığı veya not bırakan kişilerin karakteristik özelliklerinin ne olduğu gibi araştırma soruları yanıtlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Ancak bu çalışmalar, not bırakan kişiler ile not bırakmaya kişiler arasındaki benzerliğe dikkat çekmektedir, ve bu bağlamdaki çalışmalardan elde edilen bulguların genel itibariyle karmaşık sonuçlar verdiği öne sürülür (Olson, Wahab, Thompson ve Durrant, 2011; Tewksbury, Suresh ve Holmes, 2010). Bunun yanı sıra, not bırakan kişilerin karakteristik özellikleri cinsiyet, yaş ve kültür bakımından ve intihar notlarının içerikleri bakımından incelenmiştir. Cinsiyet açısından kayda değer olmayan farklılıkların olabileceği (Leenaars, 1987; Lester ve Heim, 1992; Lester ve Linn, 1997); yaş açısından yaşlı kesimin intihar notlarında tecrit ve hastalığa daha fazla değindiği (Bauer, Leenaars, Berman, Jobes, Dixon ve Bibb, 1997); kültür açısından ise çok büyük farklılıklar olmamakla birlikte Türk örnekleminde dolaylı anlatımın daha yaygın olduğu ileri sürülmüştür (Leenaars, Sayin, Candansayar, Leenaars, Akar ve Demirel, 2010). Diğer yandan, niteliksel araştırmalar konu bakımından iki ana odak noktasından ilerlemiştir. Bu alandaki çalışma akımlarından biri notların ardındaki motivasyona odaklanırken, başka bir araştırma akımı intihar notlarını iletişim araçları olarak değerlendirmekte ve iletişimle ilgili unsurlara odaklanmaktadır. Motivasyon üzerine yapılan çalışmalardan biri intihar araştırmacısı olarak tanınan Sheidman'in pşişe acısı (*psych-ache*) teorisini ortaya koyduğu çalışmadır. Bu teoriye göre, intiharın ölümcül olma derecesi psikolojik acıya, hissedilen baskıya ve zihin karışıklığına bağlıdır. Diğer taraftan, McClelland, Reicher ve Booth (2000) intihar notlarının intihar eden kişilerin ilişkilerini yansıttığını, dolayısıyla bu notlarda motivasyondan ziyade iletişim stillerinin incelenmesi gerektiğini savunur. Bu araştırmacılar, intihar notları üzerinde söylem analizi yapıp, notlardaki temel fonksiyonun 'kendini ya da diğerini (mektubun yazıldığı kişileri) suçlama' olduğunu ileri sürmüşlerdir.

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İletişim, temel olarak 'mesaj gönderme ve alma' ya da 'anlamlı mesaj alışverişinin dinamik süreci' olarak tanımlanır (Steinberg, 2007). Diğer yandan, intihar notu iletişim aracı olarak değerlendirildiğinde; notun sahibinin muhataba bir mesaj gönderdiği ancak kendisine gelecek olan mesajı blokladığı ve ölümün de doğası gereği muhataptan bir yanıt alamadığı göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır. Bu bağlamda, intihar eden kişilerin intihar notlarının ya da intihar eyleminin kendisinin tek yönlü ve doğrusal bir istikamette bir mesaj içerdiği söylenebilir. İntihar notu yazan kişinin diğerinden gelecek olan mesajı bloke ederek, zihnindeki boşlukları düşlemlerle dolduruyor olabileceği düşünülmüştür. Bu nedenle, kendini öldüren kişinin diğerleriyle ilişkilerindeki deneyimlerinin yanı sıra, zihnindeki fail ve Öteki temsillerinin anlaşılmasının ve eylemin arkasındaki düşlemlerin keşfedilmesinin önemli olabileceği varsayılmaktadır. Lacancı bir bakış açısıyla intihar, "sembolik ağdan [dil] çıkış" ve "toplumsal bağın çözülmesi" olarak tanımlanan eyleme geçiş (*passage à l'acte*) olarak kabul edilebilir (aktaran Evans, 2006). Bu bağlamda, "intihar notu bırakma" önemli bir araştırma konusu haline gelmektedir. Mevcut çalışmanın temel amacı not bırakan kişilerin büyük Öteki ile olan ilişkisini incelemektir. Diğer bir deyişle, bu çalışmada failin Öteki'ne yönelik duygularının zihinsel temsilleri nitel araştırma tekniği kullanılarak, Lacancı bir bakış açısıyla incelenmiştir. Ankara Cumhuriyet Savcılığı'ndan alınan belgeler tematik analiz yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Uygulama bağlamında, intihara meyilli hastaların duygularının psikoterapi alanında nasıl değerlendirilebileceğine ya da aktarımın ne şekilde ele alınabileceğine yönelik soruları yanıtlamak için bu çalışmanın bir başlangıç niteliğinde düşünülebileceği varsayılmıştır.

Psikanalitik bakış açısına göre, kendine zarar verme davranışları ve intihar ölüm dürtüsünün bir ifadesi olarak değerlendirilmektedir (Weatherill, 1999). Lacan ölüm dürtüsünü anne ile olan ilk ilişkiye ve emzirilme süreçlerine bağlayıp; anoreksi, madde bağımlılığı (ağız yoluyla), gastrik nevroz gibi yemeye ilişkin pasif intihar türlerini 'ölüme yönelik iştah' olarak açıklar (Lacan, 1938/t.y). Anne ile çocuk arasındaki simbiyotik ilişkinin kesintiye uğramasının, çocuğun psişesinde kalıcı bir işarete yol açtığı belirtilmektedir (Evans, 2006). Buna ek olarak, Lacan anne ve ölüm

arasında bir bağın olduğunu, hatta defin uygulamalarının anne rahmine dönüşü simgeleyebileceğini söyler (Lacan/t.y). Lacan'a göre, fail kaybedilen anne imajını ölüm yoluyla yeniden bulmaya çabalar (aktaran Rudinesco, 1997). Dolayısıyla, Lacanyen bakış açısına göre intihar, dili yani semboliği aşarak anneyle olan simbiyotik ilişkiye ya da hakikate geri dönme çabası olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Diğer Freud sonrası psikanalist teorisyenlerden farklı olarak, Lacan ego yerine 'fail' ile ilgili düşüncelerinden söz eder (Evans, 2006). Lacan'a göre ego ayna evresinin bir çıktısıdır; zira Lacan, kendisini parça parça olarak deneyimleyen failin aynadaki imaja ve onun bütün ve tam olmasına hayranlık duyması ve bu imajla özdeşim kurması yoluyla ortaya ortaya çıkan egonun bir yanılsamadan ibaret olduğunu ve yabancılaşmaya sebebiyet verdiğini ileri sürer. Ayna evresinin hem rekabet ve agresyona yönelik duyguları hem de erotik elementleri içinde barındırması, Lacan'ın 'narsistik intihar agresyonu (*narcissistic suicidal aggression*)' olarak tanımladığı durumu işaret etmektedir. 1960 yılında Lacan, ayna evresine yönelik düşüncelerini revize ederek, ayna önünde bebeği tutan ebeveynin yüzündeki mimiklerin, tanımanın ve onaylamanın bu süreçte bebekte vuku bulan libidinal yatırımı açıklayabileceğini ileri sürmüştür (aktaran, Fink, 1997). Ebeveynin ayna önünde kullandığı dile vurgu yapılarak, bu noktada imajinel (imgesel) olanın sembolikle yani dil ile yeniden yazıldığı ifade edilmektedir. Ayrıca imgeseldeki agresiflik ve kıskançlığın, dilin müdahalesiyle ideallere, otorite figürlerine, yasaya, performansa, başarıya ve suçluluğa evrildiği belirtilir (Fink, 1997). Çocuğun, Büyük Başka'nın bakışını içe atması ve kendini onun gözünden görmesiyle ego-idealin geliştiği dile getirilir (Swales, 2012). Bu noktadan itibaren, ötekinin arzusunun tüm insan tecrübesine aracılık ettiği, hatta failin kendini diğerleri için doğrulamak adına intihar bile edebileceği söylenir (Mikhailova, 2005). Büyük Başka, Lacan'ın en karmaşık kavramlarından biri olup; dil, bilinçdışı, anne, yasa, talep, arzu ya da acılı zevk (*jouissance*) gibi farklı nosyonları niteleyebilmektedir (Fink, 1995). Lacanyen analizde küçük başka (*the other*) ayna imajını belirtirken, Büyük Başka (*the Other*) semboliğe, yasaya ve bunun gibi asimile edilemeyen anne gibi öznelere ilişkin bir kavramdır (Evans, 2006).

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İntihar notları üzerinde derinlemesine bir inceleme sunabilmek için mevcut çalışmada niteliksel analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Niceliksel çalışmalardaki gibi genellenebilirlik esasına odaklanmaktan ziyade, niteliksel araştırmanın amacı sosyal bir olguyu kendi bağlamında derin ve detaylı olarak değerlendirmek ve olguyu kabaca tasvir etmektir. Ek olarak, bu çalışma yöntemi 'nasıl, ne, neden' gibi sorular sordurarak araştırmacıya etiyolojiyi araştırma şansı tanır (Hays & Singh, 2012). Nitel çalışmalarda araştırmanın güvenirliğini (*trustworthiness*) sağlamak için öznellik, düşünümsellik, doygunluk gibi bir takım unsurlara odaklanılır (Morrow, 2005). Ontolojik bağlamda nitel ve nicel araştırma yöntemlerinin temel farklarına mevcut çalışmada detaylı olarak değinilmiştir. Özetlemek gerekirse, "Gerçekliğin nasıl bir doğası vardır?" sorusuna yanıt olarak ortaya çıkan, gerçek ve doğru kavramlarına yönelik inancı temsil eden ontolojinin iki temel türü bulunmaktadır (Killam, 2013). Bunlardan birincisi realism, ikincisi ise rölativizmdir (bağıntıcılık), ki nitel çalışmalar bu bakış açısından kaynağını almaktadır. Rölativistik bakış açısı çok sayıda gerçekliğin olabileceğini ve gerçekliğin zamana ve mekâna göre değişiklik gösterebileceğini ileri sürmektedir (Klenke, 2016). "Bilgi nasıl edinilir?" sorusuna yanıt bulmaya çalışan epistomolojik bağlamda, nitel çalışmalar genellikle sosyal yapılandırmacılık yaklaşımına dayanmaktadır. Bu bakış açısına göre, araştırmacı çalışmasında aktif bir rol üstlenir ve çalışmanın bir parçasıdır, dolayısıyla bir araştırmacı dünya görüşüyle, düşünceleriyle, yaşantılarıyla yaptığı çalışmayı etkiler (Morgan ve Smircich, 1980). Araştırmanın metodu ise nitel ya da nicel olarak belirlenebilir. Nitel çalışmaların amacı, çoklu gerçeklik ilkesini göz önünde bulundurarak, deneyimlere ve bağlama dayalı olayları derinlemesine incelemektir (Killam, 2013).

Araştırmada örneklem yöntemi olarak amaca yönelik örneklem (*purposive*) yönteminden faydalanılmıştır. Çalışmayı gerçekleştirebilmek için gerekli etik ve resmi izinler alındıktan sonra, Ankara Cumhuriyet Başsavcılığı'ndan 12 adet dosya biçiminde veri alınmıştır. Dosyaların içeriğinde; 'intihar notları, defter, sosyal medya paylaşımları, son mesajlar, akraba ve görgü tanıklarının ifadeleri, olay yeri inceleme raporları ve otopsi raporları' gibi bir takım resmi belgeler vardır. Bu çalışma için

seçilen veri seti ise, intihar notları, bir adet defter, sosyal medya paylaşımları ve son mesajlardan oluşmaktadır. Bu belgelerin sayısı hem verilerin yeterliliğine hem de Cumhuriyet Başsavcılığı'nın iznine bağlı olarak belirlenmiştir.

Coffey (2014), dokümanlarla çalışırken tema analizi yöntemi kullanmanın tamamıyla mümkün ve uygun olduğunu belirtmiştir. Nitel araştırmanın ana akımı olarak bilinen tematik analiz, belirli bir teori veya epistemolojiye bağlı değildir. Aksine, tema analizi, teorik olarak esnek bir yaklaşımdır ve temellendirilmiş kuram (*grounded theory*), konuşma ve söylem analizi ya da fenomenolojik analiz gibi farklı epistemolojik yaklaşımlarda bir araç olarak kullanılabilir (Braun ve Clarke, 2006). Tematik analiz, veri içerisindeki kalıp veya temaların araştırılması yoluyla gerçekleştirilir (Boyatzis, 1998). Mevcut çalışmada, esnek doğası ve doküman analizine uygunluğu sebebiyle, tematik doküman analizi yönteminden faydalanılmış; araştırma sorularına paralel olarak veriler tüme-varımsal ve yorumlayıcı tema analizi ile analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sırasında, Braun ve Clarke (2006) tarafından ortaya konulan tema analizi aşamaları uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın güvenirliğini sağlayabilmek için araştırmacı inanılırlık (*credibility*), tasdiklenebilrlik (*confirmability*), güvenilebilirlik (*dependability*) gibi bir takım öğelerin sağlanması konusunda hassasiyet göstermiştir. Araştırmacının çalışmanın çeşitli kısımlarında kendi sürecini saydamlaştırmaya çalışması (*reflexivity*) bu hassasiyete örnek olarak gösterilebilir. Buna rağmen nitel araştırmanın doğasından ve bu çalışmanın deseninden kaynaklanan sınırlılıklar olmuştur, ancak bu kısıtlılıkların çalışma üzerindeki etkisini en aza indirgemek için saptanan unsurlar detaylı bir biçimde ele alınmıştır.

Anlamsal düzeyde açıklayıcı bir analizle yola çıkıp daha sonra literatürün de yardımıyla birinci düzey bulguların yorumlandığı ve kuramsallaştırıldığı bir ikinci düzey analiz yapmak, Patton (1990)'a göre, araştırma yaparken kullanılabilecek en ideal yoldur. Uygun biçimde, bu çalışmadaki analizler iki ana adımdan oluşmaktadır. Öncelikle, "İntihar notu bırakan kişilerin diğerleriyle ilişkilerindeki deneyimleri nasıldır?" sorusunu yanıtlamak amacıyla birincil (anlamsal) düzeyde tema analizi

gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu düzeydeki analizler esnasında kodlamaların verinin içinden çıkmasına ve tüme-varımsal yöntemin gerekliliklerinin sağlanmasına dikkat edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Tüme-varımsal tematik analizin amacı, verilerin belirgin olan veya yüzeyde bulunan anlamlarını araştırmaya yöneliktir (Braun ve Clarke, 2006). Ayrıca, bu tür analizlerde, araştırmacı önceden var olan bir kodlama çerçevesinden faydalanmamaktadır (Boyatzis, 1998). Çalışmanın ikinci adımında, "İntihar notlarında failin büyük Başka'ya ilişkin duyguları zihinsel düzeyde nasıl açıklanır?" sorusu yanıtlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu amaçla, Lacanyen bakış açısından faydalanılarak birincil düzey analizlerden elde edilen bulgular ikincil bir düzeyde yorumlanarak irdelenmiştir. Diğer bir deyişle, ikincil (yorumlayıcı/ örtük) düzeyde bir analiz gerçekleştirilmiştir. Braun ve Clarke (2006)'a göre, örtük düzeyde tema analizi, verilerin anlamsal ya da yüzeysel içeriğinin ötesine geçmeyi ve altta yatan fikirleri, varsayımları ve kavramları incelemeyi amaçlar. Bu araştırmacılar, örtük düzey analizlerinin doğası gereği psikanalitik açıklamalarla uyumlu olduğunu ileri sürmüştür. Bu bağlamda, görünenin altındakini bulma merakıyla bilinçdışı süreçlere odaklanılarak birincil düzeyden ortaya çıkan imleyenler ikincil düzey analizlerde Lacanyen bakış açısıyla yorumlanmaya çalışılmıştır.

Birincil düzey tema analizinde, çeşitli tema ve alt temaları içeren dört ana kategori ortaya çıkmıştır. Araştırmacı, ana kategorileri 'duygular', 'algılar', 'işlevler' ve 'düşlemler' biçiminde isimlendirmiştir. Bu kategorilerin altında yer alan tema ve alt temalar şu şekilde özetlenebilir:

(a) 'Duygular' kategorisi 'olumlu' ve 'olumsuz' duygular olmak üzere iki temadan oluşur. Olumlu duygular teması 'sevgi', 'minnettarlık / şükran' ve 'rahatlama' olmak üzere üç alt temaya sahiptir. Olumsuz duygular temasının da 'mesuliyete yönelik duygular (suçluluk, utanç, üzüntü ve öfke), 'umutsuzluk' ve 'kaygı' olmak üzere üç alt teması vardır.

(b) 'Algılar' olarak isimlendirilen ikinci kategoride de 'kendiliğe yönelik algılar' ve 'diğerine yönelik algılar' olmak üzere iki tema ortaya

çıkmıştır. Kendiliğe yönelik algılar 'büyüklenmeci/ mükemmel benlik algısı' ve 'güçsüz/ yetersiz benlik algısı'; diğerine yönelik algılar ise 'ideal öteki' ve 'olumsuz öteki' olmak üzere ikişer alt temadan oluşmaktadır.

(c) Üçüncü kategori 'işlevler' kategorisi olarak adlandırılmıştır ve üç tema içerir. Bu temalar, 'mesuliyete yönelik işlevler', 'intihara dair diğerlerini bilgilendirme' ve 'cezalandırma' biçiminde isimlendirilmiştir. Bu temalar arasından mesuliyete yönelik işlevlerin, 'aklanma (sorumluluktan veya suçlanmadan arınma) ihtiyacı' ve 'diğerini aklama (sorumluluktan veya suçlamadan arındırma) ihtiyacı' olmak üzere iki alt teması olduğu düşünülmüştür.

(d) Dördüncü ve son kategori 'düşlemler' olarak isimlendirilmiş olup iki temadan oluşmaktadır. Bu temalar, 'ölüm sonrası yaşama dair düşlemler' ve 'ölüm sonrası olayların kontrollüne dair düşlemler' biçiminde belirlenmiştir. Ölüm sonrası olayların kontrolüne dair düşlemler teması üç alt temaya sahiptir: 'Son dilekler ve ricalar', 'Yönlendirmeler, talimatlar ve öneriler', 'Diğerinin duygularının kontrolü'.

Bu kategorilerin, temaların ve alt temaların yapıları gereği kesiştiği noktalar vardır, diğer bir deyişle, bu elementler arasındaki sınırlar akışkan olarak nitelendirilebilir. Bu kısımda, belirtilen kategoriler, temalar ve alt temalar mektuplardan alıntılarla özetlenmeye çalışılacaktır.

Duygular kategorisinin ilk teması 'sevgi', 'minnettarlık / şükran' ve 'rahatlama' gibi alt temalardan oluşan 'olumlu duygular'dır. Örneğin, A. vakasının mektubundaki "*Bir tanecik abim, bu dünyada ben en çok seni sevdim.*" cümlesi sevgi olarak kodlanmışken, "*Canım ailem benim, sizinle yaşadığım her dakikaya binlerce şükürler olsun.*" cümlesi minnettarlık/ şükran kapsamında değerlendirilmiştir. A.'nın "*Acılarımdan kurtuluyorum.*" ifadesi ise rahatlama olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Bu alt temalar, diğer intihar notlarında da sıklıkla kodlanmıştır. Duygular kategorisinin

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ikinci teması olan 'olumsuz duygular' da 'mesuliyete yönelik duygular (suçluluk, utanç, üzüntü ve öfke), 'umutsuzluk' ve 'kaygı' olmak üzere üç alt temadan oluşmaktadır. Mesuliyete yönelik duygular 'kendini suçlama' ve 'diğerlerini suçlama' olarak iki dala ayrılmıştır. İntihar notlarında, kendini suçlama 'suçluluk, utanç, üzüntü ve kendine öfke' biçiminde duygular halinde ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu duygular tek tek ayrıştırılmadan, kendini suçlama başlığı altında ele alınmıştır. Genel olarak, *"Beni affedin"* ya da *"Üzgünüm"* gibi söylemler kendini suçlama başlığı altında değerlendirilmiştir. Daha belirgin bir örnek olarak, B. vakasının intihar notunda bir takım itiraflarda bulunarak kendini suçladığını görürüz:

Fatma seni defalarca aldattım buna hazırlıklı gel. [...] Sana el kaldırdığım küfür ettiğim hakaret ettiğim için çok üzülüyor kendime hiç yakıştıramıyordum bu nedenle çok üzüldüm ve üzgünüm bu konuda hakkını helal et lütfen. [...] Onlardan da böyle bir üzüntüyü onlara yaşattığım için özür diliyorum. Bilhassa TUĞÇE seni çok üzdüm ve çok kırdım kızım. Sen de affet beni ne olur. (B.)

Diğerlerini suçlama kapsamında ise genel olarak öfke duygusunun var olabileceği düşünülmüştür. Yine B. vakasından bir örnek olarak aşağıdaki cümleler örnek gösterilebilir:

Sebebimsin Fatma bence sen kendini bildiğin kadar masum değilsin. Kendini her seferinde masum ilan ederek buna da kendini inandırmana hayranım. [...] Sen benim intihar edeceğimi bile bile gittin değil mi? Böylesi kısa yol olacak tam da senin istediğin gibi sana kolay gelsin ben bittim şimdi sıra sende. (B.)

Benzer örnekler diğer mektuplarda da sıklıkla gözlemlenmiştir. Örneğin, K. vakası son meajlarında kız arkadaşını oldukça ağır ve agresif bir biçimde suçlamaktadır:

Canımı yakıyorsun her gün başka bir şey değil. Ya hiç mesaj atmıyorsun, bugün akşama doğru mesaj attın, niye ama böyle yapıyon seni seviyorum diye böyle yapmana gerek yok. Bana de ki seni sevmiyorum atma bir daha mesaj de atmam sana mesaj. Keşke sevsen nerde o eski günler ama şimdi yok [...] O Derya'nın dediği doğruymuş, Allah senin belanı versin inşallah geberirsin.

Ceyda bile senin gibi değildi. Adi yüzsüz git kızım benden artık uzak dur, işim olmaz artık seninle. (K.)

Mevcut çalışmada olumsuz duygular temasının bir diğer alt teması umutsuzluk olarak isimlendirilmiştir. Örneğin, E. vakasının intihar notundaki *"Murat'a ve Nazlı'ya baban biçare gitti deyin."* ifadesi umutsuzluk olarak kodlanmıştır. Bir diğer örnek, H. vakasının *"Çaresizdim yoksulluğa dayanacak gücüm kalmadı. [...] yoksulluk beni çaresiz bıraktı mecbur bıraktı"* cümlesi olarak düşünülebilir. Bunun dışında, olumsuz duygular kapsamında kaygı tespit edilmiştir. Bu biçimde kodlanan alıntılara J.'nin intihar notundan alınan ve sağlığa yönelik kaygı olarak düşünülen aşağıdaki parça örnek teşkil edebilir:

> *Bir göz yaşı, biraz kan… İnşallah kolay olacak. -Siz bana sorun.- [...] Ben çok bunaldım abi. Biraz da korkuyorum. Sağlığımla ilgili. Ben şu anı yazarken kalem elimde durmuyor. Elim artık son zamanlarda lapır lapır titriyor. Herhangi bir iş yapmama da izin vermiyor. Ha bir de beynim var. O ayrı bir dert. Vuracak bir gün biliyorum. Buna müsaade etmem. Ben hastanelerde ne yaparım. [...] Yazım aslında güzeldir ama bilirsin gerginim. [...] Biraz rahatsızlık da vardı aşkım. Beynim kopup kopup gidiyor. Ben hastanelerde ne yapardım. [...] Hem ellerimin titremesi de çoğaldı. Mantarım da var. [...] Ben bunları yazarken çok zorlanıyorum. Elim ayağım titriyor. Yavrum sağlığım pek de iyi değil. Biliyorum.* (J.)

Birincil analizlerde ortaya çıkan ikinci kategori 'algılar' olarak isimlendirilmiştir. Bu kategorinin altında, 'kendiliğe yönelik algılar' ve 'diğerine yönelik algılar' olmak üzere iki tema ortaya çıkmıştır. Kendiliğe yönelik algılar 'büyüklenmeci/ mükemmel benlik algısı' ve 'güçsüz/ yetersiz benlik algısı'; diğerine yönelik algılar ise 'ideal öteki' ve 'olumsuz öteki' olmak üzere ikişer alt temadan oluşmaktadır. Abartılan kendilik önemi, empati yoksunluğu, hayran olunmaya duyulan yoğun ihtiyaç, büyüklenme, üstünlük, yargıçlık gibi biçimlerde kendini gösteren parçalar genel itibariyle büyüklenmeci/ mükemmel benlik algısı olarak kodlanmıştır. Örneğin, G. intihar notunda, *"Giderken en sevdiklerim (karım ve kızım) sonra üzülmesin sıkıntı yaşamasın diye hayattan ayrılırken üçümüz birlikte gidelim dedim."* der. Bu ifade araştırmacı için G.'nin kendisini diğerlerinden öne koyduğu ve ben-merkezli bir tutum içinde olduğu bir izlenim oluşturmuştur. Başka bir örnek

olarak K.'nin sosyal medya paylaşımlarında yer alan şu ifade büyüklenmeci/ mükemmel benlik algısı altında kodlanmıştır: "*ASLA İNTİKAM ALMAK İÇİN UĞRAŞMAM... BENİM EN BÜYÜK İNTİKAMIM BENSİZLİKTİR. BENSİZ KALDIĞIN HER GÜN SENİN ZATEN BİTİŞİNDİR.*" Diğer taraftan, 'güçsüz/ yetersiz benlik algısı' alt-temasının güçsüzlük, becerememe, yapamama, değersizlik, yetersizlik gibi unsurları konu edinen parçalarda yer aldığı düşünülmüştür. Örneğin, intihar notunda "*Bu hayat bana göre değil, geç de olsa bunu anladım. [...] Hayat güzel aslında, yaşamak güzel ama söyledim ya bu hayat bana göre değil. [...] Belki de ben bu hayata göre değilim bilmiyorum.*" ifadesi yer almaktadır ve bu ifade güçsüz/ yetersiz benlik algısı olarak kodlanmıştır. Başka bir örnek olarak, J.'nin intihar notundan alıntılanan şu cümleler verilebilir: "*Kale ailesi bütün fertleriyle çok özeldir. Bunu belki ben bozacağım. [...] Anneme iyi bakın ona yine en kötü kahpeliği ben yapıyorum.*". Diğerine yönelik algılar altında ortaya çıkan ilk alt tema 'ideal öteki' olmuştur. Bu alt temaya örnek olarak, A.'nın intihar notundaki "*Ama beni anla ve o kutsal büyüklüğünü bi daha göster.*" cümlesi ya da J.'nin notundaki "*Sen benim peygamberimdin. Kanım, canım, karım.*" cümlesi düşünülebilir. Olumsuz öteki alt teması ise B.'nin intihar notunda yer alan ve eşine yönelik olarak yazdığı "*Bence sen kendini bildiğin kadar masum değilsin.*" cümlesi ile örneklendirilebilir. Buradaki ötekinin başka bir kişi ya da insan olmak zorunda olmadığı düşünülerek L.'ye ait olan "*Eğitimin saçma işlevi…*" söylemi de aynı kapsamda ele alınmıştır.

Üçüncü kategori 'işlevler' olarak isimlendirilmiş olup, iki temaya sahiptir. Bu temalar, 'mesuliyete yönelik işlevler', 'intihara dair diğerlerini bilgilendirme' ve 'cezalandırma' biçiminde isimlendirilmiştir. Mesuliyete yönelik işlevlerin, 'aklanma (sorumluluktan veya suçlanmadan arınma) ihtiyacı' ve 'diğerini aklama (sorumluluktan veya suçlamadan arındırma) ihtiyacı' olmak üzere iki alt teması olduğu düşünülmüştür. Birincisine örnek olarak, af dileme, helallik isteme, dini açıdan aklanmaya çalışma içerikli alıntılar örnek olarak gösterilebilir. A. intihar notunda "*Ne olur beni affedin.*" der. Benzer biçimde F., "*Evinde öldüğüm için beni affet abla.*" yazmıştır. Helallik isteme de intihar notları arasında yaygın bir içerik teşkil etmektedir. Örneğin, B. karısına "*Bu konuda hakkını helal et lütfen.*" der.

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Benzer biçimde C. "*Herkese hakkım sonuna kadar helal olsun. İsterim ki herkes de bana hakkını helal etsin.*" yazmıştır. İntihar eylemine getirilen açıklamalar da aynı kapsamda değerlendirilip aklanma arzusu olarak nitelendirilmiştir. J. vakasının notundan "*Hem ben Ali dedenizi özledim. [...] Ömrüm benim hayatta beraber ölmek yok gibi bir şey. O yüzden ben gidiyorum. [...] Ben hayattan tat almıyorum annem.*" örnek olarak cümleleri verilebilir. Diğerini aklama (sorumluluktan veya suçlamadan arındırma) ihtiyacına örnek olarak ise "*Ölümümden kimse sorumlu değildir*" biçimindeki cümleler gösterilebilir. Bu ifade D.'nin ve F.'in intihar notunda direk olarak bu biçimde yer almaktadır. Aynı anlama gelen farklı cümle yapıları da benzer biçimde kodlanmıştır. Örneğin, J. İntihar notunda "*Parasal değil, manevi de değil. Kimseye küs filan da değilim. [...] Dediğim gibi bu olay Begüm'le ilgili ya da ailesi ile ilgili bir şey değil. [...] Kimsenin hatası değil.*" yazmıştır. İşlevler kategorisi altındaki ikinci tema, 'intihara dair diğerlerini bilgilendirme' şeklinde isimlendirilmiştir. Örneğin, G.'nin sosyal medya paylaşımında yer alan "*Dostlarım, akrabalarım, arkadaşlarım, kardeşlerim dünyadan ayrılma zamanım geldi diye düşünüyorum. Bu bir bunalım ya da kriz anı değil, sakin olarak verdiğim bir karar.*" Ifadesi bu kapsamda değerlendirilebilir. Analizler esnasında mektuplarda ve son mesajlarda da benzer söylemlerin yer aldığı görülmüştür. İşlevler kategorisi altındaki son tema 'cezalandırma' olarak adlandırılmıştır. Örneğin, E.'nin intihar notundaki "*Bir kağıt bıraktım ölümüme sebep babam diye. [...] Evlat acısını sana tattıracağım.*" biçimindeki cümleler bu kapsamda değerlendirilmiştir. Diğer mektuplarda, mesajlarda ve sosyal medya paylaşımlarında da benzer içerikler dikkat çekmiştir.

Birincil analizlerdeki dördüncü ve son kategori 'düşlemler' olarak isimlendirilmiş olup iki temadan oluşmaktadır. Bu temalar, 'ölüm sonrası yaşama dair düşlemler' ve 'ölüm sonrası olayların kontrollüne dair düşlemler' biçiminde belirlenmiştir. Ölüm sonrası yaşam düşlemleri intihar notlarında yaygın bir tema olarak değerlendirilebilir. Bu düşlemler yer yer sorgulama (A.: "*Eğer diğer dünya diye bir şey varsa ben hep senin için dua edeceğim.*"), yer yer ise kesinlik ifade eden

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söylemler biçiminde ortaya çıkmıştır. J.'nin intihar notundan yapılan aşağıdaki alıntı kesinlik ifade eden parçalara örnek olarak verilebilir:

Melek Yenge saygılarımla amcama selamlarını söylerim. [...] Halacığım seni özleyeceğim. Su böreği yaparsan, belki dolaşırım oralarda. [...]Sen benim her şeyimdin Begüm. Bu öbür tarafta da böyle olacak. [...] Özlersen olur ya J. diye seslen ben duyarım. [...] Hep bi araya geldiğinizde bana da bi kadeh koyarsınız. (J.)

Ölüm sonrası olayların kontrolüne dair düşlemler teması üç alt temaya sahiptir. Bu alt temalar, 'son dilekler ve ricalar', 'yönlendirmeler, talimatlar ve öneriler', 'diğerinin duygularının kontrolü' olarak isimlendirilmiştir. Son dilekler ve ricalar kapsamında G.'nin mektubundan alınan şu ifade değerlendirilebilir: "*Lütfen cenazelerimizi otopsi ve benzeri işlemlerle bekletmeyiniz. Cenazemizin yan yana defin yapılmasını ve dinen sakıncası yoksa kızımızın aramıza diliyorum.*". Yönlendirmeler, talimatlar ve öneriler alt temasına örnek olarak ise C.'nin intihar notundan alınan aşağıdaki parça verilebilir:

Bu Gölbaşı'ndan çıkınca AŞTİ'ye doğru giderken sağda alışveriş mağazaları var ya. [...] O mağazaların arkasında bir tel örgü var yeşil. O tel örgülerin bitimine gelmeden tellerin dibinde sırt çantam var o günkü. Biraz içeriye ormana doğru 100 metre falan içeride oradayım. Gelin beni alın. Burada fazla asılı kalmak istemem. Anladın. (C.)

Yukarıda yer alan örnek daha çok yönlendirme ve talimat olarak değerlendirilmiş olup, öneri ya da tavsiye kapsamında G.'nin mektubundan alıntılanan aşağıdaki ifadeler ele alınabilir:

Oğlum öncelikle Ferhan ve Furkan amcana güven ve onları dinleyip hayatına yön vermeni istiyorum. [...] Oğlum sen ticaret yapamazsın en kısa sürede kendine sabit maaşlı bir iş bul ve çalış. Dünyada en önemli varlık ailedir. Eşinin değerini bil. (G.)

Diğerinin duygularının kontrolü alt teması ise E.'nin son mesajlarında yer alan "*Bana sakın ağlama, mezarıma da gelme.*" cümlesiyle örneklenebileceği gibi,

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K.'nın "*Kendine iyi bak oldu mu, gözünden bir damla yaş bile akmasını istemiyorum benim için, hoşçakal ben gidiyorum.*" ifadesinde de gözlemlenebilir.

Birincil düzey analizlerde elde edilen bu bulgular, daha önce de belirtildiği üzere ikincil bir analize tabi tutulup Lacanyen bakış açısıyla incelenmiştir. Lacanyen bağlamda yasa temel alındığında intihar yasak bir eylem olarak nitelendirilebilir. Ek olarak, Lacanyen yaklaşımda intihar, sembolikten çıkışı ve sosyal bağların kopuşunu işaret eden 'eyleme geçiş' kavramı ile ilişkilendirilir. Bu kavramın psikotik evreyle bağlantılı olduğu ileri sürülmektedir (Evans, 2006). Soleim (2012)'e göre eyleme geçiş ayrışmaya yönelik bir hamle iken, eyleme koyma (*acting out*) ötekiyle bağların yeniden tasdikidir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, intihar etmeden önce intihar mektubu bırakmak, diğerine yatırım yapma ya da bu yatırımı geri çekme bağlamında karmaşık görünmekte ve merak uyandırmaktadır. Literatüre göre, intihar notu bırakmanın en önemli işlevi iletişim kurmaktır. (McClelland vd., 2000; Sanger ve McCarthy Veach, 2008). Ancak, daha önce bahsedilen sebeplerden dolayı, araştırmacı bu iletişimin tek yönlü olduğunu düşünmektedir. Diğerinden gelecek olan mesajın bloklanması, kişinin iletişimdeki boşlukları düşleminde doldurmaya meyledebileceğini düşündürmüştür. Bu bağlamda, mektup bırakan kişinin zihninde Büyük Başka'yı ne şekilde konumlandırdığı, analiz esnasında intihar riski olan hastanın aktarımını anlamak adına önemli bir hale gelmektedir. Lacancı kurama göre büyük Öteki dil, yasa, anne, arzu, istek, zevk (*jouissance*) gibi farklı kavramların yerine geçebilen kaygan bir kavramdır (Fink, 1995). Lacan, bir bebeğin önceden belirlenmiş söylem ya da dil dünyasına doğduğunu, dolayısıyla Büyük Başka'nın dile ilişkin olduğunu ve bu önceden belirlenmiş yapının özneyi kendi varlığının özünden yabancılaştırdığını, ancak diğer yandan da aynı yapının diğer bireylerle iletişimi sağladığını ileri sürer. Aynı bağlamda, bilinçdışının dil gibi yapılandığını söyler (aktaran Fink, 1995). Dil sembolik düzenle ilişkilidir, dolayısıyla kişiler arası ilişkiyi ve yasayı temsil eder (Homer, 2005).

Daha önce de belirtildiği üzere, ikincil düzey analizler Lacanyen bir bakış açısıyla yapılmış ve analiz sonuçlarına göre '*çift-değerli duygulanım (agresiflik)*',

'ayrışmaya ilişkin meseleler' ve 'yasaya ilişkin meseleler' olmak üzere üç temel örtük tema ortaya çıkmıştır. 'Ayrışmaya ilişkin meseleler' temasının 'zulüm kaygısından kaçınmak için Büyük Başka'nın gözüne yapılan yatırım' ve 'tüm-güçlülük düşlemleri' isimleriyle iki alt temadan oluştuğu düşünülmüştür. Ayrıca, 'tüm-güçlülük düşlemleri' başlığı altında 'haset ve Büyük Başka'nın tümgüçlülüğü' alt teması işlenmiştir.

Bu bulguların içeriklerini temel hatlarıyla özetlemek gerekirse şunlar söylenebilir: Birincil düzey bulgularda ortaya koyulan duyguların birçoğunun, Lacan'ın 'hainamoration' kavramıyla anlattığı çift-değerli duygulanım ve agresiflik açısından ele alınabileceği düşünülmüştür. Örneğin, J. vakası intihar mektubunda, "Ağabeylerim hepinizi çok seviyorum. Şu an ki nasıl bir ateş içindeyim, onun kat kat sıcaklığıyla hepinizi kucaklıyorum" der. Birincil düzeyde bu alıntı 'sevgi' olarak kodlansa da, ikincil düzeyde sevginin ötesinde bir öfke ya da nefret söylemi olarak değerlendirilebilir; zira ateş yakıcıdır ve temas edildiğinde zarar verebilir. Diğer taraftan, bu alıntı aşırı düzeyde sevilme arzusu olarak da yorumlanabilir. Benzer biçimde, Menninger (1938) kitabında, yanan bir sobaya sarılarak intihar eden psikotik bir vakadan söz eder ve vakanın bu davranışını içsel soğukluğun ve patolojik olarak değerlendirilebilecek derecede fazla olan sevilme arzusunun giderilme çabası olarak açıklar. Bunun haricinde, "görülme arzusu" ve "aklanma arzusu" gibi bulgularla bir arada değerlendirildiğinde, birincil düzey bulgulardaki duygular, Büyük Başka'nın bakışını yakalayabilmek ya da ilgisini çekebilmek için girişilen eyleme koyma davranışları olarak ya da zulüm kaygısından kaçmanın imgesel temsilleri olarak değerlendirilebilir. Görülme arzusu, birincil düzey bulgulardan büyüklenmeci/ mükemmel benlik algısı ya da intihara dair diğerlerini bilgilendirme alt temalarından alıntılarla örneklenebilir. Diğer taraftan, aklanma arzusu ise mesuliyetle ilgili duygular (suçluluk, utanç, üzüntü, öfke) ya da işlevler (diğerini ve kendini aklama ihtiyacı), intiharın sebebine dair yapılan açıklamalar veya diğerine yapılan övgüler (ideal öteki) gibi alt temalardan yapılabilecek alıntılarla açıklanabilir. Diğerinin gözüne yapılan bu vurgu bir bütün olarak değerlendirildiğinde, görülme ya da aklanma arzularının, zulümden kaçmak adına

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Büyük Başka'nın gözüne yapılan yatırım biçiminde yorumlanması daha uygun bulunmuştur. Bilhassa, L. vakasının not defterinde farklı sayfalarda İngilizce olarak "*A stranger is watching (Bir yabancı izliyor)*" yazmasının bu düşünceyi desteklediği düşünülmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, birincil düzey analizlerde, 'düşlemler' kategorisi altında ele alınan ölümden sonraki yaşama ve ölüm sonrası olayları kontrol etmeye yönelik bulguların, ölümsüzlüğü ve sınırsız kontrolü ima etmesi sebebiyle, 'her şeye kadirlik illüzyonu' olarak yorumlanması uygun görülmüştür. Bu illüzyon, vakaların büyüklenmeci/ mükemmel benlik algısı ile de örneklenebilir. Benzer biçimde, Büyük Başka'nın her şeye kadirliği ve bunun karşısında duyulan haset, ikincil analizler esnasında örtük tema olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, Büyük Başka'nın gözüne yapılan yatırım ve her şeye kadirlik illüzyonu 'ayrışma' başlığı altında ele alınmıştır ve bu bulguların ayrışmaya yönelik problemleri işaret edebileceği düşünülmüştür. Tüm bunların akabinde, yasaya ilişkin meseleler ikincil düzey analizler esnasında tartışılmış ve vakaların hem intihar eyleminin kendisiyle hem de mektuplarında değindikleri temalarla yasadan ve iğdiş edilmeden (*castration*) kaçma çabasında olabileceği düşünülmüştür.

Var olan literatürle karşılaştırıldığında, bu bulguların tanısal açıdan narsisizmin yanı sıra psikoz veya sapkınlıkla ilişkilendirilebileceği düşünülmüştür. Bulguların birçoğu, hem Lacanyen anlamda hem de güncel tanımlamalar açısından, narsisizmle ilişkilendirilmiştir. Diğer taraftan, özellikle ikinci düzey analizler psikoz ve sapkınlık arasında dönen bir tanı tartışmasına yol açmıştır. Zira; ikinci düzey analizler literatür yardımıyla tartışılırken; ayrışmaya dair meseleler, kastrasyondan red ya da inkar yoluyla kaçınma, imgesel babanın varlığının varsayılması, babaya ait olan işlevin gerçekleştirilmeye çalışılması gibi konular gündem edilmiştir. Bu gündemler hem psikozda hem de sapkınlıkta geçerlidir (Fink, 1997). Diğer taraftan, çalışmanın genel tartışma bölümünde sunulan değerlendirmeler, bulguların sapkınlıktan ziyade psikozla, bilhassa paranoya ile ilişkili olabileceğini düşündürmüştür. Bu düşünceye katkı sağlayan tartışmalar, vakaların intihar mektubu yazmış olmalarından ve bulguların gelişimsel süreçte Lacan'a ait olan ayna evresini işaret etmesinden; dolayısıyla failin kendisini beden üzerinden tanımlamasından ve

intiharın bedene ilişkin olan bir eylem olmasından kaynağını almıştır. Bunun yanı sıra, Lacanyen yaklaşımda intiharla ilişkilendirilen eyleme geçiş (*passage to the act*) kavramının aynı zamanda psikoz ile bağlantılandırılması ve Lacanyen analizde klinik yapıların değişmezliği esası (Fink, 1997) göz önünde bulundurulmuştur.

İntihar notu bırakanlar için, psikoz (spesifik olarak paranoya) tanısının düşünülmesinde bu çalışmanın bulguları aşağıda sıralandığı biçimde katkı sağlamıştır:

(a) İntihar notu, failin kendini ve diğerlerini tanımlamaya çalıştığı yazınsal bir üretim olarak değerlendirilirse, literatüre göre bu tip üretimlerin psikoz vakalarında oldukça yaygın olduğu göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır (Fink, 1997).

(b) Bu çalışmada işaretlenen 'duyguların çift-değerliliği' ve 'ayrışmaya ilişkin meseleler' (zulüm kaygısından kaçınmak için Büyük Başka'nın gözüne yapılan yatırım, tüm-güçlülük illüzyonu, haset ve Büyük Başka'nın tüm-güçlülüğü) gibi bulguların, Lacan'ın 'imgesel düzen', 'benliğin yapılanması', 'narsistik intihar saldırısı' gibi meseleleri yerleştirdiği 'ayna evresi' kapsamında değerlendirilebileceği düşünülmüştür. Burada dikkate alınması gereken noktalardan biri, 'ben (*je*)'in bir yanlış anlaşılma üzerine kurulu olup narsistik ve paranoyak bir yapıya mahal verdiği bilgisidir (Evans, 2006).

　　a. Ayna evresinin Tura (2013) tarafından açıklanan 'beden-ben' ile ilişkili olduğu ve kendini asma, kesme, vurma, zehirleme, yüksekten atlama gibi intihar eylemlerinin hepsinin bedene ilişkin olduğu kabul edilirse, bu çalışmada bedenin önemli bir unsur olduğu konusunda anlaşma sağlanacaktır. Bunun yanı sıra, dosyalardaki otopsi raporlarından, çalışmadaki bazı vakaların vücutlarında dövme olduğu bilgisi edinilmiştir. Bedene ilişkin bu tip meşguliyetler, literatürde, aşırı zevk (*jouissance*) karşısında saldırgan davranışlar yoluyla harekete geçirilen bir tür kastrasyon

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olarak açıklanmaktadır (Recalcati, 1999); ki bu tip davranışlar, dürtüler üzerinde yetersiz kontrol durumuna da işaret ediyor olabilir. Bu bağlamda, Lacanyen analiz, psikoz vakalarında 'zevkin istilası' ve 'dürtüler üzerinde yetersiz kontrol' durumlarının söz konusu olduğunu ileri sürmektedir (Fink, 1997).

(c) Bu çalışmada, not bırakan kişiler ve diğerleri arasındaki ilişkiler tasvir edilirken, bu ilişkilerin imgesel düzeyde değerlendirilebileceği ve ego-ideal'in eksik olduğu bir duruma işaret edebileceği belirtilmiştir. Bu bağlamda; tüm-güçlülük illüzyonu, ben ile diğeri arasında oluşan iç içe geçme, Büyük Başka'nın gözüne yapılan yoğun yatırım ve kendini buradan tanımlamaya çalışma, ben'in ve ötekinin sürekli surette yüceltilip aşağılanması gibi bulguların, vakaların 'ben'e dair algılarında bir boşluğu işaret ediyor olabileceği düşünülmüştür; ki bu da akla ego-ideal'in eksikliğini getirir. Bu sebeple, intihar notlarında fark edilen cezalandırıcı tonun, Ödipal özdeşleşmeden ziyade ilkel ve taklitsel bir özdeşleşmenin işareti olabileceği düşünülmüştür. Aynı kapsamda, Fink (1997) psikoz vakalarında semboliğin imgeseli yeniden düzenlemekte başarısız kaldığını belirtmiştir.

   a. İntihar notlarında, özellikle kendini cezalandırma biçiminde tezahür eden cezalandırıcı ton, paranoya tablosunda var olan zulmedilme kaygısıyla bağlantılı olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Benzer biçimde, Melman (1994) bir başkası tarafından istila edilme hissinin paranoyada önemli bir unsur olduğunu belirtmektedir.

(d) İntihar notları dil kullanımı açısından değerlendirildiğinde, bu notların bazılarında tekrarlı, tamamlanmamış veya yarıda kesilmiş, tuhaf ve belirsiz cümle yapılarının var olduğu fark edilmiştir. Bu anlamda, bu intihar notlarındaki dilin temel cümle yapısından yoksun olduğu söylenebilir. Dilin yapısındaki bu bozulmaların psikoz ya da paranoya

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göstergesi olabileceği düşünülmüştür. Bu düşünceyle paralel biçimde, Fink (1997) psikotik yapıda dilin bir imitasyondan ibaret olduğunu söyler.

    a. Bu tanımlamaya uygun olmayan vakaların intihar biçimindeki aşırı saldırganlık göz önünde bulundurulduğunda (Örneğin, A. vakası), bu vakaların tetiklenmemiş psikoz durumu içinde olabileceği varsayılmıştır.

(e) Bu çalışmadaki 'ayrışmaya ilişkin meseleler' (zulüm kaygısından kaçınmak için Büyük Başka'nın gözüne yapılan yatırım, tüm-güçlülük illüzyonu, haset ve Büyük Başka'nın tüm-güçlülüğü) ve 'yasaya ilişkin meseleler' (kastrasyonun reddi) gibi bulguların, Melman (1994) tarafından formüle edilen ve büyüklenme, kıskançlık ve itiraz üzerinden tanımlanan paranoya anlatımıyla uyumlu olduğu düşünülmüştür.

(f) Vakaların babanın işlevini yerine getirme yolu merkeze konulduğunda, bu işlevin; yazınsal üretim (mektup yazma) sayesinde kadınsal bir konumun alındığı, can alma (intihar eylemi) sayesinde ise imgesel babanın yerinin alındığı sanrı ima eden bir takım metaforlar içerebileceği düşünülmüştür. Psikoz vakalarında babanın işlevi sanrısal metaforlarla sağlanmaya çalışılır (Fink, 1997).

İntihar vakaları için tanıyı netleştirmenin önleme çalışmalarına ışık tutabileceği düşünülmektedir. Bu bağlamda Fink (1997), hastanın aktarımını ele alırken bir analistin ne şekilde konum alması gerektiğinin tanıyla yakından ilişkili olduğunu, nevroz hastalarında uygulanan tekniklerin bir kısmının psikoz hastalarında başarısız ve hatta riskli olduğunu söyler. Psikoz altyapısı olduğu düşünülen durumlarda, bilinçdışına işaret eden, ikili ilişkiyi bozacak biçimde bir üçüncünün (bilinçdışının) araya sokulduğu yorumları bu tekniklere örnek olarak getirir ve bu tip yorumların psikozu tetikleyebileceğini öne sürer. Diğer taraftan, bu tip hastalarda, failin kendisi için uygun olan ve sosyal olarak kabul edilen bir isim (kimlik) bulabileceği sembolik bir metafor oluşturulmasının, eksik olan babanın adını ikame ettirebileceği söylenmektedir (Recalcati, 1999). Bu bağlamda Fink (1997), psikotik yapının değişmezliğinin ve analistin yalnızca psikotik krizi önleme amacıyla analizde

konum alması gerektiğinin altını çizmektedir. Göz önünde bulundurulması gereken bir başka konu ise, nitel çalışmanın doğası gereği bu çalışmadaki bulguların diğer vakalara genellenemez olmasıdır. Bu bağlamda, mevcut çalışmada verilerden elde edilen bilgilerin kabaca tasvir (*thick description*) amacı taşıdığının tekrar vurgulanması önemli bulunmuştur.

C. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☒ X

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN
Soyadı : Canbolat
Adı : Fazilet
Bölümü : Psikoloji

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON SUICIDE NOTES: MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS IN SUICIDE NOTES OF MEN

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☐   Doktora ☒ X

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın. ☒ X

2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullancılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.) ☐

3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.) ☐

Yazarın imzası .... Tarih ....

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