

TEZER ÖZLÜ: A MARGINAL VOICE
AGAINST
THE APPROVED NOTION OF THE INTELLECTUAL

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes both Tezer Özlü's life as an intellectual and her novels, *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and *Journey to the End of Life*, in order to demonstrate Özlü's portrayal of the inner life of the intellectual in her works and her unique way of expressing the effects of the political circumstances of the time on the individual intellectual. Through an analysis of her works from the standpoint of trauma theory, this study aims to demonstrate that Özlü is engaged with the political problems of the era that she lives in although she does not express it explicitly in her works.

Keywords: the intellectual, trauma, narrative cure.

ÖZ

TEZER ÖZLÜ: AYDIN TANIMINA FARKLI BİR BAKIŞ

Simavi, Zeynep

Yüksek Lisans, Medya ve Kültürel Çalışmalar Programı

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Bu çalışma, bir aydın olarak Tezer Özlü'nün hayatından ve onun iki romanı *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri* ve *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*'tan yola çıkarak, Özlü'nün eserlerinde betimlediği aydının iç dünyasını ve bir birey olarak aydının kendi döneminin politik yaşantısından nasıl etkilendiğini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Özlü'nün eserleri travma teorisi açısından incelenerek, yazarın, romanlarında döneminin politik olaylarına çok fazla değinmemesine rağmen, bu olaylar karşısındaki duyarlılığı gösterilmeye çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: aydın, travma, yazmanın iyileştirici etkisi.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Tezer Özlü, whose first writings appeared on the literary scene in the 1960s, is considered to be one of the radical figures in Turkish literature. The aim of this thesis is to point out her unique contribution to the representation of the intellectual in Turkish literature. To this end, the notion of the intellectual as represented in her novels will be analyzed by using two approaches: on the one hand, the universal and the local definition of the intellectual, and on the other, in order to demonstrate the inner life of the individual intellectual, the trauma theory as a psychoanalytical approach.

In Turkey, the novel was introduced as a part of modernization and westernization process during the Tanzimat period. According to many literary critics, the Turkish novel has almost always followed the track of realism and the main tendency has been a concern for the socio-political. While at first the main focus was on the east and west conflict, later the conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed was the focus of attention for a long time. As a result of this emphasis on the social, it can be said that although there are some exceptions, the novels written until the 1970s in Turkish literature did not pay enough attention to the inner life of the individual, his/her dilemmas, hopes and aspirations and so on. The reason for this is that to attach oneself to the realist/rationalist/determinist /positivist principles was considered to be a must in the westernization process. Consequently, the form and aesthetic concerns were considered to be of secondary importance. Although there were some exceptional novels concerned with the inner world of the individual, in the 1970s there occurred an increase in the attention paid to the aesthetic matters and a focus on the individual's life.

Therefore, the 1970s is a turning-point in Turkish novel in the sense that a variety is introduced to the novel in terms of technique and themes.¹

In the 1970s and to a certain extent in the 1980s, the main tendency in Turkish literature was writing novels with an awareness of the political circumstances in Turkey. The reason for this lies in the fact that the years between 1960 and 1980 were marked by a succession of military coups, which caused unrest and disorder in the society. Therefore, the novelists, as the responsible intellectuals of the society, produced many works depicting the conditions the country was in. By means of using literature as a ground to voice their opinions on the state of affairs and to offer different perspectives on and solutions to the events, the novelists of the era created novels that placed the political issues of the time on the foreground.²

Gürsel Aytaç makes a classification of the Turkish novels written in that era under five subgroups regarding the theme. According to her, the themes that were dominant at that time were mainly about the issues of right-left struggle, recent Turkish history, the responsibility of the intellectual, the problem of the woman intellectual, and sexuality.³ As it can be clearly seen from the list above, in the literature of this period there is a tendency to paying utmost attention to history and socio-political problems. Therefore, political awareness, an engagement with the political problems of the time and the criticism held towards intellectuals appear as outstanding features.

For the representations of the intellectual in the Turkish novel, Yunus Balcı states that in each era the definition of the intellectual is reconstructed according to the political tendencies of the time. As a result, it is not possible to talk about a standard definition of the intellectual in the Turkish context. About

¹Gürsel Aytaç, *Çağdaş Türk Romanı Üzerine İncelemeler*. Yıldız Ecevit, *Türk Romanında Postmodernist Açılımlar*. Nedim Gürsel, "Yaşadığımı Yazmak" in *Başkaldıran Edebiyat*. Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış I-II*.

² Gürsel Aytaç, *Çağdaş Türk Romanı Üzerine İncelemeler*. Murat Belge, *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar*. Ahmet Oktay, *Romanımıza Ne Oldu?*

³ *Çağdaş Türk Romanları Üzerine İncelemeler*. p. 39.

this aspect of the representation of the intellectual in the Turkish novel, Balcı states:

It is obvious that an understanding of the intellectual that was different from the western intellectuals was conveyed to us through the change in mentality starting with modernization. Consequently, in our novel, an understanding of the ‘intellectual’ which is continuously disseminated or refuted by the successor is dominant rather than a linear understanding of the ‘intellectual’.⁴

Thus, in defining the notion of the intellectual, the utmost attention should be paid to the era.

In the novels dealing with the events of the 1970s, the intellectual problem was treated mainly in the so-called March 12 novels. In these novels the influence of the March 12 military coup on the lives of the individuals is discussed. According to Ali Murat Akser’s study on the representations of the intellectual in these novels, the intellectuals that are portrayed have “a persistent criticism of the bourgeois class and sympathy for the underprivileged people”. They believe in their mission to civilize and protect their people and, they “shape their identity as a reaction to authority and to their parents who are usually of Kemalist origin. They are assisted by a local intellectual instead”. With regard to their psychological breakdown that is depicted in these novels, Akser states that they believe that the cause of the failure in accomplishing the revolution lies in their fragmentation, in the sense that they do not agree on a shared definition of the revolution, and because they are so removed from the people.⁵

In the literature written by the women writers, the same concern for the political problems is also seen in their novels. The women novelists of this era

⁴ “Türk Romanında Aydın Sorunu” in *Hece*. p. 292.

Modernleşmeyle başlayan zihnyet kırılmasının batılı aydınlardan farklı bir aydın çizgisini bize taşıdığı aşıkardır. Bu sebeple romanımızda da bunun bir yansıması olarak bir çizgi üzerinde gelişen ‘aydın’ anlayışından ziyade sürekli dağılmaya uğrayan veya bir sonraki tarafından yanlışlanan bir ‘aydın’ anlayışı kendisini gösterir.

See also, Atilla Özkırmı, “Değer Bunalımı ve Kimliksizleşme” in *Türk Aydını ve Kimlik Sorunu*.

⁵ Ali Murat Akser, “The Lost Battle: Representations of the Intellectual in the March 12 Novels”.

present the political history of the country through their own individual stories. As Jale Parla states in her article “Tarihçem Kabusumdur!”, the political history of Turkey is interwoven with the individual histories of women in the novels of the “first generation” women writers. These writers have chosen the period between 1930-1980, in order to come to terms with their past and society. Especially Ağaoğlu’s *Ölmeye Yatmak* interweaves the history of Turkey between 1938-1968 with the life stories of Aysel and her schoolmates. Sevgi Soysal, Aysel Özakin, Pınar Kür and Leyla Erbil also put emphasis on the events of the 1970s in their novels written in those years. The years under martial law are in the background of their novels and political circumstances play a key role in the characters’ lives. Furthermore, there is a panorama of the society in these novels. The writers depict various characters from every social class in order to clash different worldviews and ideologies. Thus, they criticize or praise certain points of view through their characters, and try to find a solution to the problems of the country.

To sum up, it can be said that in the novels written in these years, women writers mainly deal with the theme of women’s responsibilities as intellectuals, their identity crises, their questioning of the ideology of the republic and their realization of their gender identity. The women characters suffer due to their individual conflicts, because of the dichotomy between their ideals, desires and what society offers them.

As it is described above, the novelists in the 1970s, whether they deal with the problems of the woman intellectual or whether they depict the March 12 era in the history of Turkey, represent the responsibility of the intellectual by reference to the specific events in history and they emphasize the public role of the intellectual. Moreover the dilemma that the intellectual suffers from is depicted with regard to these particular situations.⁶

⁶ Adalet Ağaoğlu, in her article “Türk Aydını ve Ben Kimim Sorusu”, states that in Turkish literature, the Turkish intellectual is represented as living for others and as someone who shapes his/her identity according to the mission that s/he defines to serve his/her country. Therefore, the intellectual never looks for individual freedom and never asks the question “Who am I?”. In *Türk Aydını ve Kimlik Sorunu*. p. 223.

Turning back to Tezer Özlü's original contribution to the representation of the intellectual in the Turkish novel, it is seen that in Özlü's novels, *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri* (*The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, 1980) and *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk* (*Journey to the End of Life*, 1984), the narrator does not take up the responsibility of the intellectual, that is, the public role of the intellectual is not emphasized. Therefore, although the narrator of these novels portrays perfectly the Turkish intellectual, who is alienated from her own culture and her dilemma as a result of the education that she has received, she is not presented to the reader as a representative of or a spokesperson for a certain group.

Moreover, although Özlü attaches her primary attention to the inner life of the individual, she does not disregard the role that society plays in the individual's life. In her novels, the political events are not treated as of the primary focus. Most of the time, the narrator simply states but does not make a comment on the social issues. It is in this sense that she refers to the events of the period so as to describe their effects on the inner life of the individual rather than to criticize the politics of the time. As a result, the political climate of the time is mostly used as an atmosphere in her novels, and the focus of attention always stays on the inner life of the individual.

In this study, first of all, by reference to the local and universal definitions of the intellectual, a portrait of the narrator in Özlü's two novels, *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and *Journey to the End of Life*, will be drawn as a Turkish intellectual. Secondly, by means of using trauma theory, the inner life of the individual intellectual will be described and it will be claimed that although the narrator seems to be engaged only with her own dilemmas in life, in fact, the reasons for the dilemma that the narrator suffers from reside in the conditions of society that she lives in. Therefore, even though Özlü is regarded as a writer, who is more concerned with the problems of the individual in modern times and his/her existential condition, in this study by making an analysis of her works from the standpoint of trauma theory, it will be demonstrated that Özlü is also engaged with the political problems of the era that she lives although she does not express it explicitly in her works.

CHAPTER II

A PORTRAIT OF THE TURKISH INTELLECTUAL: *THE CHILLY NIGHTS OF CHILDHOOD*

In this chapter, the first two parts of Tezer Özlü's first novel *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri (The Chilly Nights Of Childhood)* will be analyzed together with the biographical sources on Özlü, as written by the author herself in her diary, and by her sister Sezer Duru and her friend Leylâ Erbil. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate Tezer Özlü's position as an intellectual with respect to her contemporary women writers by pointing out her similarities and differences regarding her familial and educational background. The reason for this intermingling the analysis of the novel with the biographical information is that, as her friend Leylâ Erbil states, Tezer Özlü's novels are mainly focused on herself.⁷ However this does not indicate that her novels are pure autobiography. Özlü's life never ceases to exist in her narration on the condition that she knows how to mould it in her art.⁸ On this aspect of her works, Erbil states that Özlü is a unique writer in the sense that she establishes a new writer's ethics while she omits the distance and formality between the writer and the reader.⁹ Therefore, although *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* is a work of fiction, considering the significant role that her life plays in her works, the novel will also be used as a reference to trace Tezer Özlü's position as an intellectual.

⁷Leylâ Erbil. "Bir Romanı Okurken" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 31.

⁸Leylâ Erbil. "Sevgi ya da Sanat Dünyasında" in *Tezer Özlü'den Leylâ Erbil'e Mektuplar*. p. 18.

⁹Leylâ Erbil. "Önsöz" in *Tezer Özlü'den Leylâ Erbil'e Mektuplar*. p. 8.

2.1 “Home” and “School”: Familial and Educational Background

The Chilly Nights of Childhood, published in 1980, depicts the period from the 1950s to the late 1970s in Turkey. Focusing on the memories of a young woman’s childhood years spent in the rural part of Anatolia, of her traumatic departure to Istanbul and of her encounter with foreign culture at school, the novel explores the theme of individual trauma while in the background it portrays a traumatic phase in the history of Turkey.

In the first two parts of the novel, namely “Ev” (“Home”) and “Okul ve Okul Yolu” (“School and the Way to School”), the narrator describes the house she grew up in Istanbul with respect to her house in the country and the school where she was exposed to foreign culture. The first two parts of the novel are significant in the sense that they do not only illustrate the narrator’s childhood, but they also offer the writer’s perspective on the social circumstances of the time when the immigration from the rural to the city was at its peak and when the foreign schools were very popular among the petit bourgeois who sent their children to these institutions to be educated in the western manner. Moreover, regarding Tezer Özlü as a representative of the Turkish intellectual, it can be said that the first two parts of the novel also shed light on how a particular generation was brought up in Turkey by giving a picture of the familial life and the education that they receive.

2.1.1 Home

In the first part of the novel, “Home”, the portrayal of the two houses that the narrator spent her childhood in plays a crucial role in order to understand the impact they have on the psyche of the child as it shapes her existence and her perception of life. Therefore it should not be treated merely as a setting. The narrator’s house in Istanbul, in contrast to the one in the provinces, with its physical conditions and with its display of private space arouses the sensations of restlessness, boredom, misery and depression in the child as opposed to the image

of home as a “place of happiness”¹⁰ and security. On the other hand the narrator’s depiction of her home in the provinces implies the sensations of joy, freedom and nostalgia:

We are not in the provinces any more. The orchards among the big wooden houses are left in quiet towns. And the quiet towns in the ‘50s. The high pines of Esentepe, where we used to pick yellow, purple crocuses blossoming under the melting snow are an abstract childhood dream. I run up the hill with my thin legs on bright summer days... Towards the cool breeze of the tides...¹¹

As it can be seen from the passage above, the narrator remembers her house in the country with nostalgia. It is described as if the small, quiet Anatolian town is not only a place left behind for the child, but it is also left behind in time in the history of the country. For the narrator, this type of towns existed only back in the 1950s. After the wave of immigration from the rural to the city, these towns ceased to exist for the generation she belongs to - that is a particular generation who spent their childhood in *taşra* (the provinces) as the children of officials who served their country with patriotic dedication. Therefore, now it seems to her that an era has ended with the migration to the city and the provinces are only a pleasant memory.

In contrast to the metaphors she uses to describe her memories of the provinces, that is, the times when she used to run towards the cool breeze of the waves on bright summer days, her description of her home in Istanbul implies the feelings of boredom and agony. As Nurdan Gürbilek claims, Tezer Özlü identifies childhood with darkness, scantiness and impossibility, and talks about a

¹⁰Gaston Bachelard. *The Poetics of Space*, quoted from Nurdan Gürbilek. *Ev Ödevi*. p. 61.

¹¹ Tezer Özlü. *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p.7.
Şimdi taşrada değiliz. Geniş tahta evler arasındaki meyve bahçeleri sessiz kasabalarda kaldı. Ve sessiz kasabalarda 50’li yıllarda. Eriyen karlar altında açan sarı, mor çiğdemler topladığımız Esentepe’nin yüksek çamları soyut bir çocukluk düşü. İnce bacaklarımla aydınlık yaz günlerinde yokuşu koşuyorum... Serin esintisine doğru dalgaların...

childhood in which “the inability to leave is a deep, deep pain.”¹² Moreover, Gürbilek draws the reader’s attention to the portrayal of home in the novel in which she asserts that quoting from Özlü “the heavy and suffocating atmosphere of the middle-class homes”¹³ is perhaps the most suitable phrase to describe the house of the narrator:

The hook at the back of our room’s door is always heaped up with clothes. The small fitted cupboard in the room is full of clothes of the family members (except those of my brother).¹⁴

The entrance is made of stone. It is dark. The rooms and the kitchen open up to the entrance. We also eat here. My father, to avoid excess consumption of power, chooses bulbs that illuminate the room neither too much nor too little. He goes mad if the light is on in an empty room.¹⁵

The physical conditions of the house, with its thrifty use of light and the clothes heaped up at hooks at the back of the doors give a feeling of entrapment to the narrator. In a house where everything is heaped up because of the scarcity of space, where everyone has to share a room with the other, one inevitably starts to feel suffocated and entrapped.

Apart from the physical conditions, the attitude of the parents to each other and the relationship between them are also mentioned in this part. The narrator

¹² *Ev Ödevi*. p. 64.

“...onun [çocukluk] karanlıkla, darlıkla, imkânsızlıkla bir tutanlar, “gidememenin derin, derin, derin bir acı olduğu” bir çocukluktan söz edenler de var.”

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 65. “Orta sınıf evlerinin ağır, bunaltıcı havası”.

¹⁴ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 10.

Oda kapımızın arkasındaki askı, her zaman üst üste asılmış giysilerle dolu. Odadaki küçük gömme dolapta (ağabeyim dışında) tüm aile bireylerinin giysileri asılı.

¹⁵ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. pp. 11-12.

Hol taş. Karanlık. Odalar ve mutfak buraya açılıyor. Yemekleri de burada yiyoruz. Babam, fazla elektrik yakılmasın diye ampüllerin karanlık ile aydınlık arasında ışık verenlerini seçiyor. Kimsenin olmadığı bir yerde ışık yanarsa çok öfkeleniyor.

describes her home as a “center of learning”. Everyone in her house goes to school except the very old grandmother Bunni. Her father works as an inspector and the mother is a schoolteacher. On Sundays, the father never takes off his pyjamas and reads aloud the reports he has written that day to the family while the mother corrects the exam papers.

My father, who was a PE teacher once, has kept his whistle. In the mornings he is whistling it without taking off his loose striped pyjamas:

-You were coy, why did you join the military? Get up! Get up!

He yells with a raucous voice.

I wake up and find myself in Süm’s arms with the first lights of the day. I ponder what kind of relation my father could build between this house and the military service. My father wants a military order at home. That is for sure. He would perhaps have trumpets played at the door had he been rich... How the Turkish men of my father’s generation adore the army and the military service...¹⁶

This image of the father does not only indicate that he wants an order, a discipline of the military in the house, but he also has patriotic feelings for his country. There is an Atatürk corner with his bust and a satin Turkish flag in the hallway where the father stands in respect every time he hears the National Hymn and asks the other members of the family to do the same. When no one agrees to do so, he sings the entire Hymn in a loud voice. In addition to this, the father attaches a note to the children’s desks. In that note he writes:

My dear children:

¹⁶ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 7.

Bir zamanlar beden eğitimi öğretmenliği yapmış babam, düdüğünü saklamış. Sabahları çizgili, bol pijamasını çıkarmadan düdüğünü öttürüyor:

-Nazlıydın niçin geldin askere? Haydi kalk! Haydi kalk!

Borazan gibi bir sesle bağıyor.

Uyanıp, sabahın ilk ışıklarıyla birlikte kendimi Süm’ün koynunda buluyorum. Babamın bu evle, askerlik arasında ne gibi bir bağlantı kurabileceğini düşünüyorum. Babam ev yaşamında askeri bir düzen istiyor. Bu kesin. Zengin olsa belki de kapıda borazanlar çaldırarak... Babamın kuşağındaki Türk erkekleri ne büyük bir ordu ve askerlik sevgisi besliyorlar...

1. The light should be coming from the left.
2. The book should be at a distance of 30-45 cm from your eyes.
3. Lights should be turned off as soon as you finish studying etc..... I wish you good luck hoping you to become auspicious descendants to this land. Your dear and devoted father. Name. Surname. Signature.¹⁷

As it is seen from the examples above, the father is filled with feelings of responsibility and patriotism for his country, and he tries to raise his children in that manner. Yet, for the children, the father is not the only figure who is obsessed with this responsibility. The guests who come to visit them are also very passionate about their duty towards their country. The topics discussed with the guests are always the same: School, duty, success, the arguments with the administrator, the success of the children, then again school and duty. Moreover, the narrator's best friend Günk's parents are also teachers and they share the same attitude as her father. Thus, the narrator considers the feelings of exaggerated love and responsibility for the country to be a characteristic of the generation that her father belongs to.

As for the relationship between the father and the mother, the narrator describes it as distant and without love. The narrator feels that there is no warmth, no love between her parents. She feels her mother makes it obvious with her every act that she does not love her husband and she considers them to be committed to each other owing to a sense of responsibility. Hence she says, "Every day and night is so without love."¹⁸

In *Ev Ödevi*, Nurdan Gürbilek states that the parents in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* are described in such a manner that the reader cannot regard them as beings for whom the child feels love or anger. On the contrary, Gürbilek claims that the parents are portrayed in the book like the representatives of ideological

¹⁷ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 10.

Yavrularım:

1. Işık soldan gelmeli. 2. Kitap gözünüzden 30-45 cm uzaklıkta durmalı. 3. Çalışma biter bitmez ışıklar kapatılmalı vb..... Bu vatana hayırlı evlatlar olmanız isteği ile başarılar dilerim. Sevgili ve cefakâr babanız. Ad. Soyadı. İmza.

¹⁸ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 11. "Her sabah ve her gece öylesine sevgisiz ki."

apparatuses of state since they are solely described with their occupations and one cannot learn much about the relationships among the family members. For Gürbilek, it is also the language of the novel that does not allow one to detect any feelings for the parents. She likens the language Özlü uses to phrases kept hidden from them in a diary. These phrases, which are like notes from a diary, are written in an open, honest and sincere manner and they do not imply the voice of a person who wants these memories to survive, but rather it is the voice of one who wants to leave them behind and free herself from them. Therefore, Gürbilek claims that both the power and the powerlessness of the language is a result of this directness because it is difficult to express anger in this kind of language.¹⁹

Furthermore, the narrator's relationship with her brother is depicted equally with her portrayal of her parents in the sense that there is not any single statement which implies a personal comment. On the contrary, there is an air of admiration of a fan. As her brother is both a university student and a young writer, and has a circle of friends, who are also talented artists, she regards them as legendary beings. As a high school student, the narrator admires their life style. So she frequents the cafes that they go every day to observe them from a corner.

The only member of the family, who is described in detail, is the grandmother Bunni. Although there is not any emotion attached to her depiction either, Bunni's influence on the narrator can be seen from her detailed portrayal. The narrator describes Bunni as a person who has dedicated her whole life to housework and is a devoted mother to her son and his family. Moreover, she does not have any expectations from life, yet the only thing she feels curious about is her funeral. For Sennur Sezer, the narrator's wish to escape arises from Bunni's existence because Bunni represents the kind of Turkish woman who is doomed to stay at home all her life, which creates a fear in the narrator that she will end up like her.²⁰

¹⁹ *Ev Ödevi*. pp. 67, 68.

²⁰ "Tezer Özlü'nün Dünyası" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 51.

On the other hand, as opposed to the depiction of the family members with its detached and distant tone from any emotions, the anger felt towards the house and to its depressing atmosphere is explicitly expressed in the novel, especially when the narrator writes about her suicide attempt. The thought of death haunts the narrator, but she says she does not have a specific reason for committing suicide; yet there is only a feeling of anxiety that pushes her to death:

I wake up to a dark night at a late time. Everybody is sleeping their usual sleep. The house is cold. I try to move as quietly as possible. I swallow handfuls of pills I have been collecting for days. I eat bread with jam afterwards not to vomit. I am a young girl. I prepare all day for my dead body to look pretty. It is as if there were people I want to take revenge on with a pretty dead body. There are houses, couches, carpets, music, teachers I want to rebel against. There are rules I want to rebel against. A scream! Keep your little worlds to yourselves. A scream!²¹

It is important to note here that the narrator does not state any personal reason for her suicide attempt. Her attempt is only an outcry, a kind of rebellion. She does not have a problem with anyone, but with the way the things are around her. For that reason, her rebellion is against the system, against the order of society. She does not feel any resentment for her family or friends but she feels rage against the pressure of the rules, which forces her to be a conformist and obedient. She wants to object to the rules, to houses, to furniture, to teachers, to all those things around her which impose the suffocating atmosphere of the grey, cold years of childhood, and which remind her of the limits of childhood that she

²¹ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 12.

Karanlık bir gecenin geç vaktinde kalkıyorum. Herkes her geceki uykusunu uyuyor. Ev soğuk. Çok sessiz davranmaya özen gösteriyorum. Günlerdir biriktirdiğim ilaçları avuç avuç yutuyorum. Kusmamak için üzerine reçelli ekmeği yiyorum. Genç bir kızım. Ölü gövdemin güzel görünmesi için gün boyu hazırlık yapıyorum. Sanki güzel bir ölü gövdeyle öç almak istediğim insanlar var. Karşı çıkmak istediğim evler, koltuklar, halılar, müzikler, öğretmenler var. Karşı çıkmak istediğim kurallar var. Bir haykırış! Küçük dünyanız sizin olsun. Bir haykırış!

regards as dreadful. Handan İnci Elçi also claims that the reason for the narrator's rage against the house in which she grew up is because she considers it to be an obstacle to the way of life she wants live²², and when her attempt to suicide fails, she decides and desires to leave not only that particular house but all the houses she has entered and will enter throughout her life. Consequently, Özlü ends the first part of the novel, "Home", with these words:

Sundays... Nowadays... While passing through streets... if I notice family fathers in pyjamas, if my eyes spot smoking chimneys on rainy grey days in the winter... if the windows of houses are vapourized... if I see clothes hung up inside rooms... if clouds are close to wet bricks, if it is drizzling, if radios are broadcasting live soccer games, if the voice of quarreling people can be heard in the streets, I always want to leave, leave, leave, leave, leave.....²³

2.1.2 School

In the second part of the novel, "School and the Way to School", one sees a similar depiction of the school in the sense that it is also associated with the images of darkness, scantiness and entrapment as in "Home". The narrator feels that in the winter, the concrete courtyard of her school has the most rainfall. The whole area around the school, from Karaköy Square to Kuledibi, has the same architectural features of the dark grey buildings as her school. Accordingly, these dark buildings allow no sunshine, and the shadows become darker than anywhere else. The narrator explains that this part of Istanbul does not have any characteristic features; on the contrary the streets resemble the old, dark streets of

²² Elçi, Handan İnci. *Roman ve Mekan: Türk Romanında Ev*. p. 243.

²³ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 16.

Pazar günleri... Şimdilerde... Sokak aralarından geçerken... gözüme pijamalı aile babaları ilişirse, kışın, yağmurlu gri günlerde tüten soba bacalarına ilişirse gözlerim... evlerin pencere camları buharlaşmışsa... odaların içine asılmış çamaşır görürsem... bulutlar ıslak kiremitlere yakınsa, yağmur çiseliyorsa, radyolardan naklen futbol maçları yayımlanıyorsa, tartışan insanların sesleri sokaklara dek yansiyorsa, gitmek, gitmek, gitmek, gitmek, gitmek..... isterim hep.

the Middle European cities. As one arrives at Kartçınar Sokağı, where the Austrian School is located, the old buildings block the sunshine once more, and the shadows become even darker. The buildings of the school with its shelter-like narrow passages and hidden stairways, with the religious rites taking place in the twilight of the morning reminds one of the atmosphere of the Middle Europe in the Middle Ages. Moreover, when the students enter the school building, the inside is also twilit and the pale nuns in their long robes are walking around like dark clouds, and the lights are dim as they were at home.

Apart from the gloomy atmosphere of the school, which causes agony and depression in the child, the attitude of the nuns and the education she receives are also disturbing, and are reasons for her misery. In fact, the portrayal of the school, with its associations of the Middle Ages, reflects the mentality of the institute, which is strict, conservative and religion-oriented rather than individual-oriented. The Catholic atmosphere of the school, the nuns' constant references to the love of God and their praise of death as a means to unite with God have a deep influence on the child. Especially the irreconcilability of her own culture with the foreign culture she is exposed to at school causes a dilemma, which she does not know how to cope with:

We are children yet in those autumns, winters, springs and summers. But we have a strange feeling of dissatisfaction, discomfort instead of a childish joy. We bear the discomfort of teacher parents, of narrow houses in the Muslim neighborhoods, of the Catholic atmosphere of the church school, of the nuns whose behavior do not suit our thoughts and could be called crazy, of other teachers, of learning, of the lack of a current to guide our thoughts, of the whole life lying in front of us which we are expected to comprehend. Life is presented to us as a foreign element to be comprehended just now, whereas experiencing it and getting down to its roots are left for the future.²⁴

²⁴ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 23.

O sonbahar, kış, ilkbahar ve yazlarda henüz çocuğuz. Ama içimizde çocuksu bir sevinç yerine, garip bir hoşnutsuzluk, bir sıkıntı. Öğretmen anne babanın, Müslüman mahallelerindeki dar evlerin, kilise okulunun Katolik havasının, düşüncelerimizle bağdaşmayan çılgın sayılacak rahibelerin davranışlarının, öteki öğretmenlerin, öğrenmenin, düşüncelerimize yön verecek bir

As a child, she regards life to be a problem, to be an impasse, which she does not know how to deal with. The disparity between the way the things are at home and on a larger scale in her society, and the things she is taught at school are impossible to reconcile, to exist together in harmony. Consequently, she suffers from a conflict between the values of her own society and the teachings of her school. Very much like home which does not give any feelings of warmth or peace to the narrator, the school does not help her in overcoming the restlessness she feels towards her life because of her nonconformist attitude to the norms of society. As a result of this, she does not want to look back at her childhood. She rather sees it as something that has to be left behind:

Have you ever given it a thought? Can you really see a dead person once more? Can you go to a dead school? Can you sleep in a dead house? Those years are dead. We are made to live those years to kill them eventually.²⁵

It is important to point out the narrator's perspective to her past here. She does not regard the past as something that is still a part of her life, which has shaped her. Quite the reverse, the past is seen merely as something dead, and she does not feel any attachment to it. She does not want to look back, but wants to avoid the thought of those years in order to overcome the feelings of agony and entrapment. She claims that because she is made to live that way in those years she wants to free herself even from the memories of her childhood, of her home and school.

Another point worth mentioning about the attitude of the narrator is that while she is talking about the things that happened in the past she does not make

akım olmayışının, kavranması istenen önümüzde beklenen tüm yaşamın sıkıntısı var. Yaşam, şimdi ancak kavranılması gereken; oysa yaşanması, gerçeğine inilmesi ilerideki yıllara atılan bir yabancı öge gibi önümüze getirilmiş.

²⁵ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 24.

Hiç düşündünüz mü? Ölen bir insanı gerçekten bir kez daha görebilir misiniz? Ölen bir okula gidebilir misiniz? Ölen bir evde uyuyabilir misiniz? O yıllar öldü. O yılları bize öldürecek biçimde yaşattılar.

any comments on how she had felt then. As it is said above, her depiction of the past events consists of sentences as if they were stolen from a diary. Rather than elaborating on the events with her past thoughts and feelings, she just notes down the trivial affairs of the day. So while the narrator is writing down her memories of the past, she is careful not to spoil their natural characteristics. Therefore it can be said that she does not pretend to express her feelings in the past, but rather she expresses her present feelings about the past, which makes her tone sincere and distant from any kind of superficiality.

A final remark that can be made on the narrator's views about her school is that her reaction against the oppression she feels at school is similar to the one she experiences at "Home". She feels rage against the school with its teachings and its suffocating dark atmosphere, which makes her feel all the more desperate and helpless. Hence, she prefers the streets which have more life, more freedom, and which are more real and natural. Accordingly, she shares the Romantics' ideals of education - an education that is close to nature and allows more freedom to the child as opposed to the strict and repressive nature of her own school.

(Years later, when I see little primary school children going to school at dawn, memorizing patriotic poems, which I can never erase from my mind, on humid Istanbul mornings... I cannot help thinking,
-Nothing has changed.
I want to remove away the clouds, embrace the sun, run with the children on the hills, experience the trees, the wind, the sun, the rain, the people with them.)²⁶

²⁶ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 22.

(Yıllar sonra, sabah karanlığında küçücük ilkokul çocuklarının belleğimden silemediğim vatan şiirlerini ezberleyerek, siyah giysiler içinde okula gittiklerini görünce, nemli İstanbul sabahlarında...)

- Hiçbir yanlış değişmedi,

diye düşünmekten kendimi alamıyorum. Bulutları dağıtmak, güneşi avuçlamak, çocuklarla tepelerde koşmak, ağaçları, rüzgarı, güneşi, yağmuru, insanları onlarla birlikte yaşamak istiyorum.)

2.2 Tracing Real Life behind the Text

Regarding the descriptions of home and school in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, in this part, Tezer Özlü's familial and educational background as a representative of the Turkish intellectual will be discussed by reference to the short biography written by her sister Sezer Duru in the introduction part of *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan* and Tezer Özlü's writings from her diary as published in *Kalanlar*. The biographical information on Özlü is important in two respects. First of all, it is crucial in order to point out her position as a woman writer among her contemporaries, and secondly it is a necessary way to understand her mind as a representative of the Turkish intellectual.

However, as Tezer Özlü's brief biography and the fragments from her diary do not and cannot give one all the clues about what Özlü thought and felt, her novels are significant references to understand her mind. Although her novels are mainly based on her life, Özlü does not openly write about herself; however her novels still play a key role to understand her points of view and her position as an intellectual. Therefore, in order to point out her unique stance, her novels will also be consulted in detail.

To understand Tezer Özlü's position among her contemporaries, it is necessary to look at the woman writers of her generation first. In this respect, Dilek Cindoğlu's work is very illuminating. Cindoğlu, in "Women Writers and Women's Fiction in 1970-1985 Period of Turkey"²⁷, explores the mother-daughter relationships of the woman writers through in-depth interviews and analyses of the novels written by them. In this study, the attention will be paid only to the part, where Cindoğlu gives a picture of the familial background of the woman writers.

From the nineteen women writers that she interviewed in the summer of 1985 (including Adalet Ağaoğlu, Leylâ Erbil, Ayla Kutlu, Erendiz Atasü, Nazlı Eray, Latife Tekin, Pınar Kür, Peride Celal etc.) she concludes that the portrait of the woman writers, who had written novels between the years 1970 and 1985, is

²⁷ Dilek Cindoğlu. "Women Writers and Women's Fiction in 1970-1985 Period of Turkey".

remarkably consistent. According to Cindoğlu's list of shared attributes of these writers²⁸ is that first of all, most of them come from families of civil servants, where the father is a bureaucrat and the mother is a housewife. Secondly, although many of them are from metropolitan backgrounds, an important number of them have spent their childhood in *taşra* (the provinces) because of their fathers' occupations. Moreover, the fathers, because of their positions as government employees, were the "westernizing agents" in the provinces, and they tried to bring up their children with the Kemalist ideals of enlightenment. Perhaps the most significant point that Cindoğlu draws the reader's attention is the effects of this type of education on women. Cindoğlu states:

The woman writers in our study, appear to have fulfilled their parents' aspirations in terms of both internalizing Kemalist ideology and also becoming well educated in select schools. 17 of the 19 authors in our study speak a foreign language. They are, in reality, an embodiment of the "educated", "westernized" women of their parents' aspirations; a true product of Kemalist enlightenment. Yet in one way or another the Kemalist Paradise appears to have proved unsatisfactory, although achieved. On the one hand this may be because of internal contradictions of Kemalist ideology which offered women new roles in the public and did not question – even ignored- the traditional roles in private life...Furthermore the Kemalist ideology itself was not any more that influential as the capitalist ideology and the rules of the market began to gain ascendancy in 1950's and 1960's, thus they could not enjoy the prestige that the first Kemalist professional woman generation was endowed with. (Cindoğlu, 1986: 11)

This statement is particularly important as it sheds light on the reasons for these women's inner conflicts. The theme of the identity crises of women which was handled in most of the novels of the time, in fact, points to a reality that these women writers suffer from.

²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 9, 10, 11.

Comparing this picture with the biography of Tezer Özlü as written by her sister Sezer Duru, the parallelism can obviously be seen. As Duru states, Özlü's parents were educated at the teacher training schools, and their father also studied law at the university. Since their parents were idealist servants of the republic, they travelled through Anatolia, thus their children Demir (who is also a well known writer), Sezer and Tezer spent their childhood in towns like Simav, Ödemiş and Gerece. In 1952, Sezer, their father and their grandmother went to Istanbul whereas Tezer and their mother stayed one more year in Gerece waiting for their mother's appointment to Istanbul. Tezer, after graduating from Taksim October 29 Primary School, was sent to the Austrian School. From the portrait that Cindoğlu draws of, Özlü's experiences in the provincial town and the Austrian school, where she was sent to be educated in the western manner, as well as from Özlü's own portrayal of home and school in her novel, it can be said that, in terms of familial background, Özlü is one of the typical examples of this group of woman writers.

As for Özlü's personality, Sezer Duru claims that her sister was an oversensitive person, and she did not conform to the conditions that are put forward by the status quo.²⁹ As a consequence, Özlü suffered perhaps more than any other women in her generation from the contradictions between what she was taught to become and what she encountered in real life. The traces of this can be seen in her diary as published under the name of *Kalanlar*.

In the preface to "*Kalanlar*", Ferit Edgü as a close friend of the writer, states:

She had a personality aware of the fact that it was not easy to be a human being, and she was struggling for that. She was struggling to untie the bonds of society and decadent relations between people.³⁰

²⁹ Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan. p. 16.

³⁰ Ferit Edgü. "Önsöz Yerine" in *Kalanlar*. p. 8.
İnsan olmanın kolay olmadığını bilen, /Bunun savaşımını veren bir kişiliği vardı. /Durmaksızın, toplumun, insanlar arası /Yozlaşmış ilişkilerin örgülerini sökmek istedi.

Furthermore, Edgü says, what scares and disgusts Özlü most is oppression. She believes that all types of oppression destroy the essence of human beings; hence she describes the ones who exercise pressure on others as fascists³¹.

However, a close look at the fragments in her diary will demonstrate better and more clearly the aspects of her personality and her state of mind. In one of the fragments in her diary, Özlü states that the ruling class in power, and the norms of her society forced her to surrender and be like the others. Once she suffered from mental breakdown; but when she has regained control over herself, she has become really invincible.³²

As her sister Sezer Duru declares, Özlü can be defined as a nonconformist in the sense that she is against the rules, doctrines, orders which are in opposition to what she believes to be true. Accordingly, she considers them to be oppressive and rebels against those who do not let her and the people like her live their lives as they wish.

Regarding the instance given above about the attitude of Özlü to the requirements of her society, one can see that the narrator in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* shares the same feelings and thoughts about her home, school, and, on a larger scale, about her culture as Özlü. When the narrator declares that she thinks nothing has changed when she sees the little children in black school uniforms going to school memorizing patriotic poems, and when she claims that the years of her childhood are dead as she was made to live those years in that manner, she expresses the same outlook on her society as Özlü does.

Furthermore, her notes in her diary demonstrate that the departure from the provinces to Istanbul has a deep impact on Özlü like the little girl she describes in her novel. In the first part of the novel, the narrator says that she comes to Istanbul one year later than Süm (it is a nickname for Sezer Duru). While Süm shows the narrator the new things she has encountered in the city such as detergent and pasteurized milk, the narrator observes that Süm is quite used to the

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 11.

³² *Ibid.* p. 31.

habits of city life and adopts herself easily to the circumstances of the city whereas she still feels herself calm and peaceful like the times she used to spend under the plum trees in the provinces. From the child's perspective on the city life, it can be deduced that the narrator is a very sensitive person, and consequently, the departure she experiences in her life affects her more than it affects her sister or any other person.

In her diary Özlü writes under a quotation taken from Cesare Pavese that the region of her personality is definitely a town in Anatolia. And she describes it as thus:

The region of my personality is definitely a town in Anatolia. Not urbane at all. Unconsciously humble. Neither like spring nor like summer. Quiet, calm but not broad. Just boring. I like the word "boring". It is enough to explain many towns and cities of Anatolia and it arouses many feelings inside me at the same time.³³

Although Özlü attaches a feeling of boredom to Anatolian towns, she still regards them as a part of herself, even more than that as something that defines and shapes her character. The reason for this could be the fact that she opened her eyes to the world in a small town in Anatolia, so she still views life as she used to see it when she was a little child. Therefore, although the tone of her language and her statements in her novel indicate that she wants to leave behind all those memories of her childhood and never look back at them again, she still identifies herself with the first image of the world she has, that is a small Anatolian town.

³³ *Kalanlar*. p. 46.

Benim kişiliğimin yöresi mutlaka Anadolu'da bir kasaba. Hiç kibar değil. Bilinçsizce alçakgönüllü. Ne baharımı ne yazımı. Sessiz, durgun ama geniş değil. Yalnızca can sıkıcı. "Can sıkıcı" sözcüğünü seviyorum. Birçok Anadolu kasabasını, kentini anlatmaya yetiyor ve içinde birçok duyguyu birden uyandırıyor.

Yet, it is also true that in the novel her home in the provinces is described in a more friendly and peaceful manner as opposed to the house in the city and the school. Until then even though she has used the word “boredom” to describe the small Anatolian towns, the house and the school in the city have even more negative connotations for her. In that respect, the rage and the pain she feels towards the city life and the school she was sent to are more enduring than the boredom she has felt towards the province.

Many things are boring in my country... A dark, middle age like, Christian high school ruled by nuns is added to my boring, petit bourgeois civil servant’s house. I had to spend nine years in this school... I would flee from this school even today. I never passed through the streets leading to school again. This prison gave me language. A language and a second world together with that. So that I would not belong to either world. So that I would be sentenced to live nowhere.³⁴

The passage above clearly displays Özlü’s views on the house in which she was brought up and the education she received. Both the words she uses to describe her home and school, and the emotions they arouse in her are very similar to her depiction in the novel, which forms another parallelism between her life and her fiction. In addition to the “boredom” she feels towards her environment, she also expresses her alienation from her own culture. She does not consider the education she received at the Austrian School, where she learnt German, to be something privileged or worthwhile, on the contrary she regards it as the source of all her sufferings. For Özlü, the school reminds her of a prison. The foreign language she learnt there presented a second world, a second culture to her, which made her all the more alienated from her own culture. Hence her

³⁴ *Kalanlar*. p. 46.

Ülkemde birçok şey can sıkıcı... Can sıkıcı, küçük burjuva, memur evimin yanına bir de karanlık, kara, ortaçağimsı, Hıristiyan, sözlerin yönettiği bir lise ekleniyor. Dokuz yılımı geçirmek zorunda kaldım bu okulda... Bu okuldan bugün bile kaçırım. Okula çıkan sokaklardan bir daha hiç geçmedim. Bu hapishane bana bir dil verdi. Bir dil ve onunla birlikte ikinci bir dünya. Her iki dünyaya ait olmamayım diye. Hiçbir yerde yaşamaya hüküm giyeyim diye.

hatred for her school results from this feeling of in-betweenness or rather from a sense of not-belonging. So she blames the education she received for her in-between state of being.

At first, she only feels like an outcast in her family, home and her own culture. Özlü states that she thinks her life does not have any relation, any connection with her parents' life, and feels that she was not born of her parents³⁵. But when she encounters another culture at school she realizes her state of not belonging, her homelessness all the more. As the school does not offer her a way of escape, she feels herself suffocated in the gloomy atmosphere of the school. Besides, the fact that she has to live in these two opposite, irreconcilable worlds for nine years, makes her extremely depressed.

One final remark on the parallelism between the themes she deals with in her novel and her life, and on her thoughts about the culture clash that is felt by the narrator of *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* can be best made by reference to her own words on the novel:

I wanted to tell about a shock in this book. The shock created by the western culture and the education, which an eleven-year-old child of a Turkish petit bourgeois family who was sent to Istanbul for education until the age of 20 experienced in the Austrian school, one of the various foreign schools in the city of Istanbul. Petit bourgeois parents are the patriotic persons of the enthusiastic generation after the Turkish national independence war. What happens to a Turkish girl who has come from the provinces to the city of Istanbul and confronts Austrian, especially German culture in a Catholic Church school? She wants to escape from home, because she experiences the shock of the incompatibility of the stagnant life, of the life deprived of love, of the crowded life in these houses, with her ideas. She wants to flee from school, because the school is a dark church. Most of the lies taught at school will never be needed in real life.³⁶

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 44.

³⁶ *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan.* p. 145.

In this chapter, the first two parts of *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, which deal with the house and the school that the narrator spent her childhood in, is closely analyzed together with the life of Tezer Özlü as written by the author herself and her sister, Sezer Duru. The reason for this close attention to home and school is that they are treated as more than merely a setting in the novel. These two places have a considerable influence on the psyche of the child since they shape her personality and her points of view on life.

Moreover, it is important to point out that the depicted character and the environment she lives in should not be regarded simply as a representation of an individual's life. What Tezer Özlü portrays in her novel must be seen on a larger scale. Although the narrator's tone reveals the fact that she does not claim to be a spokesperson for her society and stays away from any kind of didactic speech, the study on the life of Turkish woman writers and the life of Özlü itself demonstrate that *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* tells the reader how a certain generation in Turkey was brought up.

Nurdan Gürbilek also draws the reader's attention to this aspect of the novel. Gürbilek alleges that there is a generation in Turkey, who immigrated from the provinces to Istanbul and grew up in houses like the one Özlü describes in her novel. When the majority of this generation became the supporters of socialism in the 1970s, they stood against the state that their parents had served for years. So for Gürbilek, the leftist ideology of the 1970s has the traces of the house that Özlü depicts in her novel. Therefore for the children like the narrator of *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, the leftist ideology also corresponded to a wish for a different kind of freedom, that was a wish to escape from home, to leave, to

Bu kitapta bir şoku anlatmak istedim. On bir yaşındaki, bir Türk küçük burjuva ailesinin çocuğunun, 20 yaşına dek okumak için gönderildiği İstanbul kentindeki çeşitli yabancı okullardan biri olan Avusturya okulunda karşılaştığı Batı kültür ve eğitiminin yarattığı şoku. Küçük burjuva ana babalar, Türkiye ulusal bağımsızlık savaşından sonraki heyecanlı kuşağın vatansever kişileridir. Taşradan İstanbul kentine yeni gelip, burada küçük yaşta Avusturya ve özellikle Alman kültürü ile katolik kilise okulunda karşılaşan bir Türk kıızı ne olur? Evinden kaçmak ister, çünkü bu evlerde süren durgun yaşamın, sevgisiz yaşamın, iç içe yaşamın düşündüğüne uymadığının şokunu yaşar. Okuldan kaçmak ister, çünkü okul karanlık bir kilisedir. Okulda öğretilen birçok yalan, gerçek yaşamda hiçbir zaman gerekmecektir.

destroy a public order that is imposed on their inner lives, as well as it was a wish for justice.³⁷

³⁷ *Ev Ödevi.* p. 74.

CHAPTER III

THE JUXTAPOSITION OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL TRAUMA: *THE CHILLY NIGHTS OF CHILDHOOD*

The third part of *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* called “Léo Ferré’nin Konseri” (“The Concert of Léo Ferré”), is about the memories of the narrator of the time she spent in the mental hospital when the March 12 military coup took place. This section is particularly important as it deals with the individual trauma while in the background it gives an atmosphere of the unrest in the country, thus interweaving the individual trauma with the social one. In that respect, in this chapter, through a critical reading of *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* from the standpoint of trauma theory, it will be claimed that although Tezer Özlü seems to emphasize the individual’s struggle in life, she interweaves the political and the individual in such an intricate way that the socio-political climate of her culture is also portrayed in her novel. While Özlü seems to stress the individual’s suffering with regard to his/her existence, she does not disregard the key role that society plays in one’s life. Moreover, it will be claimed that this part also offers an alternative perspective to the March 12 period. Thus, in this part of the study, the juxtaposition of the individual trauma with the cultural one will be analyzed. However, before focusing on the narrator’s experience of the mental hospital, the events preceding her madness will be pointed out.

3.1 The Route to Madness: Marriage

As it is mentioned in the previous chapter, the narrator in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* feels rage against the order of society that she lives in and

considers it to be a source of oppression. The education she receives, instead of guiding and helping her to improve herself as an individual, not only fills her mind with unnecessary information of all sorts, but also causes a dilemma in her. Because she cannot find a means to reconcile her life with the doctrines of her school, she regards both the teachings of her society and of her catholic school as untrue and pointless. Accordingly, the narrator wants to escape from home and school, because she thinks that they are the ones, which make her life bitter and miserable.

In order to escape from the suffocating atmosphere of home, she decides to marry one of her brother's friends. The sole reason for her marriage is to leave home because she cannot stay with her family and also she needs the existence of a man near her as she cannot endure the lonely nights. However, the narrator states that she has known deep inside her that she does not love the man she marries. When she is with him, she feels that they are dragging each other to a void. So what she expects from marriage is not love but some freedom, which means to her to have some books and records, to be able to read, sleep or go out whenever she likes.

In her portrayal of her husband, she particularly stresses his great admiration and love for Paris. He is depicted as someone constantly listening to French chansons. Every night after he comes from the theater -he is an actor- he tries to create a Parisian atmosphere at home. He drinks, listens to the records of Léo Ferré, dreams of Paris with its boulevards and cafes, and says that one cannot become a man if he does not see and does not live in Paris. She says she only feels pity for him when he opens the bottle of *rakı* which he brings home every night. Therefore, soon she finds her marriage unbearable. When her husband is away from her, she feels alive and happy and realizes that they are killing each other slowly.

As it can be seen from her depiction, the man she chooses to marry is also experiencing a culture shock. As he is an actor, he idealizes Paris as a center of art and lives in depression in his own society. He thinks that the society he lives in does not meet any of his expectations. He creates a dream world of Paris for

himself, and believes he can find the ideal life that he wants to lead there. However, according to the narrator, he has also lived in Paris in depression. Therefore, the problem lies not in the society he lives in, but in the way he perceives life and what he expects from it. When she thinks of him many years later, while she is at the concert of Léo Ferré in Berlin, she thinks that to regard Paris as a saviour city is an obsession. Comparing herself with him, she sees that she is doing better than he is in the sense that she regards herself as still alive, whereas for her, he was already dead even before he died.

When she looks back at those years that she spent with her husband, she questions the reasons for their inability to get over their depression and their failure in marriage. For these, she blames her culture. She states that in her country, it is not possible for people to make love without getting married. Furthermore, they grow up in families where the parents are united not with love but with a sense of responsibility. Since people are not allowed to love and caress each other even from their childhood, men and women of this society grow up without having the chance to know each other. However, she considers these conventions to be against human nature, because for her, it takes to know many men in order to understand “man”. For this reason, it is not possible for the people in their early twenties to be happily married in a society that forbids intimacy between men and women.

Looking at Özlü’s comments on the theme of marriage in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, it is seen that the reason for the failure in marriage lies in the narrator’s alienation from her own culture:

When (The child of a Turkish petit bourgeois family) wants to make love, she has to get married, the culture of the country makes marriage a must. But how will her morals agree with those of the men in her own country any longer? What will this multicultural person choose, to follow her own direction? She has been taught much more than the general level of the society she lives in, yet

she has been expected to follow the rules of this country.³⁸

As Özlü's remark demonstrates, failure in marriage is inevitable for these people who are experiencing a culture shock and alienation from their own society due to their training with the values of another culture that is not in line with what they experience in their society.

3.2 Representations of Individual Trauma in the Mental Hospital

The instances where the narrator talks about her madness and the time she spends in the mental hospital are scattered in "The Concert of Léo Ferré". In this part of the novel, her memories of the various clinics she is sent to and her memories of her marriage are merged into each other. This feature of her narration indicates that her illness coincides with her marriage. However, it also creates a kind of ambiguity around the chronology of events. Consequently, no definite statement can be made about the causes for her mental illness. As she does not state a particular reason behind her suicide attempt, but only a kind of anxiety, she does not declare a particular or triggering reason for her illness, either.

On the other hand, considering her difficulty in adapting herself to the norms of society, the paradoxes she suffers from as a result of the clash between her own culture and the western culture that she is taught at school and her disappointment in her marriage, it can be claimed that all of these circumstances pave the way to madness. As Leylâ Erbil states in her article on the novel:

In modern society, in civilized society (?) people are progressive and free as long as the system allows them to

³⁸ "Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri Üzerine Söylemek İstediklerim" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 145.

[Bir Türk küçük burjuva ailesinin çocuğu] Sevişmek isteyince, evlenmek zorundadır, ülkenin düzeni evliliği gerektirmektedir. Ama bu insanın ahlak anlayışı artık kendi ülkesinin erkekleriyle nasıl bağdaşacaktır? Bu iki kültürlü insan, yolunu çizebilmek için neyi seçecektir? Ona, içinde yaşadığı toplumun genel düzeyinden çok daha fazlası öğretilmiş, sonra da ondan bu ülkenin kurallarına uyması istenmiştir.

be. Our demands which are beyond those limits will upset the social order; those who cannot compromise and conform to the social order are in hospitals, in clinics if they are not in prison.³⁹

Taking all this into consideration, the social order, which oppresses her, can be thought of as the main cause for her mental illness.

The concept of trauma⁴⁰ is quite helpful here in order to understand and reveal the nature of her experience. In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Cathy Caruth states that “post-traumatic stress disorder” (PTSD) is defined as “a response to an event outside the range of usual human experience” by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980⁴¹. However, this definition has created an ambiguity around the concept. Today, many disciplines are involved in the debate on trauma, and each of them offers a new perspective on the notion, yet the generally agreed upon assumption about trauma is that it is:

a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increasing arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event. (Caruth, 1995: 4).

In this study, the concept of trauma will be used in this sense. Since trauma theory will be employed to understand better both the narration that is

³⁹ “Bir Romanı Okurken: Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri” in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 31. Modern toplumda, uygar toplumda (?) insan, düzenin istediği ölçüde ilerici olacaktır. Sınırları zorlayan taleplerimiz düzeni bozacaktır; düzenle uzlaşamayanlar, uyum sağlayamayanlar ise cezaevlerinde değilse hastanelerde kliniklerdedirler.

⁴⁰ Although there are various definitions of trauma since it has become a focus of attention of many disciplines, the concept of trauma that is referred to in this study is based on the theory as constructed by Cathy Caruth since her work in the field deals with the link between trauma and literature. The other works that are referred to are from *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, which is also edited by Caruth herself and share mainly the same attitude towards trauma as Caruth's.

⁴¹ Cathy Caruth. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 3.

used by Özlü and the psychological state that the protagonist is in, the term is not treated in the medical sense, meaning as a diagnosis of her mental illness but rather treated as a mood that the narrator suffers from.

Laura S. Brown's suggestions on the notion of trauma will be useful to make the point more clear. Brown, in her article, "Not Outside Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma"⁴², questions the definition given by the American Psychiatric Association. According to her, the range of human experience refers to "the range of what is normal and usual in the lives of men of the dominant class".⁴³ Yet Brown claims that not only experiences such as of wars, torture, genocide or traffic and industrial accidents but also the everyday assaults on integrity and personal safety should be regarded as sources of psychic trauma. It is this perspective on the notion of trauma that can help to unmask the operation of everyday oppression. Furthermore, she points to Maria Root's concept of "insidious trauma" (Root, 1989, 1992) which "refers to the traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit."⁴⁴ In short, it is stated that trauma should not be treated merely as a response to a violent event that causes a physical injury. The oppression operating in society can cause the same effect on the minds of the individuals, especially on women and on the people from nondominant groups.

Besides, Kai Erikson also in his definition of trauma states that "it is *how people react to them* rather than *what they are* that give events whatever traumatic quality they can be said to have"⁴⁵. Accordingly, in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, it is the reaction that the narrator gives to the circumstances in which she lives and how she perceives them makes her experience traumatic.

⁴² In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. pp. 100-112.

⁴³ "Not Outside Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 101.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 107.

⁴⁵ "Notes on Trauma and Community" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p.184.

The use of the concept of trauma in this study can be explained further by reference to Jenny Edkins' conceptualization of the term in her *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. According to Edkins:

What we call trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors: when the community of which we considered ourselves members turns against us or when our family is no longer a source of refuge but a site of danger. (Edkins, 2003: 4)

In the light of this conceptualization of trauma, it can be asserted that the conditions that the narrator of *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* lives in are traumatic since she regards neither her home nor her culture as places of protection. She rather views all institutions of her society as sources of oppression.

Going back to the novel, the approach of the narrator's illness coincides with the time when her husband is in Paris. She describes the absence of her husband as a wonderful silence that welcomes her when she comes home from work. In the following days a progress takes place as fast as a thunderbolt. She finds the world more endurable and feels that she lives in extraordinary beauty. She believes that her talents improve and she understands everything better. She loves people more than usual, and thinks that they love her more than they used to. Besides her thoughts are clearer than before. At this moment she realizes that everything is better without her husband. She does not want him to come back, because she thinks he will bring his depression and hopelessness with him. So she sends a letter to her husband announcing her wish for a divorce. When he comes back, he sees her with another man. That night she feels that her mind is flying out of her head and thinks that someone has set a trap for her, thus her narration becomes delirious:

That night, I stay with the young man. I make love. Then it rains. I cannot get back to sleep. My brain flies away from my head. It is impossible for me to restrict my brain and thoughts. Willy is watching me. He wants

to kill me with one of his guns. They want to kill me. Everything was arranged. The young man is an arrangement too. It is as if my brain has been launched to space. I cannot sleep. There is an unstoppable stream of thoughts inside my brain. Make me sleep. Don't hide away the pills. Get a doctor. Make me sleep. I am getting sick. I rush into the street.
-They are going to kill me!
From now on I rule the world.⁴⁶

After this delirium, the narrator explains that the illness, which starts forcefully, brings her to Istanbul from Ankara, and for the next five years of her life, her vigour, her sensitivity, the freedom of her thoughts and her fearlessness will be taken from her in the room of the hospital where she is put at the age of twenty-four. This depiction of her experience indicates passivity on the part of the narrator. She feels herself exposed to some kind of an accident, an incident, which takes away all her power. As Erikson states "the traumatized people often come to feel that they have lost an important measure of control over the circumstances of their own lives and thus very vulnerable"⁴⁷, the narrator expresses her loss of control over her life in the years she spends in the mental hospital.

The survivors of traumatic events display psychophysiologic reactions to the situations, which remind them of their experience of trauma⁴⁸. These are physical reactions accompanying the psychological reactions to the reminders of trauma such as fear, sweating, trembling and heart pounding⁴⁹. Moreover, the

⁴⁶ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 37.

O gece, delikanlıyla kalıyorum. Sevişiyorum. Sonra yağmur yağıyor. Bir daha uyuyamıyorum. Dünya hızlandı. Beynim kafamdan uçuyor. Beynimle düşüncelerimi sınırlamam olanaksız. Willy beni izliyor. Tabancalarından biriyle beni öldürmek istiyor. Beni öldürmek istiyorlar. Her şey düzenlenmiş. Delikanlı da bir düzen. Beynim uzaya atılmış gibi. Uyuyamıyorum. Kafamın içinde durdurulmaz bir düşünce akımı var. Uyutun beni. Hapları saklamayın. Doktor getirin. Uyutun. Hastalanıyorum. Sokağa fırlıyorum.

-Beni öldürecekler!
Şimdi artık dünyayı ben yönetiyorum.

⁴⁷ "Notes on Trauma and Community" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 194.

⁴⁸ Richard J. McNally. *Remembering Trauma*. p. 118.

survivor can feel “pseudophobia” which refers to an avoidance of the representations of the traumatic screen⁵⁰. Years after, when the narrator sees the movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* in one of the movie theaters in Germany, she leaves the movie hall as she cannot bear to see the scene of electroshock treatment which would be applied to a patient who rebels against the system of the hospital and asserts that the mentally ill people can only be healed if they are allowed to stay outside and spend time with normal people. As she walks around the theater, she thinks that no one among the audience has ever experienced an electroshock treatment because if they had, they would not have been able to watch it. That night after the movie she feels that she is dragged into a state of strange sensitivity and cannot sleep.

When she turns back to the movie hall, she sees that the patient is turned into a “tree”. She comments that the patient’s life will be filled with deep pain after this. In the movie, the patient’s friend, in order to prevent it, kills and “saves” him. After the movie, she asks Süm whether she feels a little of the pain that her sister has suffered from and states that she totally agrees to the opinion that the mentally ill people can only be healed if they are allowed to spend their time with their loved ones, with people who do not consider their behaviour as mad, because mental illness is also a contagious disease, and it can pass on another person easily even by perceiving the pain or the hopelessness of the patient. However, Süm replies that it must have been necessary for her to be looked after and locked up in the clinic since she was ill. As a response to this, the narrator comments that she cannot make herself clear, because these people watch the movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* in the same manner as if they were watching a ship approaching the port, or looking at the shop windows, or watching a movie on the life of Napoleon.

Süm’s response in fact reflects the attitude of society towards madness. As Phyllis Chesler states:

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 106.

⁵⁰ Henry Krystal. “Trauma and Aging” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p.81.

Society generally banishes such experiences from understanding, respect – and from plain view. Madness is shut away from sight, shamed, brutalized, denied, and feared. Contemporary men, politics, science –the rational mode itself– does not consult or is not in touch with the irrational, i.e., with the events of the unconscious, or with the meaning of collective history. (Chesler: 1997, 65)

It is towards this kind of attitude that the narrator feels contempt since it does not try to or want to see and understand what a patient of mental illness suffers from.

The treatment she is exposed to is portrayed in detail in the novel. The system in the hospital is described as horrifying. All of the doctors have their private offices in the rich quarters of the city, so they only come to the hospital in the mornings for a brief period of time to examine and cure their patients. Most of these doctors are conservatives. All they think of are money, cars, houses and good future for their children. They secretly try to have mistresses, yet pretend to be happily married fathers and progressive scientists. They invite their young and pretty patients, who are almost recovered to their flats in Beyoğlu, and these patients sleep with them, as they are scared that they will be ill again and have to endure the same treatment from the very same doctor. The ones who are old and ugly are not even looked after.

The men servants take blood, give injections and look after the patients. Their treatment of these ill people is even worse. When they get angry, they beat and tie them to their beds. One fat nurse wants the narrator to take off her clothes in front of her lover, another beats her because she has dropped her cigarette on the floor, one of the doctors corners her in his office to force her to sleep with him and she succeeds in running out of the room promising him that she will come to his private office. In such a hospital, she cannot do anything else but obey what she is told to do. She describes herself as obedient and calm, because she knows that if she objects, the torture exercised on her will become harsher. In order to protect herself, she reacts in an “automatonlike behavior”⁵¹ obeying what she is

⁵¹ Henry Krystal. “Trauma and Aging” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 81.

told to do. This type of behavior helps the victim to survive the torture s/he is exposed to and results from what Robert Jay Lifton calls “psychic numbing” or “psychic closing off”, which means “a cessation of feeling”⁵² on the part of the victim. The psychic numbing serves as a defense mechanism for the consciousness to deal with its confrontation with death⁵³. Therefore, in extreme cases of trauma, the victims build up this defense mechanism in order to cope with the experience. In the novel, the narrator’s calm attitude while telling her experience of the asylum and her only comment on these people as “vulgar” demonstrate that she has also numbed herself to what she has suffered from in order to survive.

As for the conditions of the mental hospital and the vulgar attitude of the staff, it could be said that they are regarded as the usual treatments of these institutions. The narrator states that she has been to various clinics, but in her narration apart from certain small differences in the physical features of the hospitals, the old, lifeless atmosphere of these clinics, the attitude of the staff and the inmates, and her fear of them are depicted in the same manner. This depiction is parallel to Phyllis Chesler’s idea that there is a widespread attitude of seeing mental patients as less “human” than medical patients.⁵⁴ Chesler also states “over the years, there have been various newspaper accounts of the prostitution, rape, and impregnation of female mental patients by the professional and non-professional staff, and by male inmates”⁵⁵. Regarding Chesler’s portrait of the asylums in the west, it can be seen that its examples in Turkey are not any different, either.

⁵² Robert Jay Lifton. “An Interview with Robert Jay Lifton” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 136.

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 136.

⁵⁴ Phyllis Chesler. *Women and Madness*. p. 75.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 77.

On the day the narrator gets out of hospital, she says that neither the electroshock treatment nor the pills have cured her. She has recovered because of her fear of the possibility that she would be once more locked up in hospital.

3.3 A Different Perspective on the March 12 Period

In the interval between the two crises of madness, the narrator's mind is full of obsessive ideas. Although she is out of hospital, she feels herself dragged away with the very horrifying boredom she feels at hospital, because she wakes up with the dread of spending another blank day. When she is with her friends, she cannot adapt herself to their routines, either. The pain of obsession does not leave her. Her friends miss her free and cheerful attitude. However, there is an abyss between the narrator and her friends with regard to the way they perceive the world; hence she criticizes their points of view. In their way of life, neither vigour nor depression reaches to the level of madness and a fear of death. They all believe in what they are doing and although they defend "rebellion", they try to keep their places in the order of things.

She defines the spring of 1971 as a strange one. The events of that spring terrorize the country. She states that she could never detect her mental relation to the events of that year and she experiences her life in the most fragmented manner possible in April and May. Her sister Süm takes her and their brother to a village in the Mediterranean. The radios are constantly announcing the arrests in Istanbul, and she observes that there is a violence and terrorism in the news. In July, she goes back to Istanbul with her brother and he is immediately put in jail. However, in Istanbul she senses that the events are not that horrifying as they sound from the distance. So, she remarks that terror also knows how to hide itself in the daily life.

The depiction of her electroshock treatment needs close attention as it demonstrates the crucial aspects of the narrator's traumatic experiences and her perspective on the March 12 period in Turkey. After her return to Istanbul, the narrator spends her time sleeping all day. She does not want to get up because she

knows that to be awake is to become mad. However, she is woken up by a friend and she finds herself in an electroshock coma. She describes these comas as strange, extraordinary incidents, which make her feel as if she were beyond death. Thinking of her experiences of electroshock, she remarks that an electroshock does not have a middle point; it only has a beginning and an end. However, she feels that she has been in the middle of death while the electric is given to her brain. At this point of her narration, her sentences are separated with slashes as if each slash represents a moment of electricity given to her, and the sentences between them can be interpreted as what she thinks in the interval between each shock:

“...And now the events have gone so far that they give me electroshock/ maybe they are trying to make me talk by electroshock/ the doctor must have come home/ moreover the shock device in his hand is a strange device/ it is like a wooden shoe shine box/ who knows, maybe he was not able to regulate the electricity well/ or it is just the city power/ it goes up and down/ and it kills/ and now they have put me into a shock coma in my house/ are they trying to make me talk/ does my husband want to know if he was really cheated on or not/ what difference does it make if he was or was not/ are they making me talk/ am I talking/ they should not have done this to me/ I do not have any secrets/ I have always treated them all nicely/ .../ there, I feel the beat of the electricity on the metal fillings in my teeth/ it is unbearable/ I know there are people dying under these kind of shocks/ .../ is Süm with me/ she cannot be/ my mother my brother my husband/ I understand with a shock that they are with me/ I will die shortly when I close my eyes/ they will not have anyone left to mess with/ what is it that they want/ so much that they end my life with electricity/ I am not angry/ they just want the best for me/ is this natural/ is this an event to be experienced by living and thinking/ maybe it is natural”
-I’m dying, continue the revolutionary struggle without me, I say.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 52.

“... İşte şimdi olaylar o denli ileri gitti ki, bana elektroşok veriyorlar / belki de beni elektroşokla konuşurma yöntemine gidiyorlar / doktor eve gelmiş olmalı / üstelik elindeki şok gereci garip bir

As it can be seen from the passage above, the narrator is conscious during the electroshock treatment. Although she does not blame anyone for what she is suffering from, her depiction of the electroshock implies a scene of victimization. Her family and her doctor exercise power on her by giving electricity while she is lying helpless yet aware of what is going on around her. Elaine Showalter claims, in her study of the representations of female madness in English culture, that the scene of electroshock treatment “makes use of archetypal patterns of masculine dominance and feminine submission”⁵⁷. In *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, the definition of the electroshock treatment apparently displays the dominance of the one party and the submission of the other. Yet, rather than viewing the unequal distribution of power between two parties in terms of masculinity and femininity, in the context of the novel, the one who holds power, is the sane, rational, conformist majority against the mad, irrational, nonconformist and rebellious other.

The statement, which she makes when the shock is over, is significant in order to demonstrate how her wish for the accomplishment of the revolutionary struggle is deeply rooted in her subconscious. After this statement she says that neither during the March 12 period, nor before or after that she has placed herself in the revolutionary struggle. Yet she thinks that she could destroy the conventional norms of the petit bourgeois, which forbid the individual from experiencing justice and liberty.

gereç / tahta bir boyacı sandığı gibi / kim bilir belki de elektriği iyi ayarlayamadı / ya da kent cereyanı işte / yükselir alçalır / ve öldürür insanı / ve işte beni şimdi evimde şok komasına soktular / konuşurmak mı istiyorlar / kocam gerçekten aldatılıp aldatılmadığını öğrenmek mi istiyor / aldatılma ne olur aldatılmasa ne olur / konuşturuyorlar mı / konuşuyor muyum / bana bunu yapmamalıydılar / bir gizlim yok ki / hepsine her zaman iyi davrandım / ... / işte elektriğin dişlerimdeki metal dolgulardaki titreşimini duyuyorum / dayanılır gibi değil / böyle şoklar altında ölenler olduğunu biliyorum / ... / başımda Süm var mı / olamaz / annem erkek kardeşim kocam / şok içinde onların başımda olduğunu anlıyorum / biraz sonra gözlerimi kapayınca öleceğim / artık uğraşacak kimseleri kalmayacak / istedikleri ne / yaşamımı elektrikle bitirecek kadar / kızmıyorum / salt iyiliğimi istiyorlar / doğal bir olay mı bu / yaşayarak düşünerek yaşanacak olay mı bu / belki de doğal”

-Ölüyorum devrimci mücadeleyi bensiz sürdürün, diyorum.

⁵⁷ Elaine Showalter. *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* p.207.

Moreover, she states that at the time of the revolutionary struggle, her wish for its continuance is not to make herself endure the lethal power of electroshock. It is a very natural wish, because it is a wish that has fostered and developed with her. She claims that it is the essence of her existence to wish for its accomplishment since it is a wish explicitly expressed when she is face to face with death; hence it forms the essence of her thoughts.

Another noteworthy aspect of the novel is the part in which she describes the day she is out of hospital. After her release from hospital, she has dinner at a friend's house with the friends', who are also released from the martial law prisons. When they start to sing revolutionary songs, she asks them not to do so, since she does not feel herself strong enough to bear the enthusiasm of their release from prison while she is still feeling tired after her experiences in the asylum. Even though she cannot share their enthusiasm, still she spends her first night out with people who are also oppressed and tormented at another place and due to other reasons. Accordingly, it can be claimed that their traumas serve to form communality⁵⁸ and that trauma can also be a means of uniting people who suffer from similar experiences.

Considering the novels written on the March 12 period in Turkish literature, Tezer Özlü's depiction offers a different perspective to it. The literary works, named under the title of March 12 novels, mainly deal with the political issues, and they have a rather sociological emphasis in the sense that they try to depict the social events that took place in those years.⁵⁹ Moreover, in these novels the protagonist is usually an arrested revolutionary since the main aim is to portray the events taking place in prisons and the torture that these revolutionaries suffer from.⁶⁰ Consequently, the protagonist is always depicted as a passive

⁵⁸ Kai Erikson. "Notes on Trauma and Communality" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 186.

⁵⁹ Berna Moran. *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış III*. p. 17.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p.14.

person who has to endure the circumstances and does not have any control over the situation he is in.⁶¹

In addition to these features, Ömer Türkeş states that the reasons for these revolutionaries' protests and their worldviews are not even mentioned in these novels; but only their psychological breakdown as a result of their defeat is depicted.⁶² Moreover, these literary pieces are either written by the revolutionary intellectuals who are involved in the events of the time or by the outsiders who feel sympathy to the struggle of the youth.⁶³ As a result, they happen to be either the propaganda of the ideology they support or an elegy on the failure of the revolution or a gesture of sympathy to the struggle.⁶⁴ The fact that these novels depict a certain era makes them historical or sociological novels in a sense. Thus they have the handicap of reaching to a small number of readers who want to learn about the epoch that these novels depict.⁶⁵

In the light of all these aspects of the March 12 novels, it is clearly seen that Tezer Özlü's approach shares some similarities as well as differences with these novelists. First of all, it should be noted that *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* cannot be considered to be an example of this type of novels. However, it is equally true that the March 12 period is used as an atmosphere in the story⁶⁶. Although the protagonist, herself, claims that she has never been involved in the events of the period, she still feels herself attached to the revolutionary struggle. The reason for her sympathy towards the revolution is that as an individual, who

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p.14. See also Alemdar Yalçın. *Siyasal ve Sosyal Değişimler Açısından Türk Romanı*.

⁶² "Romanda 12 Mart Suretleri ve '68 Kuşağı" in *Birikim*, 132, April 2000. p. 81. For a discussion of the representation of socialist ideology in these novels, see Murat Belge, "12 Mart Romanlarına Genel Bir Bakış" in *Birikim*, 12, February 1976. The same article is also published in Murat Belge. *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar*.

⁶³ Ömer Türkeş. "Romanda 12 Mart Suretleri ve '68 Kuşağı" in *Birikim*, 132, April 2000. p. 80.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 80.

⁶⁵ Berna Moran. *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış III*. p. 17.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 82.

is against every form of oppression, she naturally feels close to the ideals of the revolution and regards it as the essence of her existence.

On the other hand, one parallelism between *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and the March 12 novels is that the protagonist is also depicted as a passive victim, who suffers from the torments not of prisons but of mental asylums and electroshock treatments. Yet, in contrast to the psychological breakdown and the disillusionment that the revolutionaries suffer from, the narrator of *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, never states any kind of accusation towards anyone around her for her sufferings, and she always believes in the power of life and so embraces it.

In contrast to the thematic correspondences between Özlü's novel and the novels of March 12, the style that is used in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* differs radically from them. First of all, the way Özlü expresses her political stand is unique, and different from the above mentioned novelists. Özlü weaves her political concerns with her personal views in such an intricate way that her narration displays perfectly the inextricability of the political, the social life from the life of the individual. Although she seems to have put emphasis on the inner life of the individual and her sufferings, she portrays the individual paying utmost attention to the socio-political climate of the era she lives in. Füsün Akatlı comments on Özlü's style in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* as thus:

There are moments when the conflicts of a person's outer life and inner life pass a fine border line, the inner fights against the outer, it becomes a victim of "the right" when it is beaten and "the wrong" when it beats. An eye that has exceeded and then returned from that border line enables those who have managed to stay at this side of the line and who are aware of this success; namely, who have always sensed that fine line to experience all these in a much clearer and more intense manner than they could ever see with their own eyes.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ "Acımın Tadıyla" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 28.

Kişinin dış yaşamı ile iç yaşamının çatışmasının incecik bir sınır çizgisinin ötesine kayıverdiği anları, iç'in dış'a karşı verdiği savaşımı, yenik düştüğünde "doğru"nun, yendiğinde "yanlış"ın

In addition to this, Sennur Sezer also claims that the writings of Özlü should not be merely seen as her own life story. Because, although Özlü seems to express herself, in her novels she, in fact, criticizes the world by describing the circumstances of her existence and the people that she has to live with.

Therefore, in the novel, her not focusing solely on the events of the March 12 period does not suggest a lack of concern or unawareness on her part. Quite the contrary, by not limiting her depiction to a particular period or an event, she, as an intellectual, expresses her involvement with the problems of modern society and their effects on the individual's life.

The final and probably the best illustration of her socio-political concerns can be made by reference to her own words:

The awakening that has started in the higher parts of the society in the last fifteen years has reached a level where each thinking Turkish person can guide his/her thoughts. Salvation is not of the individual, it depends on everybody's salvation. Life is not in the future as it is thought, and told, it is in every moment that is lived.⁶⁸

3.4 Turning Back to Life: “Yeniden Akdeniz”

The final part of the novel, “Yeniden Akdeniz”, can be regarded as a tribute to life. In this chapter, there is an embracing attitude and a celebration of life after having passed through difficult times.

Beginning with a description of the beautiful scenery of the Taurus Mountains in the Mediterranean, this part depicts the times after the narrator's recovery and the end of the March 12 period. As opposed to the previous chapters

kurbanı oluşunu, o sınır çizgisini aşıp dönen bir göz; çizginin beri yanında kalmayı başarmış olanlar arasında bu başarının bilincinde olanlara, yani o ince çizgiyi hep duyumsamış olanlara kendi gözleriyle göremeyecekleri bir netlikte, yeğlilikle yaşatıyor.

⁶⁸ “Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri Üzerine Söylemek İstediklerim” in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 146. Toplumun ileri kesimlerinde başlayan uyanma, tüm düşünen Türk insanının, düşüncelerine yön verebileceği bir düzeye erişmiştir on beş yılda. Kurtuluş bireysel değil, herkesin kurtuluşuna bağlıdır. Yaşam, öğretilen, anlatılan gibi ilerilerde değil, yaşanan her anda.

of the novel in which the setting is illustrated as gloomy and creates a wish to escape and leave behind, the atmosphere of this section arouses feelings of peace, tranquility and timelessness.

Moreover, it is for the first time in the novel that the narrator's reflections on life and death are explicitly expressed, and there is an attempt on the part of the narrator to reconcile the idea of death with her love of life.

Life is full of unlimited passions. Getting used to death grows, develops as much as one loves life. It gains beauties. Just as I see off this love easily, life should be seen off that easily, that nicely. I should hand over my loves with satisfaction. Like the softness of breezes, the intensity of the Mediterranean rains.⁶⁹

Although the previous parts seem to be more charged with the idea of death as the trauma of the narrator and her suicide attempt are depicted, in fact, in those parts there is not a single contemplation on that notion. On the other hand, in this part there is, in a sense, a compromise made both with life and death. As the narrator's love of life increases, she starts to view death as an inextricable part of life, thus she reconciles with it.

Friends are waiting for each other in the coffee house. I love them. They are all people feeling the pain of their country and struggling to change the order. There is a strange unity between us against the new inhumane black marketter rich people. We are stronger when we get together. There is a strange feeling inside the people in our group which gets bigger and bigger at the tables overflowing from the coffee house into the streets at these summer nights. It is as if everybody is waiting for a more beautiful life to come and find us. The March 12 era is over. However the pain of that era had rankled us and become one with our existence. The power of terror will try to infiltrate and expand year by year and will

⁶⁹ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. p. 61.

Yaşam mutlak tutkularla dolu. Yaşamı sevmekle birlikte ölüme alışmak da büyüyor, geliyor. Güzellikler kazanıyor. Bu sevgiyi nasıl rahat uğurluyorsam, yaşamı da o denli rahat, o denli güzel uğurlamalı. Sevgilerimi doyumla devretmeliyim. Esintilerin yumuşaklığı, Akdeniz yağmurunun yoğunluğu gibi.

drag us to harder days. It is impossible not to feel these pains deeply whilst preparing for small lives at breezy summer nights. Restlessness is there as always. It gets bigger. Not smaller. Then some of our friends die one by one. They are only in their forties. We bury the longing and expectation for more beautiful lives along with them. More beautiful lives are not ahead. A more beautiful life is not otherwise. The beautiful life is here. In Taksim square. It is among the black crowd selling pickles, rice, bagels, flowers, postcards and polishing shoes. There is no beautiful life other than here or this shape of cars stuck in traffic, the smell of exhaust, the smell of urine all over the square, this black crowd that flourishes in front of our eyes, our feelings. The limits of a beautiful life are as much as our friends who died and were buried had lived. The house of Gani is still sealed up. The same rat is still sitting at his window. I think “ Only the beauties of this neighbourhood are sufficient for living, for enjoying life. These natural qualities should have been enough to delay his death.”⁷⁰

As it can be seen in the passage above, there is a radical change in the narrator’s attitude to her surroundings and her friends in contrast to her perspective during the interval between her crises of madness. Here, the narrator is shown as being in harmony with her environment and forms a feeling of

⁷⁰ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. pp. 61, 62.

Kahvede arkadaşlar birbirini bekliyor. Onları seviyorum. Hepsi ülkerinin acılarını duyan, düzenin değişmesi için çaba harcayan insanlar. Yeni türeme insanlıktan yoksun karaborsacı zenginler karşısında garip bir birlik var aramızda. Bir araya gelince daha güçlüyüz. Bu yaz akşamlarında, kahvenin caddeye taşan masalarında, giderek büyüyen grubumuzdaki insanlarda garip bir duygu var. Sanki herkes daha güzel bir yaşamın gelip bizi bulmasını bekliyor. 12 Mart dönemi geçti. Ama bu dönemin acısı içimize kaya gibi oturmuş, varlığımızla bütünleşmişti. Terörün gücü, yıllar yılı sızmaya, yayılmaya çalışacak ve bizi daha çetin günlere sürükleyecek. Esintili yaz akşamlarında, küçük yaşantılara hazırlanırken, bir yandan da bu acıları içten duymamak olanaksız. Tedirginlik her zamanki gibi var. Büyüyor. Küçülmüyor. Sonra arkadaşlarımızdan birkaçı arka arkaya ölüyor. Henüz kırk yaşlarında insanlar. Daha güzel yaşamlara duyulan özlem ve bekleyişi onlarla birlikte gömüyoruz. Daha güzel yaşamlar ötelere değil. Daha güzel yaşam başka biçimde değil. Güzel yaşam burada. Taksim Alanı’nda. Turşu, pılav, simit, çiçek, kartpostal satan, ayakkabı boyayan siyah kalabalık içinde. Trafik tıkanıklığından yürümeyen arabalar, egzoz kokusu, alana yayılan sidik kokusu, gözlerimiz, duygularımız önünde açılan bu kara kalabalıktan başka yerde, daha başka bir biçimde bir güzel yaşam yok. Güzel yaşamın sınırları, ölen, gömülen arkadaşlarımızın yaşadığı kadar.

Gani’nin evi hala mühürlü. Camında gene aynı fare oturuyor.

“Yalnızca bu mahallenin güzellikleri, yaşamak, yaşamın tadına varmak için yeterli. Onu ölümden alıkoymaya yetmeliydi bu doğal veriler”, diye düşünüyorum.

solidarity with the people around her. As the state of affairs gets worse in the country, they share the same worries about the circumstances. However, in the face of the terror that is felt in society and the pain for the loss of friends, she does not feel desperate; rather she feels more love for life and celebrates the ordinary details of the mundane life. The reason for this is not only that she believes there is no need to look for a better life, because life is beautiful as it is, as it exists, but also it implies a firmer stand against the injustices of society she lives in.

Perhaps the most important theme that Özlü deals with in this part is the love between people as she ends the novel by referring to the idea of a sexual intercourse, which crosses the boundaries between two people and unites them.

When I sleep with him, it is as if there were no men or strong pains in the long years that have passed by. There is just love, a desire that has remained vigorous. Years, events have not exhausted me at all, on the contrary they have guided my feelings. It has taught me the holiness of the beautiful, of loving a person, of caressing a person's skin, of uniting with a person, and of enjoying that holiness.

...

I am so insatiable whilst climaxing with him that it is as if the sun really rises in the east and sets in the west in this country.

We make love again towards the morning. The one whose warmth that awaits me and makes my body numb I feel in all my wetness. The most beautiful moment in life... The moment that becomes holy with the union of two people. Eternity. This moment that reconciles all the times of existence. The eternity in the union of two people should be the core of human life.

...

This jolt that two people experience by embracing each other should be the core of the universe. This union that lasts forever, calls into being, keeps alive, and transfers life into further eras...⁷¹

⁷¹ *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*. pp. 64, 65.

Onunla yatarken , sanki aradan geçen uzun yıllarda ne bir erkek, ne de büyük acılar var. Dipdiri kalmış bir sevgi, bir istek var yalnız. Yıllar, olaylar beni hiç yıpratmamış, aksine duygularıma yön vermiş. Güzelin, bir insanı sevmenin, bir insanın tenini okşamamanın, bir insanla birleşmenin kutsallığını, bu kutsallığın tadına varmayı öğretmiş bana.

...

As it is seen from the passage above, the narrator views sexuality as a force of life that shapes and continues the existence of man. Moreover, this perspective on sexuality enables her to embrace life and to believe in the possibility of destroying the boundaries and forming an understanding between two sexes.

On this aspect of the novel, Leylâ Erbil claims that Özlü's portrayal of sexuality expresses a kind of rebellion against the conservative bourgeois morals concerning sexuality. Erbil draws the reader's attention to the statement that the narrator perceives that the years and the events have guided her feelings and she has become experienced enough to be able to find ideal partner. Erbil interprets this statement to be in line with Wilhelm Reich's idea that sexual instincts should not be repressed because one can only be happy when one finds his/her ideal partner. Therefore, according to Erbil, Özlü offers a healthy and progressive perspective on sexuality as opposed to the conventional norms of the bourgeois society.⁷²

The form and the style of its narration are the other noteworthy aspects of the novel that need to be elaborated on in order to understand better how the themes of individual suffering and the pursuing relief are reflected apart from the themes that are delineated.

Taking the each part of the novel into consideration, the first two chapters can be defined as a representation of the oppressive circumstances and a foreshadowing of the stormy events both in the life of the narrator and in her society. The third part "The Concert of Léo Ferré" is the breaking point and the

Onunla boşalmak öylesine doyumsuz ki, sanki bu ülkede güneş doğudan doğuyor ve gerçekten batıdan batıyor.

Sabaha doğru yeniden yatıyoruz. Beni bekleyen ve bedenimi uyuşturan sıcaklığını tüm ıslaklığımda duyduğum insan. Yaşamın en güzel anı... İki insanın birleşmesiyle kutsallaşan bu an. Sonsuzluk. Varoluşun tüm zamanlarını uzlaştıran bu an. İki insanın birleşmesindeki sonsuzluk özü olmalı insan yaşamının.

...
İki insanın sarılarak geçirdiği bu sarsıntı özü olmalı evrenin. Sonsuza dek varan, var eden, yaşatan, yaşamı ileri çağlara doğru devreden bu birleşme...

⁷² "Bir Romanı Okurken: Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 34.

tensest part of the novel in the sense that the narration both with its content and form explicitly presents the madness and the torture she suffers from. Hence, the final part is narrated like a relief with its atmosphere of serenity.

As it is stated before, *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* is, above all, about memory. Therefore, the traumatic nature of the events is not only described through the explicit narration of the past experiences, but also reflected by using the features of traumatic memory in the narrative.

The traumatic memory refers to the fragmented style of the narration when the victims talk about their experiences of trauma. According to the psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk, the reason for this fragmentation in the survivor's narration resides in the emotional intensity of trauma, thus making it difficult "to piece together a coherent narrative of what happened".⁷³ Accordingly, the victim uses "repeated phrases, speech filters and unfinished thoughts" which "disrupts the smooth flow of the story".⁷⁴

In *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, this fragmented feature of the traumatic memory is employed particularly in the part called, "The Concert of Léo Ferré". The events of this part are narrated in such a way that it is not possible to draw a chronological pattern of the story whereas in the other parts of the novel even though the narrative comes back and forth between the past and the present, a sequential order can still be detected in the depiction of past events. Considering the theme that is dealt with in "The Concert of Léo Ferré", the use of fragmented narrative is explicitly intentional. Since it is in this part that the narrator describes her madness and electroshock treatments, Özlü's intentional use of fragmentation in her narrative enables her to highlight the effects of trauma on the narrator's mind. However, it should also be noted that, this fragmented nature of the narrative does not suggest that the events are told in an arbitrary fashion. On the contrary, as Tahir Abacı states, there is a self in the novel that reports her days in the mental hospital in a coherent manner as opposed to the aimless character of

⁷³ Quoted from Richard J. McNally. *Remembering Trauma*. p. 135.

⁷⁴ Foa, Molnar, Cashman. (1995). Quoted from Richard J. McNally. *Remembering Trauma*. p. 135.

the writings of the “genuinely” mad who cannot form a lucid story because of their obsessive and repetitive use of imagery.⁷⁵

In “Yeniden Akdeniz”, where the recovery after the mental illness is described, the structure of the narrative returns into its continuous flow. Therefore, the trauma that is experienced is not only depicted in the content of the work, but is also reflected in its form. In fact, considering the function of literature or of the construction of a narrative of one’s traumatic past as a way of healing⁷⁶, this novel not only becomes a reflection of traumatic memory but it is itself an example or a representation of the process of healing that one goes through; thus in this context writing also functions as therapy.

In addition to this function of literature/writing, the work of Judith Herman, especially her concept of “narrative cure”, points to another dimension of writing about one’s traumatic past. According to Herman, the narrative written by the victim is “politically charged” in the sense that the victim makes a “testimony” to an experience that society has “negated”, because not only the victim but also society represses traumatic events from its memory. Thus the victim, in fact, “makes a political statement that offers a basis for social change” while s/he is writing his/her experience.⁷⁷ With regard to this aspect of Herman’s work, Robson states that Herman’s notion of “testimony”, in fact, establishes a link “between the private and public, between individual ‘cure’ and the restoration of social order”⁷⁸. Regarding this, it can be said that although Özlü’s “testimony” seems to be an individualistic interpretation of the March 12 period, her different

⁷⁵ “Deli Göleği ile Edebiyat” in *Varlık*, October, 2005. p.8.

⁷⁶ For the therapeutic effect of constructing a narrative of one’s trauma, many theoreticians refer to the work of Pierre Janet. For Janet, in order to come to terms with one’s traumatic past, the traumatic memory must be turned into a narrative memory, which is a coherent, complete story of the traumatic experience, and the victim should give a place to this experience in his/her life story. Quoted from Caruth, Cathy. “Recapturing the Past: Introduction” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 153.

⁷⁷ Quoted from Robson, Kathryn. “Curative Fictions: The ‘Narrative Cure’ in Judith Herman’s *Trauma and Recovery* and Chantal Chawaf’s *Le Manteau Noir*” in *Cultural Values*, vol. 5, nr. 5, January 2001. p.117.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p. 117.

perspective on this phase is crucial in the sense that she diverts our attention to the life on the margin.

CHAPTER IV

WITNESSING THE TRAUMA OF THE OTHER: *JOURNEY TO THE END OF LIFE*

Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk (Journey to the End of Life) is about the narrator's voyage to the deaths and lives of her favorite writers, Franz Kafka, Italo Svevo and Cesare Pavese. The book was originally written in German under the name of *Auf den Spuren Selbsters* (*On the Track of a Suicide*) and won the Marburg Literature Award in Germany in 1983. About her reasons for choosing German as the language of her work, Tezer Özlü states that her one-year-stay in Germany naturally made the German language dominant in her thoughts as she had been engaged with it for 28 years, thus the sentences of her work revealed themselves to her in German. In addition to this, there was an increase in the number of the Turkish literary pieces translated into German at that time. Özlü considered that the translation of her work into German language would take many years; moreover, even if it was translated, there would probably be some differences regarding the style.⁷⁹ In 1984, the author herself translated the book into Turkish; however, the Turkish version was considered to be a recreation rather than a translation.⁸⁰ On this aspect of the book, Füsün Akatlı comments that Özlü's narration⁸¹ does not have the traces of German although it was

⁷⁹ "...Marburg Edebiyat Ödülü Üzerine..." in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 148.

⁸⁰ Quoted from the foreword of *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*.

⁸¹ "Narration" seems to be a more appropriate term to define *Journey to the End of Life* as it is a work of reflections on literature and life. As the head of the jury Hans Jürgen Fröhlich states in the ceremony of the Marburg Literature Award, in this literary piece the autobiographical aspect of the narrative enables to reflect the narrator's life and thoughts more closely to the reader, yet it is neither an autobiography, nor a novel but rather has a style of its own. (from *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 151,152). Moreover, Füsün Akatlı also declares that although she avoids using terms

originally written in that language. Therefore, she regards it to be a work of Turkish literature, and finds it irrelevant to question the reasons for Özlü's choice of using another language since Akatlı expresses that she does not feel that she is reading a "translated" work.⁸²

Apart from the language of the book, the process of writing and the style are the other important aspects to be discussed before an in-depth analysis of the work. Özlü states that it took her six months to write the introductory pieces in Berlin and she completed the two thirds of the book while she was traveling on the route between Berlin –Prague–Vienna–Zagreb–Belgrade-Nis -Berlin-Zagreb-Trieste-Torino- Santo Stefano Belbo to visit the graves of Kafka, Svevo and Pavese and the places they spent their lives, to interview their relatives and friends to feel closer to these writers.⁸³

Accordingly, not only the theme but also the form of the narration reflects the journey to the end of the lives of these authors. Fatih Özgüven comments on the structure of the book as a "floating mine" in the sense that the work as a diary of her journey uses a technique that involves less of the fictive features of a novel and more of the performance of a voyage. Thus, it echoes the aimless and haphazard motion of her journey with its breaks and continuance. Consequently, it creates a writing that is a combination of this motion of a journey and a texture of its experience.⁸⁴

Although the narration seems to have an aimless and haphazard structure, as it will be claimed and demonstrated in this chapter, there is an intention underlying the loose structure of the narration. As Özlü does in all her works, she interweaves the themes she deals with in this one in such an intricate way that this seemingly loose structure, in fact, becomes a strong binding of real life and literature, and the reconciliation of the irreconcilable past and present.

in her writings, she uses "narration" to define *Journey to the End of Life* as it gives the true definition of the book. ("Acıdan Acıya Yol Vardır" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 44).

⁸² "Acıdan Acıya Yol Vardır" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 44.

⁸³ "...Marburg Ebebiyat Ödülü Üzerine..." in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 149.

⁸⁴ "Güzel ve Başınabuyruk Bir Yazı: Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 41.

The main purpose of this chapter is to argue that in *Journey to the End of Life*, literature/writing is treated as a means of healing from the sufferings of life. Rather than regarding the problem that the narrator poses as a conflict of real life versus writing, it will be suggested that writing is treated as a therapeutic process in life. To this end, trauma theory will be used as it offers a different perspective to the functions of literature. Through a critical reading of *Journey to the End of Life* from the standpoint of trauma theory, it will be claimed that although the narrator seems to believe that life and literature are in opposition to each other or that one has to make a choice between the two, in fact the book explores the spaces where life and literature coexist and nurture each other. The proof of this lies in the fact that while the narrator is traveling in different countries, she empathizes with the authors, with whom she shares the same attitude to life, and communicates with them in the realm of art. Through her reading of their works and tracing their lives, she becomes a “witness” to their suffering while at the same time she looks at her own life. It is in this respect that literature becomes a way of understanding the trauma of others and a way of reconciling with one’s own traumatic past. Therefore, in the first part of this chapter, the emphasis will be on her reconciliation with her past throughout her journey, and her correspondences with her beloved authors will be explored in the following part.

4.1 Reconciliation with the Past

Journey to the End of Life starts with the narrator’s reflections on her beloved writer, Cesare Pavese. She is surprised to learn that they were born on the same day, and starts to question what makes herself feel identical to him as she unites what she experiences only with Pavese’s words. Therefore, she not only shares the same view on life as Pavese but also sees the world through his writings. In that respect, the quotations from Pavese throughout the narrative serve both as a means to portray Pavese’s thought and writing and to represent the narrator’s reflections on his art and the influence he has on her life.

Another significant aspect of these quotations is that they create a correspondence between Pavese and the narrator both in real life and in the realm of art since the narrator traces Pavese's life in the places he lived as well as his thoughts in his works.⁸⁵

Furthermore, as his influence is undeniable in her life, she also views her past while she is making this journey to the world of Pavese. Therefore, in *Journey to the End of Life* through Pavese, there is a correspondence going on at two levels, one is evidently with Pavese, Kafka and Svevo and the other is with the narrator's own past. In other words, the narrator also traces her own life while she is tracing the lives of these writers⁸⁶.

The general assumption that is agreed upon *Journey to the End of Life* is that it is about the narrator's journey after her three beloved authors, while at the same time it aims to establish the link between real life and the world of literature/writing⁸⁷. The most detailed analysis of the work from this aspect is made by Hiclâl Demir in her article "Yaşamın ve Yazının Ucuna Yolculuk". In this article Demir claims that "Taking Pavese's abandonment of life and writing as a starting point, Özlü examines the ties between life and writing on the basis of

⁸⁵ Güven Turan also states that the book can be seen as a correspondence out of time between Özlü and Pavese. "Beklenmedik Bir Durakta İnen Yolcu: Tezer Özlü" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 67. "Kitaba, Tezer Özlü ile Pavese'nin zaman ötesi diyalogları demek hiç de aykırı düşmez örneğin."

⁸⁶ Emre, Gültekin. "Tezer Özlü'de Ölüm ve Yaşam Çatışması" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 101.

⁸⁷ Füsün Akatlı claims that the narrative is a journey to the places where Kafka, Svevo and Pavese lived and died and on a higher level it is a journey to end of either the life of these authors, or of the writer, or of the readers. Yet, although the readers have the chance to see these authors from the perspective of the writer, the most significant thing is the one life that is depicted among all other lives. ("Acıdan Acıya Yol Vardır" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. pp. 45, 46).

A similar comment is made by Ahmet Cemal. For Cemal, although at the beginning the journey leads to the dead, through the dead one finds him/herself in the middle of life. Since the writings of these dead authors are still living, they cannot be seen as dead, and it is this ability to turn the life into words that constitutes the fundamental secret of life. ("Bir 'İnsan'a Dönüş Öyküsünün Romanı" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 48).

Moreover, Ferit Edgü comments that Özlü in *Journey to the End of Life* breathes the lives of her beloved writers as their writings are not enough for her. Therefore, the originality of the book resides in this wish and attempt to pursue the lives of Kafka, Svevo and Pavese even though it is an impossible quest. However, what is achieved at the end is the overlapping of words and life. ("Önsöz Yerine" in *Kalanlar*. pp. 10, 11).

her own life”⁸⁸. Accordingly, she alleges that the journey to the “graveyards of literature” is also a journey to the inner world of the narrator. In fact, the narrator’s inner world implies a split in the self. For Demir, throughout the book she tries to reconcile the two split selves into one, and this wish will be accomplished by reconciling the problem of life and writing that she depicts in her narration.⁸⁹ According to Demir’s interpretation, the narrator throughout her journey tries to find out whether it is life or writing that is more alive. Considering Demir’s basis of her argument on different phases of this questioning, it can be claimed that Demir interprets that the narrator treats the relationship between life and writing in opposition to each other. Accordingly, she ends her article by saying that the narrator chooses life. However, Demir views the problem as a vicious circle. Although the narrator’s journeys in the future will urge her to write them down, this wish to write will also end with a re-yearning for life.

Even though this interpretation is faithful to the main problem of the novel, which can be summarized as a reflection on the relation between life and writing, in this part the main focus will be on the role of writing in overcoming the pains suffered in life through analyzing the split self of the narrator rather than regarding the problem of life and writing in opposition to each other.

In *Journey to the End of Life*, the narrative is written from the first person point-of-view; however, from the very beginning, the narrator uses both “I” and “you” while she is, in fact, referring to herself, which implies a split in her. This simultaneous use of “I” and “you” is seen at various points in the narrative. At some points the “I” refers to the self that is writing the narrative at that particular moment, thus pointing to the present, whereas the “you” refers to the self that has lived and experienced what is being written. For this reason, this double address to the self implies both a correlation between life and writing, and

⁸⁸ “Yaşamın ve Yazının Ucuna Yolculuk” in *Hürriyet Gösteri*, n. 224, December 2000. p. 46. “[Özlü Pavese’nin] yaşamdan ve yazıdan vazgeçışı izleğinden yola çıkarak yaşam ve yazı arasındaki bağlantıları kendi hayatını esas alarak irdelemiştir.”

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 47.

a correlation between the past and the present. Yet, as it will be demonstrated with the certain passages in the text, this interpretation is quite general and has to be elaborated on since it does not fully reflect the intention behind this use.

For how long will you be able to bear such a person. Utterly insatiable. She exhausts you. You mutually exhaust each other. I took her along to every city. I took her away from the Boz Mountains of Golcuk, from its blue lake, from her nervous grandmother who wanted to lose herself behind the mountains, and I brought her to the deepest nights, to the farthest cities, to the loves of the youngest people, to the earliest mornings of life. Still insatiable.⁹⁰

According to Robert Jay Lifton's theory of self, "one's sense of self is radically altered" and a second self is created due to extreme trauma. Although it is not "a totally new self", it is "a form of doubling" in the sense that there are "elements that are at odds in the two selves"⁹¹. As it is seen in the passage above, the narrator has also created a second self since she talks about herself as if she is referring to another person. She is not in peace with her "other" self who feels dissatisfied with life and everything in general. This attitude tires her and she wants to get rid of the dissatisfied self.

Furthermore, this depiction of the psychic splitting of the narrator also portrays perfectly what Henry Krystal calls "the post-traumatic state". According to the definition of Krystal's post-traumatic state, the victim, as a result of serious psychic traumatization, can experience his/her emotions as "outside the self-representation". Thus, for Krystal, this state "is characterized by an

⁹⁰ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 13.

Böylesi bir kişiyi ne kadar süre taşıyabileceksin. Hiç doyumsuz. Seni yoruyor. Karşılıklı yoruyorsunuz birbirinizi. Ben onu tüm kentlerde dolaştırdım. Gölcük'ün Bozdağlarından, mavi küçük gölünden, dağlar gerisinde kendisini kaybetmek isteyen sinirli ninesinin yanından aldım, yaşamın en derin gecelerine, en uzak kentlerine, en genç insanların sevgilerine, en erken sabahlarına getirdim. Gene de doyumsuz.

⁹¹ Caruth, Cathy. "An Interview with Robert Jay Lifton" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p.137.

impoverishment of the areas of one's mind to which the "I" feeling of self-sameness is extended, and a hypertrophy of the "not-I" alienated areas".⁹²

In order to understand the causes of this split in the self, it is important to examine the nature of traumatic experience. As Dori Daub states, trauma is "an event that has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during and no after".⁹³ The reason for this is that the traumatic event takes place so suddenly and unexpectedly that it is not assimilated into the consciousness, which makes it a missed experience. As a result, the experience is implanted into consciousness, and the event is repeated in dreams, hallucinations or flashbacks.⁹⁴ In Laub's words:

Trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every respect. The survivor, indeed, is not truly in touch either with the core of his traumatic reality or with the fatedness of its reenactments, and thereby remains entrapped in both.⁹⁵

The traumatic scene haunts the victim until one comes to an understanding of it through constructing a narrative and transmitting the story to another person. Therefore, it is this unassimilated nature of the traumatic experience that makes it a recurring experience, and hence different from the other experiences that can be associatively linked.

⁹² "Trauma and Aging" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 85.

⁹³ "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening" in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. p. 69.

⁹⁴ Cathy Caruth. *Unclaimed Experience*. p. 62.

⁹⁵ "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening" in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. p. 69.

Yesterday, on the first Sunday of April that I spent in Berlin, I decided to henceforth regard woes as bliss. Have I not felt the same strong pain at the happiest moments of my life. And there was an expectation far beyond the woes: The expectation of my own world. The expectation of the morning tea I could have in my own room. At the cafeterias of the mental institutions, I wanted to drink the tin pot tea in my own room. Nobody ever went to death as beautifully, as vigorously as you did.⁹⁶

In this instance, although the past is told from the first person point-of-view, the last sentence also implies a split in the self because it suggests that she feels as if she were somebody else. Moreover, it demonstrates that she does not employ the second person singular pronoun for all of her past experiences. On the contrary, her use of “you” on certain occasions but not on all of them implies an intention. The narrator uses “you” only for the past experiences that she could not come to terms with and acknowledge as her own. Therefore, these memories are told as if she had not experienced them but as if they had happened to another person. Accordingly, these parts turn into an address to the other self.

This same employment of “you” can be seen in the instance when the narrator meets a girl who suffers from depression and wants to end her life by drinking excessively. The girl’s boy friend tells the narrator that she refuses to go to the asylum and asks for help. At this point the narrator remembers her own madness, and the narration switches from “I” to “you”:

Suddenly you recall your madness. On a hot spring day on the Mediterranean coast, leaning on the fence of a vegetable garden, you are watching the girl who is pumping a well.

⁹⁶ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 9.

Dün Berlin’de geçirdiğim Nisan ayının ilk Pazar gününde artık bundan böyle acıları mutluluk olarak nitelendirmeye karar verdim. Yaşamımın en mutlu anlarında da aynı güçte acıyı duymadım mı. Ve acıların çok ötesinde bir beklenti vardı: Kendi dünyamın beklentisi. Kendi odamda içebileceğim sabah çayının beklentisi. Sinir hastanelerinin kantinlerinde, teneke çayı, kendi odamda içmek istiyordum. Kimse senin kadar güzel, hiç kimse senin kadar canlı gitmedi ölüme.

Radios are listing the wanted people. Every so often, you feel the unbearableness of being thrown into eternity. You think of the long, arduous path between madness and freedom. Of how strong one should be. Of time and sufferings. You want to send him back to his friends and return to the beauty of freedom.⁹⁷

As it can be seen from the passage above, the narrator alienates herself from her traumatic past and tries to avoid and ignore the events that remind her of her sufferings. Van der Kolk and van der Hart state that the traumatized people have an experience of living in two different worlds simultaneously; one is the “realm of trauma”, whereas the other is the “realm of ordinary life”. Since very often it is impossible to bridge these two worlds, there occurs a “permanent duality” in the lives of the survivors⁹⁸ as it is depicted in this passage.

One final example of the split self due to the extreme trauma that the narrator suffers from is portrayed when she associates the streets of Trieste with the streets of Istanbul. In this case, she does not only refer to her own traumatic past but she also refers to the traumatic past of her country, of the times when the regime oppresses its people:

At later hours, you will walk in the city streets and avenues. The streets you wandered, dreamed and thought about within the portrayal of Italo Svevo. How much you looked up to the novel characters wandering the Trieste boulevards back then, while reading Svevo in the unbearable chaos of Istanbul. In the city of Istanbul where bombs exploded, where gunfire were heard day and night, where death found people any minute, the only corner to escape from the unbearable life were books again. To be able to walk in the streets of a city...

⁹⁷ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 29.

Birden deliliğini anımsıyorsun. Akdeniz kıyısında sıcak bir ilkbahar günü, bir sebze bahçesinin çitlerine dayanmış, kuyudan su çeken kıza bakıyorsun.

Radyolar arananları sayıyor. Sık sık sonsuza atılışın dayanılmazlığını duyuyorsun. Delilik ve bağımsızlık arasındaki uzun, güç yolu düşünüyorsun. Ne denli güçlü olmak gerektiğini. Zamanı ve çekilen acıları. Onu gene arkadaşlarına yollayıp, bağımsızlığın güzelliğine dönmek istiyorsun.

⁹⁸ “The Intrusive Past” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 177.

Walking on the streets of cities is one of the best gifts of life. Even though bombs do not explode anymore, there are no streets left to be walked in in the city you live. Cars and a black crowd has covered the sidewalks, the paths, the air, the sky, the shop windows, the sea surface. Is there any other city which you feel estranged from than your own. That deep city whose depth you loved so much and could not seize the moment of, of which you gradually abandoned and discarded, which you perceived just one picture when you went away.⁹⁹

As a result of the unbearable circumstances, the narrator also alienates herself from her city, and decides to leave it. She feels that, even though violence is not taking place in its streets any more, there is another kind of invasion which makes her feel like a stranger.

On the other hand, the “I” she uses while she is referring to her past demonstrates that she acknowledges these experiences as her own. These instances are usually of her childhood spent in the rural areas:

Before me, a big garden planted with saplings. It takes me back to the apple gardens of my childhood. I am trying to determine the types of the trees growing amid the fresh green. It doesn't work. But the way it opens up before me is just the way of my childhood's apple gardens. This vision takes me back to the days when I found and ate apples only, and at night I terribly upset when my mother made me and my brothers sit at her knees and started peeling apples again.

⁹⁹ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. pp. 61, 62.

Daha sonraki saatlerde kent caddeleri ve sokaklarında yürüyeceksin. Italo Svevo'nun anlatımlarında dolaştığın, düşlediğin, düşündüğün sokaklarda. O zamanlar, İstanbul'un dayanılmaz kargaşası içinde Svevo'yu okurken, Trieste bulvarlarında dolaşan roman kahramanlarına ne denli özenmiştin. Bombaların patladığı, her gün, her gece silah seslerini duyulduğu, her an, ölümün insanları bulduğu İstanbul kentinde dayanılmaz yaşamdan kaçılacak tek köşe gene kitaplardı. Bir kentin sokaklarında yürüyebilmek... Kentlerin sokaklarında yürümek yaşamın en güzel armağanlarından biri. Senin yaşadığın kentte bombalar patlamasa da yürünecek sokaklar kalmadı. Kaldırımları, yaya yollarını, havayı, gökyüzünü, vitrinleri, deniz yüzeyini arabalar ve siyah bir kalabalık kapladı. Sana kendi kentinden daha yabancı bir kent var mı. Derinliğini bu denli sevdiğin ve anını yaşayamadığın, giderek bırakıp attığın, uzaklaştığında yalnız bir tek resmini algıladığın o derin kent.

Back then, I would be angry with my mother who was peeling apples instead of pears. When my father asked me which one I liked more, him or the pear, -of course the pear, I would say. The child in me would think that the pear had a taste, that such a taste could not be expected from a father. And my father would get enraged as if he were the child and I were his father. He would stop loving and caressing me. What a childish father, the child in me would think.¹⁰⁰

The narrator's use of "I" in this passage demonstrates that she embraces her childhood memories even though they remind her of her childhood frustrations.

The self that suffers from trauma can only be integrated by transforming one's traumatic experience into "a story, placed in time, with a beginning, a middle, and an end (which is characteristic for narrative memory)".¹⁰¹ Therefore, considering *Journey to the End of Life* as a text that interweaves the present with the associations of the traumatic past, the narrator tries to reconcile her two split selves into one complete self, while at the same time she rewrites or recreates her past with regard to her present. This implies a positive and liberating attitude to her past. Since the conventional way in literature is to depict the character's past in order to shed light on his/her present state, in this case the narrator's present, her wish to overcome her traumatized "other" self shape her past and she

¹⁰⁰ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. pp. 91, 92.

Önümde genç ağaç fidanları dikili büyük bir bahçe. Beni çocukluğumun elma bahçelerine geri götürüyor.

Taze bir yeşil içinde büyüyen ağaçların cinslerini saptamaya çalışıyorum. Olmuyor. Ama önümde açılışı tıpkı çocukluğumun elma bahçeleri. Yalnız elma bulup yediğim ve akşamları, annemin, beni, ağabeyimi ve kardeşimi dizleri dibine oturtup, yeniden elma soymaya başladığında müthiş kızdığım günlere ötürüyor beni bu görüntü.

O zamanlar, annem armut soymuyor da, durmadan elma soyuyor diye, öfkelenirdim. Babam, kendisini mi ya da armudu mu çok sevdiğimi sorduğunda,

-tabii armudu, derdim.

İçimdeki çocuk, armudun bir tadı olduğunu, babadan böyle bir tat beklenemeyeceğini düşündürdü. Babam da, sanki kendisi çocuk, ben babasıymışım gibi öfkelenirdi. Beni sevip okşamaktan cayardı. Ne çocuksu bir baba, diye düşünürdü içimdeki çocuk.

¹⁰¹ Bessel A. van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart. "The Intrusive Past" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p.177.

Cathy Caruth, in "Recapturing the Past: Introduction", also refers to Pierre Janet's concept of narrative memory, and states that the traumatic event can be integrated if only it is turned into a completed story of the past. In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 153.

reconciles with it through her act of writing, thus the text becomes a “scriptotherapy” which is “the process of writing out and writing through traumatic experience in the mode of therapeutic reenactment”.¹⁰² As a result, the narrator succeeds in reconciling the parts of her split self by writing out her journey to her inner world as her voyage ends:

And for the first time during my journey, this journey I took around my authors, their streets, their cafes, their boulevards, their graves, their houses, the districts from where they observed the world, I sense that the two conflicting personalities within me are united in a single “self”. Both behind me and before me, I grasp the entire eternity, the entire infinitude of the timelessness in which I exist. At times, I see eternity as a light, at other times, I see it as a grey line. But, didn’t the child see that light at Esentepe.¹⁰³

Another significant aspect of *Journey to the End of Life* is its continuity with the previous novel as the past memories of the narrator refer to the events in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*. About this aspect of the text, Fatih Özgüven claims that these references to *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* spoil the beauty of its completeness. However, the references have a function in the text. As stated above, *Journey to the End of Life* is about the writer’s journey to her inner world and reconciliation with her past as much as it is a journey to the world of her favourite writers. Therefore, the allusions to the previous novel are, in fact, necessary because they demonstrate the change in the perspectives of the narrator. For instance, the part that Özgüven claims to be the voice of the self-pitying

¹⁰² Suzette A. Henke. *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women’s Life-Writing*. p. xii.

¹⁰³ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 113.

Ve ilk kez yolculuğum süresince, yazarlarımın çevrelerinde, sokaklarında, kahvelerinde, bulvarlarında, mezarlarında, evlerinde, dünyaya baktıkları yörelerde çıktığım bu yolculukta, içimde çakışan ikili kişiliğin, tek bir “ben”de birleştiğini sezinliyorum. İçinde var olduğum zamansızlığın tüm sonsuzluğunu, tüm sınırsızlığını hem ardımda, hem önümde kavriyorum. Sonsuzluğu zaman zaman bir ışık, zaman zaman da gri bir çizgi olarak görüyorum. Ama çocuk da o ışığı Esentepe’lerde görmüyor muydu.

Turkish intellectual taken from *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, only demonstrates that the narrator still has the same rebellious attitude against the norms of society:

When they ask me what I do, whether I am married, what my husband does, when they ask who my parents are, I see in their faces that they approve of me. And I want to scream at them all. The things you approve are all just a surface, a surface that is not consistent with my reality. Neither a regular job, nor a proper dwelling, nor the stateless state of what you call “marital status”, nor being considered an accomplished individual is my reality... But the facts of the internal world for which a person sacrifices her real talent, her whole life, blood, reason, existence are not worth a thing to you...¹⁰⁴

However, the following passage demonstrates that the narrator has a more optimistic view and belief in the change of things for the better as opposed to her despair expressed in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*:

I live in order to change human relations. I do not know of any moment as dreadful and desperate as the brief moments when I get seized by despair that nothing’s going to change. Everything will change. Human relations will change just as the mountains, seas, oceans, lakes, plains, steppes and deserts, river beds, glaciers, cities and villages of the earth change. There will also be a time when people will not be expected to do anything inconsistent with their instincts.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 51.

Sordukları zaman, bana ne iş yaptığımı, evil olup olmadığını, kocamın ne iş yaptığını, ana babamın ne olduklarını sordukları zaman onayladıklarını yüzlerinde okuyorum. Ve hepsine haykırmak istiyorum. Onayladığımız yanıtlar sadece bir yüzey, benim gerçekliğimle bağdaşmayan bir yüzey. Ne düzenli bir iş, ne iyi bir konut, ne sizin “medeni durum” dediğiniz durumsuzluk, ne de başarılı bir birey sayılmak benim gerçeğim değil... Ama insanın gerçek yeteneğini, tüm yaşamını, kanını, aklını, varoluşunu verdiği iç dünyasının olgularının sizler için hiçbir değeri yok ki...

¹⁰⁵ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. pp. 52, 53.

İnsan ilişkilerini değiştirmek için yaşıyorum. Hiçbir şeyin değişmeyeceği umutsuzluğuna kapıldığım kısa anlar kadar korkunç ve umutsuz anlar tanımıyorum.

Yet one should see the fact that although both of the texts deal with the same events of the past, the point-of-view of the narrator is radically different in each of them. While in *The Chilly Nights of the Childhood* the narrator wants to leave behind her past and never look back at it again, in *Journey to the End of Life*, the narrator faces her own past and there is an attempt to be reconciled with it. Moreover at the end of *Journey to the End of Life* the narrator arrives at the same solution that to escape is the only happiness for her in life, and this time the concept of escape is more positive and liberating:

Here now, in Torino, at Valentino Gardens, I understand why I was so bored as a child. Boundaries of childhood are dreadful. Like the chilly nights of childhood. Its boundaries, its impossibilities, its visions, its immobility, childhood's narrow boundaries are dreadful... But now, I am no longer in the prison of childhood. No longer am I in the exile of childhood. Childhood is imprisonment, childhood is exile. Like the city of Torino. A phase in one's life that one should escape from. It is a phase that one should escape in order not to make the "Journey to the land of the dead".

At Valentino Gardens, I realize that my only happiness is to escape. From everything. Everything. From all children, all the pain, all the love, all satisfaction, all nights, all days, houses, marriages, family ties, every young moon, every country, every border, every limitation, habit, every world, every other world, every life.¹⁰⁶

Değişecek. Dünya küresinin dağları, denizleri, okyanusları, gölleri, ovaları, bozkır ve çölleri, nehir yatakları, buzulları, kent ve köyleri nasıl değişiyorsa, insan ilişkileri de değişecek. İnsandan, içgüdüleri ile bağdaşmayan uğraşların beklenmediği bir dönem de olacak.

¹⁰⁶ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. pp. 112, 113.

Şimdi burada, Torino'da, Valentino Bahçelerinde, çocukken neden o denli sıkıldığımı anlıyorum. Çocukluğun sınırları korkunç. Çocukluğun soğuk geceleri gibi. Sınırları, olanaksızlığı, görüntüleri, hareketsizliği, çocukluğun dar sınırları korkunç... Ama şimdi çocukluğun tutukevinde değilim. Çocukluğun sürgününde değilim. Çocukluk tutukluk, çocukluk sürgün. Torino kenti gibi. İnsanın kaçması gereken bir kesit. "Ölümler ülkesine yolculuğa" çıkmaması için, kaçması gereken bir kesit.

Valentino Bahçelerinde tek mutluluğumun kaçmak olduğunu kavıyorum. Her şeyden. Her şeyden. Bütün çocukluklardan, bütün acılardan, bütün sevgilerden, bütün doyumlardan, bütün gecelerden, bütün günlerden, evlerden, evliliklerden, aile bağlarından, her genç aydan, her ülkeden, her sınırdan, her sınırlılıktan, alışkanlıklardan, her dünyadan, her öteki dünyadan, her yaşamdan.

4.2 Witnessing the Trauma of the Others: Kafka, Svevo, Pavese

In *Journey to the End of Life*, the narrator's journey to the lives and graves of the three authors, namely Franz Kafka, Italo Svevo and Cesare Pavese, not only resides in the fact that they are her favourite writers, but also in that she feels herself connected to them¹⁰⁷. The reason why she empathizes with these three authors is that Svevo, Kafka and Pavese are the symbols of rebellion against the things which are against human nature as she is.¹⁰⁸

Throughout her journey, she visits the houses where they spent their lives, the places they depicted in their novels, and the people they lived with and wrote about in their novels. Therefore, the narrator tries to find the traces of their writings in the places and in the people that she visits and establishes links between what she sees in her voyage and what their works tell. For instance, while she is interviewing Svevo's daughter Letizia in Trieste, the narrator asserts that she has known her since her mother's pregnancy. Moreover, as Letizia tells her about their life and family, the narrator thinks that the members of the family are the characters that Svevo depicts in his novels. When the narrator goes to Santo Stefano Belbo to meet Nuto, Pavese's best friend and one of the characters in his novel, she says that while she was reading the novel in Istanbul many years earlier, she had never thought that one day she would meet him. At that moment, she decides that literature is in fact more alive than life as it overflows from life.

Furthermore, she also finds connections between her own life and theirs. For instance, while she is visiting Kafka's tomb, she feels that the green, wild silence of the graveyard makes her forget the world she is forced to live in, and thinks that the reason for this is that Kafka also suffered from the deepest pain of the world as she does. As for Svevo, she considers him the most passionate smoker in world literature, the author who tries to calm down his limitlessness

¹⁰⁷ In fact Sezer Duru, in her biography of Tezer Özlü states that Özlü was like a relative of these writers. "Kız Kardeşim ve Ben" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 18.

¹⁰⁸ Ahmet Cemal. "Bir 'İnsan'a Dönüş Öyküsünün Romani" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 48.

with smoking, the one who describes love, jealousy, marriage and death most beautifully, and the master of hidden feelings that one cannot perceive yet can define while reading him. While she is thinking of him, she remembers the time she spent in the mental hospital when she used to smoke sixty cigarettes a day as there was nothing else to do. She remembers that they tried to take her freedom away from her, yet at this moment as she is sitting at the library in Trieste breathing the smell of Svevo's books, she feels that she could never ask for any other liberty than this one.

However, the most important of all, the reason for her voyage is that, as Leylâ Erbil and Ferit Edgü claim, she wants to rebel against oppressions that they suffered from as she does and to form a kind of contact with them through the pain she feels to relieve theirs¹⁰⁹. This, in fact, suggests that the narrator's trauma enables her to form a correspondence with these writers and she takes the responsibility of a "witness" while she makes this voyage to their worlds.

In order to understand the significance of her "witnessing" the lives of these writers and transmitting their histories to the others through her narrative, it is necessary to take a look at how trauma can be a means of understanding the other. It is Cathy Caruth's theoretical framework on trauma that examines the voice of the other, which can be heard in the traumatic experience. As it is seen in her *Unclaimed Experience*, Caruth bases her definition of trauma on Freud's works of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Moses and Monotheism*. The repetitive aspect of trauma is the core concern of both Freud and Caruth. However, whereas Freud emphasizes the unwished-for repetitions due to the unassimilated nature of the traumatic experience, Caruth draws the attention to another dimension of the literary example that Freud gives in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* while he is defining trauma. In order to support his views on the subject, Freud refers to Tasso's romantic epic *Gerusalemme Liberata*:

¹⁰⁹ Ferit Edgü. "Önsöz Yerine" in *Kalanlar*. p. 10. Leylâ Erbil. "Sevgi ya da Sanat Dünyasında" in *Tezer Özlü'den Leylâ Erbil'e Mektuplar*. p. 17. Also Leyla İpekçi in her article "Ecele Bakmak: Cesare Pavese" refers to *Journey to the End Life*. İpekçi states that it looks as if Özlü wants to prevent Pavese's suicide as she relives what was lived by Pavese. *Virgül*. Mayıs 2003. p. 21.

Its hero, Tancred, unwittingly kills his beloved Clorinda in a duel while she is disguised in the armor of an enemy knight. After her burial he makes his way into a strange magic forest which strikes the Crusaders' army with terror. He slashes with his sword at a tall tree; but blood streams from the cut and the voice of Clorinda, whose soul is imprisoned in the tree, is heard complaining that he has wounded his beloved once again.¹¹⁰

What is striking for Caruth in this example is the voice of Clorinda telling Tancred that he has wounded her again, rather than the repetition of the act of wounding. For Caruth, the crying voice of the other that is released from the wound telling Tancred what he has done, in fact, "bears witness to the past he has unwittingly repeated"¹¹¹. Therefore, she alleges that this story reveals not only the repetitive aspect of the traumatic experience, but also the otherness of a voice that witnesses a truth that one cannot fully know. It is this aspect of the traumatic experience, which is the simultaneous occurrence of the unknowing repetition and the witness of the other's voice, that best depicts Freud's fascination with traumatic experiences.

Furthermore, Caruth claims that the voice of Clorinda exemplifies the other within the self that preserves the memory of the traumatic event. Thus, she assumes a split in the victim, that is, while one is unconscious of the traumatic event, the other self reveals the reality of it through repetition. Yet, Caruth offers another possible reading of the voice of the other which establishes the link between the trauma of the individual and that of another person. The voice of the other also connects one's trauma to the trauma of the other. Consequently, it makes possible the encounter with another person through sharing traumatic experience. For this reason, trauma becomes the site not only of one's own

¹¹⁰ Quoted from Caruth, in *Unclaimed Experience*. p. 2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 3.

witnessing, but also of witnessing another person's wound, thus enabling a way of sharing, communicating one's history with another person.¹¹²

This aspect of Caruth's conceptualization of trauma is also in line with Kai Erikson's views on the communality of trauma. For Erikson, trauma has "centripetal" and "centrifugal" tendencies in the sense that one's trauma can cause the victim to draw away from society, whereas it can also cause one to draw back to a community that suffers from the same experience.¹¹³ In *Journey to the End of Life*, it is the centripetal tendency of trauma that draws the narrator to trace the lives of Kafka, Svevo and Pavese, while it is the centrifugal tendency that draws her away from her society in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*.

On the other hand, there is yet another aspect of the traumatic experience which is absolutely vital for the reintegration of the self. As the above mentioned features of the traumatic experience point out, the narrator's attraction to these writers with whom she feels that they share the same destiny, enables her to create a kind of bond among them; her tracing their lives puts her in the position of a "witness" to their trauma. This position of "witness" gives a sense of responsibility to the narrator, which for Lifton has an enormous therapeutic value both for society and for the individual survivor.¹¹⁴ According to Lifton, "responsibility becomes a central agent for the reintegration of the self" because "it is carrying through that responsibility via one's witness, that survivor's mission that enables one to be an integrated human being once more".¹¹⁵ In this case, while traumatic past of the narrator enables her to understand Pavese, Svevo and Kafka, it also gives her the responsibility of transmitting this understanding to the others, which enables her to overcome her own trauma and reintegrate herself.

¹¹² *Ibid.* p. 9.

¹¹³ "Notes on Trauma and Community" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 186.

¹¹⁴ Caruth, Cathy. "An Interview with Robert Jay Lifton" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. p. 138.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 138.

This responsibility of witnessing and the subsequent reintegration can particularly be seen in her encounter with the world of Pavese. The final destination of the narrator's journey is Turin, where Pavese lived and committed suicide. Among the three writers, Pavese is the one to whom she attaches herself most:

Approaching Torino, I think more of Cesare Pavese, who was found dead in his garments in a room, in a hotel room. 11 years, 11 months and 15 days ago. My feelings tell me that perhaps my greatest affection, my closest relation is this deceased man. My love for that corpse is refreshed. It is as if we would embrace each other to unite in pain, in love that we do not believe in.¹¹⁶

As the narrator identifies herself with Pavese, she thinks that it is her responsibility to relieve his sufferings. In order to do this, she decides to visit the room at the Hotel Rome where he committed suicide at the age of 42. On this visit, the narrator is shocked to see that not only his writings foreshadow his forthcoming suicide, but also the place he lived in and the hotel room where he chose to actualize his suicide have the reflections of his death. According to her, no place in the world can make one think of death more than Turin. Furthermore, the hotel room, with its narrow, suffocating atmosphere, gives her the impression that he neatly calculated every detail of his act including the setting:

We get on an elevator resembling a vertical coffin, and ascending into darkness. The size of the elevator is also like a coffin. But it is made for a corpse bigger than Pavese's. While writing these lines on the concrete roof of Nuto's workshop today, I comprehend that Pavese searched and found this coffin, too, to draw on to death. The final means. To reach suicide. No other elevator is

¹¹⁶ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk.* p. 84.

Torino'ya yaklaştıkça, bir odada, bir otel odesında, giysileri içinde ölü bulunan Cesare Pavese'yi, giderek daha çok düşünüyorum. 11 yıl, 11 ay ve 15 gün önce. Duygularım, belki de en büyük sevgimin, en yakınımın bu ölü olduğunu söylüyor bana. O ölüye olan sevgim canlanıyor. Birbirimize sarılıp, acı içinde, inanmadığımız sevgi içinde bütünleşecekmişiz gibi.

as recondite, as dark and consequently as convenient to attain death as this one.

...

He must have taken the elevator of Hotel Rome several times and likened it to a coffin. The corridors of Hotel Rome are longer, darker and more suffocating than those of Hotel Bologna. These corridors are narrow, dark, long, suffocating, isolated, bitter, ruthless corridors which do not allow one to return from death. Room 305, where he committed suicide, is the last room of the suicide corridor. Its window opens on to Felice Court.

...

I enter the room 305. Before me, the young man who works at the information desk. He is a slim, tender lad. He is so graceful that he gives the impression that he would break if I hold him. This is an insignificant room like any room. Neither boring, nor suffocating. Neither big, nor small. Neither dark, nor light. Neither alive, nor dead. It smells neither of death, nor of suicide. Such a room. On the contrary, it weakens the fear aroused by the corridor. I am not quite impressed. The room has been renovated. It bears no traces of the last day of Pavese's life. When he opens another door, I expect to find a bathroom or a closet. We enter a dark place. The blinds of the room are closed. I perceive the narrowness in the dark. I do not only perceive the dark narrowness. I perceive suicide. The distance between us disappears. He enfolds my existence. The entire time and timelessness of my existence. His endless suicide enfolds me. Were I alone, I would collapse. I would lie down on this bed. I would scream. I would weep. Here is death. All sorts of death. This is the room: the coffin. A grave hidden beside the room 305 of Hotel Rome.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk.* p. 95.

Dikey konulmuş bir tabutu andıran ve karanlığa yükselen asansöre biniyoruz. Asansörün boyutları da bir tabut kadar. Ama Pavese'ninkinden daha büyük bir ceset için yapılmış. Bugün, Nuto'nun atölyesinin beton çatısında bu satırları yazarken, Pavese'nin bu tabutu da ölüme yol almak için arayıp bulduğunu kavıyorum. Son yolu. İntihara varmak için. Hiçbir asansör bundan daha kapalı, daha karanlık ve dolayısıyla ölüme varmak için bundan daha elverişli değil.

...

Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk. p. 96.

Otel Roma'nın asansörüne birçok defa binmiş ve bu asansörü bir tabuta benzetmiş olmalı. Otel Roma'nın koridorları Bolonya Otelinin koridorlarından daha da uzun, daha da karanlık ve daha da boğucu. Bu koridorlar, ölümden geri dönüşe olanak tanımayan, dar, karanlık, uzun, boğucu, yalnız, acı, acımasız koridorlar. İntihar ettiği 305 numaralı oda, intihar koridorunun en son odası. Penceresi Felice Alanına açılıyor.

The narrator's voyage to Pavese's suicide room is an endeavor to end his sufferings as much as it is a statement of her empathy with him. Even though her reaction in the room 305 suggests that she feels helpless in the face of the unavoidability of his suicide, her attempt to witness it beyond time and to transmit it becomes more meaningful as the receptionist boy tells her that very few people visit the room in spite of the documentary made on it by the television channel RAI.

Moreover, with regard to her tendency to identifying herself with Pavese due to her traumatic past, it can be said that she is the right person to pass his story on to the others. Lifton states that the witness "must have in some psychological way experience what they [the victims of traumatic events] experience"¹¹⁸, although it is not possible to suffer from it in the same manner. Yet, the witness can be "a survivor by proxy"¹¹⁹ which is also important because it enables one to enter into the traumatic experiences of others. Consequently, even though her visit cannot turn Pavese back to life and prevent his suicide, she believes that it can make a change in her and in other people as she transmits it in her narrative.

In addition to the narrator's endeavor to witness, the reason for her journey to Turin on the track of Pavese's suicide may also reside in the endless necessity

...

Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk. pp. 96, 97.

305 numaralı odaya giriyorum. Önümde, danışmada çalışan genç. İnce, sevimli bir delikanlı. Öylesine zarif ki, tutsam kırılacak izlenimini uyandırıyor. Burası herhangi bir oda. Ne sıkıcı, ne boğucu. Ne büyük, ne küçük. Ne karanlık, ne aydınlık. Ne canlı, ne ölü. Ne ölüm, ne de intihar kokuyor. Öylesi bir oda. Aksine koridorun uyandırdığı korkuları da hafifletiyor. Çok etkilenmiyorum. Oda yenilenmiş. Pavese'nin yaşamının son gününün hiçbir izini taşıyor. Bir kapı daha açıldığında, banyo ya da bir dolapla karşılaşacağımı sanıyorum. Karanlık bir yere giriyoruz. Odanın kepenkleri kapalı. Karanlıkta darlığı algılıyorum. Yalnız karanlık bir darlığı algılamakla kalmıyorum. İntiharı algılıyorum. Aramızdaki uzaklık yitiyor. O, varlığımı bürüyor. Varlığımın tüm zaman ve zamansızlığını. Sonsuz intiharı bürüyor beni. Yalnız olsam yıkılıp kalacağım. Bu yatağa uzanacağım. Haykıracağım. Ağlayacağım. İşte ölüm burada. Ölümün her çeşidi. Oda bu: tabut. Otel Roma'nın 305 numaralı odasının yanında gizlenmiş bir mezar.

¹¹⁸ Cathy Caruth. "An Interview with Robert Jay Lifton" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory.* p. 145.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 145.

of the repetition of her own trauma. According to Caruth, apart from the victim's too unexpected and too immediate confrontation with death, what is equally significant in the traumatic experience is the incomprehensibility of human survival. For Caruth, the reason for this lies in Freud's definition of trauma as a breach in the mind's experience of time, self and the world. According to Freud, this breach in the mind is caused by fright. Freud describes fright as "the name we give to the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it; it emphasizes the factor of surprise"¹²⁰. This factor of surprise, this lack of preparedness to take in the stimulus causes the mind to recognize the threat of death "*one moment too late*". It is in this respect that trauma is considered to be a missed experience, an experience that is not experienced *in time*, but only belatedly, and the basis of the repetition of the nightmares of the survivor lies in this facet of the experience. Caruth explains the relevance of the belatedness to the repetition of the nightmares as thus:

Not having truly known the threat of death in the past, the survivor is forced, continually, to confront it over and over again. For consciousness then, the act of survival, as the experience of trauma, is the repeated confrontation with the necessity and impossibility of grasping the threat to one's own life. It is because the mind cannot confront the possibility of its death directly that survival becomes for the human being, paradoxically, an endless testimony to the impossibility of living.¹²¹

So, one can deduce from the passage above that the surviving trauma is, in fact, an endless necessity of repetition. Consciousness, in the face of its encounter with the possibility of its death, can do nothing but repeat the event. As a result of this, the history of the traumatized person becomes the repetition of the catastrophe that s/he has once suffered from. Therefore, one can assume that repetition is not

¹²⁰ *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. p. 12.

¹²¹ *Unclaimed Experience*. p. 62.

merely an attempt to grasp that one has almost died, but also the very attempt “to claim one’s own survival”.¹²²

With regard to the narrator’s journey, in this light, the narrator’s attachment to Pavese can be the result of the necessity of repeating her own traumatic past. Since the narrator has tried to commit suicide when she was young, through her visit to the room in Hotel Rome, she claims her own survival from her suicide attempt. In *Life Out of Time*¹²³, considering the depiction of the scene, where the narrator enters the room 305, this interpretation becomes particularly accurate. In this scenario, the character’s suicide attempt is shown immediately after her visit to the suicide room, which implies that the character associates her suicide attempt with that of Pavese. Therefore, this allusion to her own traumatic past just right after the scene of her visit to that particular hotel room demonstrates that Pavese’s suicide is something that she identifies herself with and that she has internalized.

In conclusion, *Journey to the End of Life* is both an actual and a metaphorical journey in the sense that throughout her voyage the narrator traces the lives of her favourite writers in the actual journey, while she reintegrates herself in the metaphorical one she takes to her inner world. Apart from these, the role of literature and writing are the other important aspects of the narration. It is through writing out her journey that the narrator is reconciled with her own past and gets over her sufferings. So through the medium of literature, Özlü finds courage to go on living.

¹²² *Ibid.* p. 64.

¹²³ *Life Out of Time (Zaman Dışı Yaşam)* is a scenario written by Özlü to be directed by Erden Kıral. This scenario is based on Özlü’s two novels, namely *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and *Journey to the End of Life*. Although the events depicted in these novels are the same in the scenario, the order of them differs.

CHAPTER V

THE INTELLECTUAL IN EXILE

In this part of the study, Tezer Özlü's last novel/narrative *Journey to the End of Life* and her letters published under the name of *Tezer Özlü'den Leylâ Erbil'e Mektuplar* will be analyzed. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate Tezer Özlü's position as an intellectual with particular emphasis on the metaphorical use of the intellectual in exile by Edward W. Said. In the first part of this chapter, the setting of *Journey to the End of Life* will be analyzed as it is through the setting of the story that the narrator expresses her views on her own culture and the cultures of the countries where she travels. In the second part, by reference to Tezer Özlü's letters, her thoughts on the state of the Turkish immigrants and on German culture will be discussed, and Özlü's stand as a Turkish writer and intellectual will be pointed out.

5.1 Setting as an Expression of Cultural Atmosphere

The voyage that is depicted in *Journey to the End of Life* is about the narrator's journey in different countries in Europe, as much as it is a journey to her inner world and to the lands of her favourite writers. In this part of the study, the narrator's thoughts and observations on the places that she visits will be explored.

In *Journey to the End of Life*, Özlü's depiction of Berlin, Turin and Santo Stefano Belbo are particularly important as her treatment of these settings shed light upon what the narrator thinks about the different cultures and people that she encounters along the way. Moreover, in all the places that the narrator visits, she associates what she sees with the images of her country. Therefore, in her

voyage, the narrator not only expresses her thoughts on other cultures, but she also views her own culture from a distance.

Berlin is the first stop in her journey. The most significant image of Berlin for her is “the wall”:

No other city reminds one of death as much as Berlin does, no other city reminds one of life as much as Berlin does. All walls are narrow. All walls are closed. All walls are pressures upon people. To every place in this city I go with my previous walls. With the narrow walls of my parents’ house. With the stifling walls of marriages. With the office walls covered with smoke. With the cruel school walls. With house walls, prison walls, walls in front of which people are hanged or shot. With hospital walls. With asylum walls, marble walls, walls of the poor houses, walls of the rest homes, cottage walls, squatter walls, city walls, walls of the systems.¹²⁴

As it is seen from the passage above, the narrator contemplates on life and death in Berlin. However, for her, the life that one imagines in Berlin is full of negative attributes. The presence of the Berlin wall is the most obvious reason for Berlin’s oppressive and depressing atmosphere. For the narrator, the wall signifies all the limits and all the oppressions that one encounters in life, and throughout the book in all her thoughts and associations on Berlin, she makes a reference to “its walls”. The reason for this lies in the history of the country. As the narrator walks around in the streets of Berlin, the images that she sees around remind her of the Second World War:

Now a man with one arm walks before me. Immediately an image, a picture from twenty-one years ago becomes clearer. Disabled men of the then city. With one leg.

¹²⁴ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 15.

Hiçbir kent insana Berlin kadar ölümü, hiçbir kent insana Berlin kadar yaşamı düşündürmüyor. Her duvar dar. Her duvar kapalı. Her duvar insanın üzerinde bir baskı. Bu kentin her yerine daha önceki duvarlarımla beraber gidiyorum. Ana babamın evinin dar duvarlarıyla. Evliliklerin bunaltıcı duvarlarıyla. Büroların sigara kokan duvarlarıyla. Okulların acımasız duvarlarıyla. Evlerin, hapishanelerin, önlerinde insanların asıldığı, kurşunlandığı duvarlar. Hastane duvarları. Tımarhane duvarları, mermer duvarlar, yoksul evlerin duvarları, ihtiyarlar yurdu duvarları, kulübe duvarları, gecekondu duvarları, kent duvarları, sistemlerin duvarları.

Without arms. Without hands. Maybe some of them died. Some of those who survived the war. But some of them live and one of them walks across the street. These vivid images of the war.¹²⁵

Although these images of disabled people display the human tragedy in the history of the country and on a larger scale of the whole world, it is also a reminiscence of the fascist regime that ruled the country once. Regarding the Berlin wall in this light, it is seen that its presence does not only display the dividedness of the country, but on a symbolic level, it also signifies the rigidity of thought, of not allowing in “the other”.

Apart from these vivid images of the war, the narrator sees many lonely, old women in the streets of Berlin. These old women cause her to be depressed and she states that she can be anything, anywhere in the world; but she never would want to be an old woman in Berlin, as these women also remind her of everything that is related to death and to human misery.

The narrator’s views on the man she meets on her journey from Hamburg to Berlin is another significant point that has to be mentioned, since it expresses both what the narrator feels about the Catholic people and how a certain group of people in Germany view the traumatic past of their country:

The toughest people on earth are the Catholics. One would better speak to stones. Better speak to water, the cloudy sky, the silence of the night. But never to a highly educated Catholic. And the lawyer now tells me he voted for the German Catholic Union Party! This lawyer has two positive habits: first, he continuously smokes; second, he continuously drinks alcohol. He has another good trait: his friendship with the East German staff of the train in this line.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 25.

Şimdi önümden tek kollu bir adam geçiyor. Hemen bir görüntü, yirmi bir yıl öncesinden bir resim daha belirginleşiyor. O zamanki kentin sakat adamları. Tek bacaklı. Kolsuz. Elsiz. Belki bir bölümü öldü. Savaştan sağ çıkanların bir bölümü. Ama bir bölümü yaşıyor ve onlardan biri caddede karşıdan karşıya geçiyor. Bu canlı savaş görüntüleri.

¹²⁶ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. pp. 26, 27.

Yeyüzünün en güç insanları Katoliklerdir. İnsan taşlarla konuşsun daha iyi. Su ile, bulutlu gökyüzü ile, gecenin sessizliği ile konuşsun daha iyi. Ama yüksek öğrenim görmüş bir Katolik ile

The narrator's negative depiction of the Catholic people is due to her education at a Catholic Church School. From the teachings of her school, she knows the conservative and rigid perspectives of these people. However, what makes her horrified is not the man's fundamentalism but his indifferent attitude when he talks about the war. When the narrator tells him that the fascism of Hitler is the cause of the Berlin wall and Germany's dividedness, the man replies:

He says "Fortunately Germany was divided. Otherwise, the industry would develop so much that the Germans would start the World War III."

"We killed six million people with gas. We shouldn't have done that, but we did," he adds.

And he says these so indifferently, as though he were ordering another bottle of beer.¹²⁷

The narrator says that at that moment she feels both scared and ashamed of being human because of the attitude of this man.

On her journey, the narrator also associates the images she sees with her memories of her own country. As there are many Turkish immigrants living in Germany, she thinks about her own country too often when she is in Berlin. For instance, she describes the dividedness of Berlin in these words:

In a soft June evening it [the night] approaches the Berlin roofs. Comes towards this amazing city. Towards this city whose half is east, half is west, and in the middle of which Turkey lies.¹²⁸

...

konuşmasın. Avukat, bir de Alman Katolik Birliği Partisi'ne oy verdiğini söylemiyor mu... Bu avukatın iki olumlu özelliği var: Birincisi durmadan sigara içmesi; öbürü durmadan içki içmesi... Diğer olumlu yanı da, bu hatta işleyen Doğu Alman tren personeli ile dostluğu.

¹²⁷ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 27.

İyi ki bölündü Almanya. Yoksa sanayi o denli geliştirdi ki, Almanlar Üçüncü Dünya Savaşı'nı çıkarırdı gene" diyor.,

"Altı milyonu gazla öldürdük. Öldürmemeliydik. Ama yaptık", diyor.

Ve öyle umursamadan söylüyor ki, sanki bir şişe bira daha ısmarlıyor.

¹²⁸ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 16.

[Gece] Yumuşak bir haziran akşamında Berlin çatılarına doğru yaklaşıyor. Bu müthiş kente doğru. Yarıları doğu, yarıları Batı, arası Türkiye olan kente doğru.

I wonder what Berlin looks like tonight at 2 a.m. Watchmen must be guarding its walls. And just next to the walls Turks must be sleeping in their dark houses.¹²⁹

In these instances, although the narrator literally refers to the Turkish quarter near the wall, the wall is also used as a symbol to express how the narrator perceives the status of her countrymen in Germany. As the first instance demonstrates, she regards her country as “in-between”. According to her, Turkey belongs neither to the east, nor to the west. In the second instance, she refers to the otherness of her countrymen in Germany as they sleep near the walls of Berlin but not inside its walls. Furthermore, as she describes the houses of Turkish people as dark, it is not only because it is physically dark but also these people are regarded as backward in the culture that they are living in.

On her journey from Germany to Yugoslavia, this time she sees the Turkish immigrant workers on their way to Turkey. Whenever she sees the convoy of the cars heading to Turkey, she only feels helpless in the face of their state of being:

Exhausted workers on their way from Germany to Turkey are sitting by the wheat fields before me on the E-5 highway, trying to have a rest. They won't succeed. They will never be able to have a rest. They won't find rest even upon their death. They are people deprived of their deaths, just as their lives. They are left on their own. Except for their worn away inner worlds, they belong to nowhere, they only deal with money, cars and leftovers of big malls.¹³⁰

...
On my departure from Vienna twenty-one hours after my arrival there, the black people of distant and poor

¹²⁹ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 19.

Acaba bu gece, saat ikide nasıldır Berlin. Duvarlarını nöbetçiler bekliyordur. Ve hemen duvarlarının yanında Türkler uyuyordur karanlık evlerinde.

¹³⁰ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 41.

Almanya'dan Türkiye yolculuğuna çıkmış yorgun işçiler, önümde E-5 üzerinde, buğday tarlaları kenarında oturuyor, dinlenmeye çalışıyorlar. Başaramayacaklar. Hiçbir zaman dinlenemeyecekler. Ölümleri bile bir dinlenme olmayacak. Onlar, yaşamları gibi, ölümleri de ellerinden alınmış insanlar. Sahipleri yok. Paraları, arabaları ve büyük mağaza artıkları dışında zedelenmiş, zedelendirilmiş iç dünyaları dışında sahipsizler.

countries who sell newspapers on the crossroads of large highways again fill me with pain. Rage against the undeserved happiness and comfort felt in the face of the difficulties of their problems and lives, their poverty that dragged them to Central Europe. Conflicts are too intertwined to be settled either by leaving or by staying. They keep on growing. In the depths of rage, in the pains of unease.¹³¹

As she does not know how to solve this conflict, all she can say about the situation of these people is that theirs is the most painful condition in the era she lives in as these people are forced to earn their living in the countries which are alien to them.

The second place that Özlü visits is Turin, where Pavese committed suicide. In Turin, the narrator's thoughts are filled with the notion of death, and she senses Pavese's suicide while she is walking around the streets due to her strong attachment to this writer. As a result, Pavese is the only person whom she reflects upon in Turin.

On her way to Turin, the narrator thinks about Pavese's life. According to the narrator, Pavese was not well understood while he was still alive. She thinks that the power which rules countries and makes revolutions is something other than what Pavese possesses. According to her, Pavese is born to turn his environment into poetry; so one cannot expect a man like him to turn a gun against another human being in a civil war. Therefore, she states that she does not forgive the Italian progressionists who criticized him without understanding his human qualities. Thus, it can be said that the narrator feels that Pavese is left alone and misunderstood by the other people who share a different kind of political perspective from his.

The final stop in her journey is Santo Stefano Belbo, where Pavese had spent his childhood and where Nuto, Pavese's best friend and one of the

¹³¹ *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk*. p. 42.

Varişimdan yirmi bir saat sonra Viyana'dan uzaklaşırken, geniş trafik yollarının kavşaklarında gazete satan uzak ve yoksul ülkelerin kara insanları, gene acıya boğuyor beni. Yaşamlarının, sorunlarının güçlükleri, onları Orta Avrupa'ya sürükleyen yoksullukları karşısında hak edilmemiş mutluluklara, rahatlıklara duyulan öfke. Çelişkiler o denli iç içe ki, ne gitmekle, ne de kalmakla çözümleniyor. Giderek büyüyor. Öfkenin derin boyutlarında, huzursuzlukların acılarında.

characters in his novel, lives. In contrast to the gloomy depiction of Berlin and Turin, Santo Stefano Belbo is described in a joyful manner. In this part of her journey, the narrator enjoys the beautiful scenery of the mountains and fields. As opposed to the other places which make her want to escape, this time in this village she confesses to herself that she wants to come and visit this place once more in the future.

With regard to the final destination of the narrator, it can be said that there are many parallels between the endings of *Journey to the End of Life* and of *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*. As stated above, first of all, both stories end in the Mediterranean. Secondly, both can be treated as a tribute to life, since Santo Stefano Belbo is the place where the narrator goes to after her visit on Pavese's suicide room, while in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, the narrator travels in a village in the Mediterranean after her recovery. Moreover, in both narrations the sexual intercourse that is depicted is treated as something that gives life, that makes life continue, as opposed to the other definitions of this motif. In both novels, when the narrator describes her love affair with a man, she uses a neutral and natural language. The reason for this is that the narrator views this act as a rebellion against the norms of society, which consider it to be wrong. However, as opposed to the insignificant portrayal of the men she is together with on her journey, in the final part of *Journey to the End of Life*, the narrator describes what she experiences as love.

The depiction of the Mediterranean in both novels is in line with Albert Camus' notion of the Mediterranean humanism, which is defined as a philosophy grounded on nature and moderation.¹³² According to Philip Thody, Camus believes that there is "a fundamental difference between political doctrines elaborated in the north of Europe and the more tolerant attitude toward life fed by the Mediterranean"¹³³. Camus states that his definition of "Mediterranean is not a liking for reasoning and abstractions, but its physical life- the courtyards, the

¹³² <http://www.egs.edu/resources/camus.html>

¹³³ Albert Camus. "The New Mediterranean Culture" in *Lyrical and Critical Essays*.

cypresses, the strings of pimientos”¹³⁴ This different treatment of these two cultures can also be seen in the attitude of the narrator in *Journey to the End of Life*. While the narrator is traveling in Germany, her eyes only catch the images of death, decay and misery. In addition to this, Berlin is described as a city of walls that oppresses people. On the other hand, Santo Stefano Belbo in Italy is depicted as a beautiful place which arouses sensations of joy in the narrator, which she used to feel in the provinces as a child.

In “The New Mediterranean Culture”, Camus states that the people in the Mediterranean express themselves in harmony with their land.¹³⁵ In the light of *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and *Journey to the End of Life*, it can be stated that Özlü depicts the narrator in harmony with the land only in the Mediterranean. Moreover, in both novels the narrator arrives at the Mediterranean only after she gets over her sufferings in life and she is in peace with herself and life in general.

Furthermore, in line with Camus’ statement that “Mediterranean culture favors man instead of crushing him”¹³⁶, the narrator defines her ideal education in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* as a sort of education that is close to nature, and she depicts Mediterranean in both novels as a place that is not against human nature unlike the cities like Istanbul or Berlin. So, it can be said that Özlü also agrees with Camus’ idea that the Mediterranean culture offers people a more humane life.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 193, 194.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 190.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 196.

5.2 The Intellectual in Exile

In this part, Tezer Özlü's position as a Turkish intellectual will be analyzed as it is portrayed in her letters to Leylâ Erbil by reference to Edward W. Said's metaphorical use of the intellectual in exile.

Edward W. Said, in his *Representations of the Intellectual*, attempts to give a universal definition of the notion of the intellectual. According to Said, the public role of the intellectual is to be an outsider and the disturber of the *status quo* and s/he must give an effort to break down the stereotypes and reductive categories that are limiting to human thought.¹³⁷ However, what Said emphasizes in his work is the universality of the intellectual in the sense that the intellectual must stand for the universal values and must free her/himself from "the easy certainties provided by [the] background, language, nationality which so often shield [one] from the reality of others".¹³⁸ The duty of the intellectual is to represent universal principles such as freedom and justice, and to advance human freedom and knowledge.

Moreover, according to Said, the intellectual belongs both to the private and public realms in the sense that his/her very own ideas and values derived from his/her own experiences enter into the social world and can change the way the public life and the institutions operate.¹³⁹ Therefore, the intellectual must also search for a relative independence from the pressures of the social institutions and worldly powers.¹⁴⁰ As s/he must always be on the same side with the weak, s/he is critical of the order in his/her society and actively willing to say the wrongs¹⁴¹, her/his condition is a lonely one.

¹³⁷ Edward W. Said. *Representations of the Intellectual*. p. x.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* p. xii.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 9.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. xiv.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 17.

Exile appears as a relevant metaphor in this context. For Said, the intellectual is always in exile and an outsider. In the metaphysical sense, exile is equivalent to “restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled and unsettling others”.¹⁴² With regard to this, it can be said that the intellectual is never at home and never fully adjusted to the present conditions in his/her society. Moreover, Said gives a positive connotation for the exilic position of the intellectual; as it gives one the opportunity to have a double perspective in the sense that “the exile sees things both in terms of what has been left behind and what is actually here and now”.¹⁴³ To make a final remark on the *exilic* profile of the intellectual, it is important to note Said’s remark:

Exile means that you are always going to be marginal, and that what you do as an intellectual has to be made up because you cannot follow a prescribed path.¹⁴⁴

The definition that Said gives and his emphasis on the exilic and marginal condition of the intellectual can clearly be seen in *Tezer Özlü'den Leylâ Erbil'e Mektuplar*. Özlü had written these letters in the years between 1982 and 1986 while she was living in Europe as she could not stand the way the things were in her country. In these letters, Özlü writes about her reflections on German culture and on the state of her countrymen in Germany. In all her letters it is seen that Özlü is critical of the conditions that her countrymen are in. Although she accuses them of not improving themselves, she also feels responsible as a Turkish intellectual and tries to represent her country in Germany through book readings and cultural programmes. On the other hand, she also criticizes the westerners for their conservative attitude, and she is disappointed to see that literature has lost its significance in the west.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* p. 39.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 44.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 46.

In her first letter to Erbil dated March 27, 1982, Özlü states that the condition of her countrymen in Germany is miserable. Although she criticizes the Turks living in Germany for being ignorant and regards them as mentally ill, with the exception of the ones who are politically conscious, she states that this situation gives her a sense of responsibility as she cannot disregard these people and live in her own world. The only solution she sees for this problem is to educate them. She also states that the Germans are really trying hard and there are really many of them who intend to do good, yet all the Turks can do is to build mosques.¹⁴⁵

In her letter dated June 21 in the same year, Özlü is disappointed in the way the things are in Germany especially concerning literature. She states that there is no reason for one to write or translate books in that society since a work of literature has become a commodity. She complains that one's book is placed next to the guides on hotels in the shelves of the bookstores¹⁴⁶ and the intellectuals of this country are also faced with an impasse.

Throughout her ensuing letters, it is seen that Özlü is critical of both her own culture and the German culture she is confronted with. She states that she feels alienated from her own society. However, she also expresses her annoyance about the developing capitalism in Germany which drags people to depression. Furthermore, about the negative image of the Turkish people in Germany, she accuses the intellectuals who have misrepresented the country, but also she thinks that the fascist attitude of the Germans has a role in it, too.

As the years pass by, her longing for her country is explicitly expressed in her letters. Although the life standards in Europe make her life easier, she often states that she misses her country. In one of her last letters, she claims that her encounter with the mentality of the Middle Age conservatism in Europe is the cause for her illness.

In Özlü's letters, it is seen that her mind is occupied with the problems of her country and the German culture that she lives in. Even though, at times she

¹⁴⁵ Tezer Özlü. *Tezer Özlü'den Leylâ Erbil'e Mektuplar*. p. 26.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 29.

feels hopeless and has an accusing attitude towards the people, she does not cease to carry out cultural activities to represent Turkey and its literature. As she tries to point to the things that go wrong both in her own country and in Europe, she feels herself left alone. Her position as an intellectual, who is educated in the Western manner, keeps her at a distance from the Turkish immigrants in Germany. On the other hand, as she belongs to the Third World, the characteristics of her writings which do not come up to the expectations of the Germans make her all the more lonely and miserable.¹⁴⁷ As a result, even though she stands firm, defending what she believes to be true, in her final letters she states that she tries to concentrate on the problems that are more personal and concrete because her engagement with what she regards as the more crucial problems has made her ill.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Necmi Sönmez. “Tezer Özlü ve Leyla Erbil’in Dostluğuna Bir Gezinti ya da “Burası Bizi Öldürmek İsteyenlerin Yurdu” in *Tezer Özlü’ye Armağan*. p. 133.

¹⁴⁸ *Tezer Özlü’den Leylâ Erbil’e Mektuplar*. p. 56.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In this study, both Tezer Özlü's life as an intellectual and her novels, *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and *Journey to the End of Life*, are analyzed together in order to demonstrate Özlü's portrayal of the inner life of the intellectual and her unique way of expressing the effects of the political circumstances of the time on the individual intellectual.

Tezer Özlü is considered to be a marginal figure in Turkish literature. The reason for this is that when Özlü has written her novels, the main tendency in Turkish literature is to write novels with an awareness of the political circumstances of the time. Due to this convention, Özlü's works are considered to be focusing on the inner world of the individual without paying much attention to the politics of the time.

The aim of this study was to demonstrate that this commonly held belief is false and Özlü, in fact, pays attention to the politics of her time although she does not express it explicitly in her works. In order to prove this, first of all, it is demonstrated that even though the narrator of Özlü's novels is not explicitly described as a representative of the Turkish intellectual or as a spokesperson for a group of intellectuals in Turkey, the depicted character in her novels fits perfectly into the local and universal definitions of the intellectual. Therefore, in this study, first of all, it is pointed out that in her novels, Özlü deals with a particular type of person, that of the intellectual. This aspect is very significant since the very definition of the intellectual brings to mind first and foremost of all a concern for the political.

Secondly, the parallels between Özlü's own life and the events that she describes in her novels are drawn in detail. It is seen that even though Özlü's life

and her novels are remarkably consistent in terms of the events and the attitudes that are portrayed, the most striking and inconsistent point is the fact that although Özlü, herself, is very much engaged with the political problems of the era she lives in and feels an intellectual's responsibility for her country and for all the people who are oppressed, in her portrayal of the narrator in her novels, the emphasis seems to be on the inner life of the individual and on the pains she suffers from as a result of her dilemma between what she experiences in her own culture and the western culture that she is taught at school.

As it is described in this study, although there is a parallelism between what Özlü experiences in her life and what she depicts in her novels, she never explicitly expresses the reasons for her own and the depicted character's sufferings. However, Sezer Duru and Leylâ Erbil believe that the reasons for Özlü's mental illness and her subsequent sufferings are due to the oppression and violence that were taking place in the years that Özlü lived.¹⁴⁹

Considering this comment on Özlü's illness, trauma theory offers a significant insight in order to understand Özlü's omission of the causes of her mental illness. Since the event that causes trauma cannot be assimilated into consciousness due to the threat it poses to the well-being of the victim, one can never have a direct access to the event's true nature. Therefore, Özlü's direct telling of her sufferings and the concealment of the reasons for these resides, in fact, in the very nature of the traumatic experience itself, and trauma theory is founded on this complex and ambivalent relation between knowing and not knowing what one has experienced.

Moreover, according to Cathy Caruth, "it is, indeed at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of trauma precisely meet."¹⁵⁰ Peter Ramadanovic explains further this link that Caruth establishes between literature and trauma as thus:

¹⁴⁹ Sezer Duru. "Kız Kardeşim ve Ben" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*. p. 17.

Leylâ Erbil. "Yazarın Ülkesinde Bir Gezinti ya da "Burası Bizi Öldürmek İsteyenlerin Yurdu" in *Tezer Özlü'den Leylâ Erbil'e Mektuplar*. p. 14.

¹⁵⁰ *Unclaimed Experience*. p. 3.

What makes literature into the privileged, but not the only, site of trauma is the fact that literature as an art form can contain and present an aspect of experience which was not experienced or processed fully. Literature, in other words, because of its sensible and representational character, because of its figurative language, is a channel and a medium for a transmission of trauma which does not need to be apprehended in order to be present in a text or, to use Felman's and Dori Laub's term, in order to be witnessed. What is thus also presented through a text is a certain truth about history that is not otherwise available.¹⁵¹

Therefore, Özlü's novels portray perfectly the nature of traumatic experience in its depiction of the characteristics of the things that are suffered from, of the process of healing by turning these sufferings into a narrative and writing about traumatic experiences, and of disguising the real reasons behind the sufferings as it is impossible to have an access to them which makes them impossible to speak about.

¹⁵¹ *Introduction: Trauma and Crisis.*

<http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/text-only/issue.101/11.2introduction.txt>

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