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PRELUDE TO THE NARRATIVE: TEXTUALITY AND MEHMED UZUN'S STORYTELLING

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ABSTRACT

This M.A thesis focuses on Mehmed Uzun's textuality in his novels. The textual questions and discussions shape Mehmed Uzun's narratives and storytelling manner since text and textuality are relatively new subjects determining his literary tendencies. Also, this thesis touches on the textual organization and representation of Kurdish cultural and textual heritage in Mehmed Uzun's novels. The first chapter sketches the theoretical background regarding text and textuality. The second chapter investigates Uzun's first novel *You* within a textual and intertextual framework. The third chapter analyzes oral types, styles, narratives and their impact on Uzun's works. The fourth chapter tackles cultural and political dynamics of the Kurdish language and the textual development of this language by means of two biographical and historical novels by Uzun. The fifth chapter examines the relationship between the epic and the novel genres through a discussion on the origins of written and oral narratives which is found in Uzun's *Love Like Love Darkness Like Death*. The use of visuality and music in the textual operations holds together the discussions on Uzun's poetics in these chapters.

ÖZET

Bu yüksek lisans tezi Mehmed Uzun'un romanlarındaki metinselliğe odaklandı. Metin ve metinsellik Uzun'un edebi eğilimlerini belirleyen görece olarak yeni konular oldukları için metinsel soru ve tartışmalar onun poetikasını biçimlendirir. Buna ilaveten, bu tez Mehmed Uzun romanlarındaki metinsel organizasyon ile Kürt metinsel mirasının eserlerinde temsil edilmesini üzerinde durur. İlk bölüm metin ve metinsellikle ilgili bazı tartışmaları ele alır. İkinci bölüm, Uzun'un ilk romanı olan *Sen*'deki metinsel ve metinlerarası yapıyı tartışır. Üçüncü kısım, sözlü kültürdeki tipleme, tarz ve anlatılar ile bunların Uzun'un eserlerine etkilerini inceler. Dördüncü bölüm, iki tarihsel-biyografik romandan yola çıkarak Kürt metinselleşmenin kültürel-politik dinamikleri üzerinde durur. Beşinci bölüm ise Uzun'un *Aşk Gibi Aydınlık Ölüm Gibi Karanlık* romanındaki anlatının kökenine dair tartışmalar ve epik ile modern roman arasındaki ilişkiyi irdeler. Uzun ile ilgili tüm bu tartışmaları bir arada tutan şey metinlerinde müzik ve görselliğin işlenmesidir.

TEŞEKKÜR

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INTRODUCTION

The text, textual structures and textual thinking have evolved over the centuries, yet the rise of this phenomenon for Kurdish culture and literature is relatively new. This is why textuality as a theory and text as episteme present several questions to this field.

Textuality "… on a first reading, is the quality of coherence or connectivity that characterizes text" (Hanks). All texts are not unified by textuality, they may not give sense of unity thematically or stylistically. In order to analyze textuality, we can also seek an understanding of subtext: "Sub-text focuses on whatever understandings or themes from the background or tacit dimensions of a text, inferable but not explicitly stated" (Hanks). One of the fundemental ingredients of literature is its textuality. Text is not just sentences or printing material, it has potential for creating new modes of experiences. Textuality of Kurdish novel cannot be evaluated independently of its oral ties.

Transition from orality to literacy is one of the profound changes shaping our way of thinking. In Kurdish culture, oral literature is alive and continues to be practiced among people. This fact makes Kurdish culture a framework in which matters concerning transition from orality to textuality can be observed. Specifically, in Mehmet Uzun's texts strong ties with oral culture exist. The persistence of oral traditions is not only found in the culture of

Kurds living in the eastern parts of Turkey but, as Christine Allison puts it in the case of Badinan tribe in Iraq, also in other Kurdish regions in Northern Iraq, Syria and Iran:

> …local interest in recording oral traditions is an indication that local people perceive the old songs and stories as an important part of their Kurdish heritage, and thus of their national identity. Whatever the future holds for this vital element of Kurdish culture, the current influence of oral traditions cannot be ignored; after all, many of those now shaping the Kurdish nation did not learn their Kurdish history at school, but from the mouths of older generations.

Old songs and stories are key factors in shaping narratives of many Kurdish novelists and story tellers, but this happens within a new cultural context. We can see reification of social and cultural life and to some degree these songs reflect collective thinking of the society. Basil Nikitine in his essay concerning a real story which is written in Kurdish (*The Tale of Suto and Tato*) states that these narratives give us a vivid picture of the Kurdish mentality. We can also find in these çîroks (tales) and strans (songs) manifestation of Kurdish folklore and wisdom. Sources of çîroks are not the same with dengbêj narratives though their contexts as narratives overlap at times. Çîroks have affinities with fables, love stories, parables, comic and folk tales whereas dengbêj contes comprise heroic, mythological tales and dengbêj conducts this as his professional function. Dengbêjs narrate love stories as well, but their style of narration is quite different from those found in çîroks, humor is not found in their narration.

Uzun's and many other Kurdish writers' complain about the non-unified state of Kurdish language is a recurrent subject of discussion in the novels of this language. There is not a unified Kurdish language, as it is the production of a stateless culture, and this is why not a unified Kurdish novel. There are novels written in Kurmanji, Sorani and Gorani dialects

of Kurdish and the relatively new novel traditions of these dialects manifest remarkable difference in terms of style, making of narrative and oral conventions. Joyce Blau's assesses this fragmentation: "For reasons too complex to explain here, the Kurdish language never became unified and its dialects fall into three related groups" (20).

Literacy has never been widespread among Kurds. Many Kurdish readers educated in Turkish experience a textual shock when they are confronted with textual usage of the Kurdish language in novels, newspaper, articles. This state of shock is largely overcome by means of reading texts aloud. In order words, oral readings assist unexperienced readers of Kurdish texts. As the Kurdish alphabet was Latinized like Turkish, it is possible to read and understand Kurdish texts but it definitely requires training for fluent understanding. Therefore, audience-centered criticism is considerably poignant for interpreting Uzun's novels and an actantial metamorphosis of his characters and readers could go together. Kurdish readers have been witnessing the textual development of Kurdish language and its status is problematic.

Traditional narrators in old stories, myths, tales and verse narratives are still important figures in modern Kurdish literature. Hence, it can be claimed that there are two main types of narrators in Kurdish cultural and social contexts that have been influential on the textual production of Kurdish literature: Dengbêj* and Çirokbêj*. The literary styles which flourished out of these two traditions have been influential in Mehmet Uzun's novels.

Dengbêj: Kurdish poet, storyteller, sometimes accompanied by a wooden flute, who recounts verse narratives.The term dengbêj is a Kurdish term composed of the words *deng* [voice] and *bêj* (present tense of *gotin,* to tell).

Çîrokbêj: Story teller whose narration style is close to prose narratives in texts, which are not musical, çîrok can be translated into English as tale.

The questions that are poignant to understand Uzun's textuality are related to his representation of Kurdish textual heritage in his writings. We can formulate further questions concerning textuality of his works: How textuality operates in his works? What impetus determines his textual standpoints? How is his organization and arrangement of incidents established? Do epics and verse narratives influence his textual position? The represention of history, political and social events in his texts will also be investigated in evaluating his novels.

Textuality operates in different layers of culture in his works, which explicitly and implicitly locates abstract referents. He arranges his texts by positioning the textual author and reader, narrator and narratee in his poetics. In his poetics, linguistic construction and stylistic diversity are more important than the scheme of events and arrangements of incidents or actions. Again in his poetics, in principle, the same story can be narrated by means of other texts.

He revives old Kurdish proverbs, idioms and words, regardless of the dialect of Kurdish in which they existed. A semiotic operation and representation mark his starting point as a narrator and novel writer. Producing a linguistically competent text becomes one of his strong arguments throughout his novels. Thus, the question of textuality is needed to be scrutinized and pinpointed specifically so that some new theoretical frameworks can be drawn for his works. In this dissertation, I pursue these arguments by means of exploring textual identity, ideology, style and context of Uzun's writings.

Hannah Arendt describes Walter Benjamin's style by emphasizing his texts' realitistic tone and puts forward similar arguments regarding linguistic tendencies and approaches.

> "…the art of taking proverbial and idiomatic speech literally enabled Benjamin-as it did Kafka, in whom figures of speech are often clearly discernible as a source of inspiration and furnish the key to many a 'riddle'-to write a prose of such singularly enchanting and enchanted closeness to reality" (21).

The first chapter of this dissertation sketches the theoretical background regarding text and textuality. Text as ideological-historical production, pleasure and cultural artifact are discussed by referring to prominent theorists of the field. The development of textuality in other cultures is compared to Uzun's case and position. The relativization of the reader's standing or assigning meaning to text are of determining importance in seeking aesthetic and ideological mediums in which certain value judgements are expressed. Uzun's "implied reader" and narrator pursue implications of these personal values, experiences and dramas. Hence, through a theoretical discussion, a framing concept of textuality and intertextuality can be elucidated.

The second chapter evaluates Uzun's first novel *You* and its intertextual structure within the framework of textual discussions. In *You* Uzun deliberately delivers certain messages to the reader concerning his need for textual ground. This novel is his first attempt to invite readers to witness a historical and personal documentary in which narrator addresses his story to the narratee. Following the "realistic" approaches of Erebê Şemo, Ibrahim Ahmad and Mahmud Bakşi, Uzun displays "Kurdish realism." Traces of political, personal and poetic drama, which persist throughout all his novels, are revealed through internal tensions and conflicts which correspond to political and historical conditions of that time. States of affairs are organized in a way that two different narrators present an account of structural generalities of the text and historical documentation of Diyarbakır city and Diyarbakır prison. Interior

monologues and dramatized essays mark a point of intersection between fiction and documentary.

The third chapter tackles dengbêj types and their stylistic impact on Uzun's novels. Almost all Kurdish novelists deal with dengbêj as narrator and object of nostalgia. Dengbêj is an old tradition of storytelling which is almost extinct today. Although it is fading away, there are many records of dengbêj singing and these records have been moved to digital media. Perhaps, because of this reason dengbêj tradition maintains popularity among people who are interested in Kurdish culture. As for the çîrokbêj, the same cannot be said; because most çîroks have disappeared due to the fact that they have not been printed and this is why the influence of dengbêj in Kurdish texts as narrators is felt more actively. Another reason why çîrok tradition is less influential in Kurdish novel is due to the fact that it is regarded as a means of entertainment for children and women even though it has literary appeal for the adult male audience as well since its narration style and use of rich imagery is reminiscent of Middle East narratives like *One Thousand and One Nights*. There have been some studies or collected works on Kurdish folktales, but they have never been influential like Brothers Grimm and their anthology.

In three of Uzun's novels, protagonists are dengbêjs who elegise the situation of Kurds. The rhetoric of dengbêj is constructed through the ethical and ideological content of the social context in which he lives. It is interesting that the dengbêj tradition is not found among Alevi Kurds who are practising music by using instruments. Instruments are not banned in their culture. This signifies that Sunni tradition has evolved in a way in which the human voice has become pivotal instrument. Dengbêjs were also respected because of their religious function. One of the origins of dengbej narration is hymn singing. Therefore, dengbêj performance is sometimes a religious congregation, too.

Uzun, in all his dengbêj novels criticises mainstream/dominant dengbêj ideology which is largely shaped by means of the Sunni interpretation of Islam. Uzun's dengbêj explicitly or implicitly reflects his criticism for this "strict" interpretation. Hence, Uzun's dengbêjs appropriate new modes and standings by questioning their functions as artists.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation focuses on the lives of two prominent writers, who were famous linguists, publishers and political activists of Kurdish culture. *Shadow of Love* and *The Well of Destiny* are based on biographies of Celadet Bedirxan and Memduh Selim. Formal and thematic aspects, literary and artistic entities of these novels problematize the text in a political and cultural context. Again in these novels some key characters are dengbêjs like Fermanê Kîkî and the values that are conveyed by them determine the meaning of the texts. Like Uzun's other novels in which dengbêjs are protagonists, in these novels as well we see the patronage of them by Kurdish noblemen. Although there are centuries of spanning between Biro, Evdalê Zeynikê and Fermanê Kîkî, the tradition of patronizing dengbêjs still existed at the time of Celadet Bedirxan.

The roles of explanations and definitions that Uzun's narrators denote contribute to understanding the "redundancy" in his works. Redundancy is a typical aspect of dengbêj aesthetic which secures the receptions of a message. In fictional texts, redundancy operates on several levels. In particular, redundancy involves verbal repetitions, recurrent narrative structures, thematic resemblances. There is significant employment of verbal repetitions in Uzun's fictional works as in the narration of dengbêj narratives.

Çîrokbêj aesthetic, in which universe of the narrator and the demands of the narratee culminates in the production of a more flexible verbal text, is more amenable to fictional stories. The key element of çîrok style narratives is narrative suspense. In Kurdish folklore, the function of çîrokbêj is to entertain the public. Sometimes, the stories narrated are too long

and the çîrokbêj finishes his/her story at a moment when the suspense reaches a climax so that next day the audience gathers again to continue listening to the rest of the story. This narrative style is less formalist compared to dengbêj narratives because it contains more fantastic elements and are not verse narratives. One example of çîrokbêj in Uzun's novels is Amojna Sîtî in *The Well of Destiny*. As the character's position, status and name suggests, çîrokbêj is largely home-based and not professional as it has never been the dominant literary mode of time in Kurdish culture like dengbêjs.

The last chapter is precipitated by a discussion on the epic tradition and its reflections on the textual and verbal production of Kurdish culture. Old Kurdish epopes are mentioned in almost all Kurdish novels even in *Sobarto* of Helîm Yûsîv who is known for his usage of surrealist motifs and çîrokbêj style narration. In his novel entitled *Sobarto* he refers to story of Suleiman and Belqis, Xecê, Zîn, Mem, Ferhad, Siyabend. (17). In *Light Like Love Darkness Like Death*, Uzun makes allusions to ancient epics and uses cultural and referantial codes of this tradition. Text is constituted by various voices and codes. Seeking Ur-narratives is problematized, the degree of artistry in making the text and inscription of other epic texts hybridizes rhetorical and structural aspects of epic and novel genres. Rhetorical skills and the structure of its arguments are pervasive too. Definitons of a novel and an epic at times overlap with definitions of text and this convergence culminates in questioning of the nature of the relationship between the novel and the epic, between textual and verbal.

I.TEXT AS LITERARY OBJECT

Formal and contextual features, chronological and causal organizations in a text are examined by means of their narrativity and beyond. Sequences, story and plan for actions are all discussed to decode the textuality of literary works.

Theoretical and practical implications of literary texts and other artistic forms contain clues to analyze narrative literature. The polysemic nature of literary texts is a problematic issue tending toward ideological analysis of texts. Texts have been explored in their ideological context by many critics. Terry Eagleton emphasizes the relationship between text and ideology.

> The word "ideology" , one might say, is a *text*, woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands; it is traced through by divergent histories, and it is probably more important to assess what is valuable or can be discarded in each of these lineages than to merge them forcibly into some Grand Global Theory (1).

Most literary works are both textual and ideological productions. Texts function as instruments of conservative or repressive ideologies. The meaning of text is not confined to manuscript, printed book, material but it is beyond the scope of its formal and material qualities. Fictonal material becomes text through composing act of culture, ideology and narrative structures.

One could argue that in text there is the play of textuality. Making visible this play of textuality is one way to "characterize the text." The things texts hide can be revealed. Text is there to be diffused and instructed. All art/text does not need to be ideological but the text is

in close affinity with ideology, history and production. Also dramatic plays are included in the dramatic text category.

> The literary text is not the "expression" of ideology, nor is ideology the "expression" of social class. The text, rather, is a certain *production* of ideology, for which the analogy of a dramatic production is in some ways appropriate. A dramatic production does not "express", "reflect" or "reproduce" the dramatic text on which it is based; it "produces" the text, transforming it into a unique and irreducible entity. A dramatic production is not to judged by its fidelity to the text in the sense that a mirror-image can be judged faithfully to reflect its object; text and production are not commensurable formations to be laid out alongside one another, their distance or relation measured as one measures the distance between two physical objects. Text and production are incommensurate beacuse they inhabit distinct real and theoretical spaces (Eagleton, 297).

Here, text is not concrete, it has an abstract structure, but this abstract set of notations serve the formation of literary production. Works of art produce ideology, they can be independent, in the sense that they can be distinct from their material, printed book form (Belge, 326).

A universe of coded facts is sought and revealed in texts. We seek originality in them. Cultural and aesthetic tendencies, questions and interpretations are crystallized by means of an activity of art in texts. In Mehmet Uzun's poetics historicity and linguistic possibilities are always in the foreground. Positing himself as a novelist for whom the very meaning of the text is the basic formative experience and mode, Uzun emphasizes the historical and linguistic dimensions of his works recurrently. In short, that means text that serves to recreate social,

cultural and linguistic contexts and geneological knowledge codes in order to constitute a cultural text in which textualization of Kurdish is questioned.

> …we are thus confronted with a choice between study of nature of the "objective" structures of a given cultural text (the historicity of its forms and of its content, the historical moment of emergence of its linguistic possibilities, the situation-specific function of its aesthetic) and something rather different which would instead foreground the interpretative categories or codes through which we read and receive the text in question (Jameson, 9).

Culture can be studied as communication from source to receiver. Text is the source and receiver is regarded as, albeit not necessarily, the reader/audience. Thus, we have an overlap between semiotics and communication. An applied semiotic operation is what the text itself is concerned with. Consideration of the receiver, the modes of intentions are in a constant state of flux in that operation. Text's communicative function is different from its verbal context as Walter J. Ong states.

> The conditions of words in a text is quite different from their condition in spoken discourse. Although they refer to sounds and are meaningless unless they can be related- externally or in the imagination – to the sounds or, more precisely, the phonemes they encode, written words are isolated from the fuller context in which spoken words come into being (100).

Moreover, in the Middle Ages when transition to textuality was precipitated by the story-telling in texts, there was quality of a duologue style which corresponds to a transmutation in the structure of narrative.

> Later, in the Middle Ages, writing will present philosophical and theological texts in objection-and-response form, so that the reader can imagine an oral disputation. Boccaccio and Chaucer will provide the reader with fictional groups of men and women telling stories to one another, that is, a "frame story", so that the reader can pretend to be one of the listening company (Ong, 101).

A similar discussion is discernible in Chinese narrative tradition which is closer to Middle East verbal narrative traditions compared to Western tradition. Eastern narratives, including Far Eastern, tend to use tell-sing style before a transformation toward narrative prose, novel, takes place. Performance-reading, word-voice tensions can be observed in that phase of the transition. No matter how stylized or abstract, the narrative text is transformed in such a way that prose and poetry mixes. However, the changing interests of readers, emergence of a national reading public and characteristics that are peculiar to the novel genre force the authors to adopt new positions concerning the link between the text and a given society.

> There is, on the other hand, a wealth of genres where alternation between prose and verse is fairly balanced, and this group of genres, many of them closely related to oral performance, is often referred to as prosimetric (IDEMA 1986 and MAIR 1997). While the word "prosimetric" can thus be applied according to its definitions and ambiguities, the Chinese term "tell-sing" (*shuochang)* contains a partly different spectrum of definitions and ambiguities. A translation of "prosimetric" as *shuochang* or-the other way- of *shuochang* as "prosimetric," is therefore apt only under certain conditions. In our present discussion of the manner of the novel, we have such a case point: the

> alternation verse and prose indeed a feature of the novel, a feature that we may consider a prosimetric or "mixed" form. But we would not consider the novel a genre of "tell-sing literature" because the novel is regarded as literature for reading, not for performance (Bordahl).

Stories told by dengbêjs are read in Uzun's novels. Actually, dengbêjs are currently replaced by 'kom' (music bands performing Kurdish music) and singers who make use of traditional Kurdish melodies and modern instruments. The emergence of kom tradition can be interpreted as a sub-culture and representation of a repressed ideology through music.

Young generations are apt to seperate musicality from story telling. They read Uzun's and other Kurdish writers' works and listen to koms or singers. Uzun as well uses pieces from old songs, legends and dengbej stories as pastiches. The change in music culture and reception of a new aesthetic by a given public characterizes new trends in cultural, ethical, and literary domains. Generic, stylistic and thematic preferances are reconstructed through a new understanding of reading and reader expectations.

Another interesting fact in the history of Kurdish storytelling is that there are famous dengbêjs singing and telling but we do not know storytellers narrating by means of çîrokbêj aesthetic and style. In some cases and dialects of Kurdish, çîrokbêj means narrator as well as story teller. Storyteller and narrator have different meanings in these contexts.

A tendency from verse narrative to novel in many other cultures undergoing emergence phenomenon exists, as it is in the Kurdish novel. A new genre does not suddenly appear, it emerges gradually in response to changes in economic, linguistic, and cultural conditions. Generally, predecing works can be found such as *La Morte D'Arthur* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Some literary circles refuse to see literary history as a story of unbroken

continuity. While not denying the principle of intertextuality-that all works relate to prior works-they emphasize that relations of difference are just as likely as relations of similarity. Experimental narratives appear as a result of this. Uzun has a penchant for experimental fiction too.

How do readers receive the text by reconstructing the narrative's message? Uzun urges reader to reconstruct his text by reminding them of the intertextual character of his works. Translations from world literature enrich Kurdish literature. They also serve to form a reading public who is in relationship with world literature by means of several modes and viewpoints. Furthermore, textual authority and univocality of literary works are questioned by that reading public and structures of text and multiplicity of contexts may demonstrate "indeterminacies."

> This process of reconstitution of the text by the reader is spurred on by two integral structures of the text itself-the blank and the negation. Iser (1980) describes blanks as "leav(ing) open the connections between perspectives in the text, and so spur the reader into coordinating these perspectives… they induce the reader to perform basic operations *within* the text (169).

Negations "invoke familiar or determinate elements only to cancel them out. What is canceled, however, remains in view, and thus brings about modifications in the reader's attitude toward what is familiar and determinate-in other words, he is guided to adopt a position *in relation* to the text. These two structures are sources of indeterminacy within the text; this indeterminacy necessitates reader reconstruction of a consistent meaning from the perspectival material within the text (Stroud, 169).

One of the conspicuous aspects of the narrative in some of Uzun's novels is the stress upon visuality, visual thinking, visual interpretation. *The Well of Destiny* is "photograph reading" (Selim Temo, 285) and *Shadow of Life* has visual effects too. Unfinished, short sentences, physical description of characters, environment and reflection of memories by making use of dream imagery indicate Uzun's utilization of textual visuality. By the same token, Claude Simon in an interview expresses his ideas on novel, text and visuality.

> Yes, by choosing a given starting point, we arrive at an ending (the dénouement, called by Emile Faguet the "crowning logic" of the novel) via a series causes and effects-once more psychosocial in nature-that the author presents as absolutely determined and determining: it's rather a kind of wandering –hesitant, depending on memories, documents, or unfinished impressions-subject to associatons, contrasts, sideslips, oppositions, etc. What I offer the reader is simply a chance to explore with me a welter of images that forms around several initial images."
>
> "…What I struggle to achieve in my textual wandering or roaming about is never to lose sight of a central point and always to come back to it in the end by taking it up again-or if you prefer the musical analogy of a finale, by recapitulating all the previously played themes.

Uzun's visual application is pervasive in some of his novelistic surveys and pursuits. Visuality or three-dimensional aspect of literary work is supported by long descriptions of faces, dressing and psychological states of characters. A "central point" persists throughout his novels. This extraordinary persistence of visual perspective in these two novels marks a difference in Uzun's poetics as he adopts a musical style and performance conventions in most of his works like the ones in which dengbêjs are protagonists.

The contrast between ordinary and professional reading is another problematic issue with respect to theory and criticism. Critics are expected to produce "professional readings" of texts, elaborate methodologies and to orient readers. Lay reader's experiences of text may be underestimated by them. The nature and function of fiction is analysed by "simple" readers during the reading activity and a spontaneous textual analysis is constructed by them. Elite and layman produce a different sense of understanding. Due to the fact that a text is not limited to a corpus of sentences, the nature of textual analysis enables readers with different abitilies and competence to generate interpretations. This discussion on the orientation of the reader is subjective in many ways. Readers are turned into critics and there is a passage from object to subject in terms of reading subject.

> Ordinary reading consists of ongoing "work." We can see how absorbing that work is by watching people on the morning train. We notice that work when we have trouble wtih it: when we find a grammatical error, when a profusion of characters mixes us up, or when we lose the continuity of our reading because of an unexplicable jump in a storyline. We notice it as well when we have to acclimatize ourselves to the word order and sentence structure of an author. Nevertheless, for the most part, the work of reading goes unobserved and unnoticed: it is unremarkable, and we have nothing interesting to say about it.
>
> The origins of this ordinariness lie in the relationship of reading to its text, and this relationship lies at the heart of reading *simpliciter*. In reading *cultura*, readers are confronted by a text lying at a distance from them; disengaged from its reading, a text is subject to its varying interpretations. The primary phenomenon in reading *simpliciter* is the activity of reading itself, not the relationship between readers and texts as two seperate entities.

> Although a text provides the necessary grounds for engaging in and continuing that activity, it only "lives" within the reading process. We do not begin with texts and readers, but with the activity of reading. To adapt Stanley Fish's metaphor, lay readers enter into a dance; only from within that dance do they discover the delights and disappointments of their partner" (Livingston).

There are many alternative definitions and functions of text and textuality. Text cannot be limited to a book or library. Lack of a direct referent of literary text makes possible an understanding of text in which text cannot be situated outside of the text. That can be evaluated as an overgeneralization. The function and meanings of text are blurred and mystified. Jacques Derrida and Julia Kristeva are the prominent philosophers who investigate how text encapsulates meaning in terms of form and essence.

> Since this conflictuality of *différance*—which can be called contradiction only if one demarcates it by means of a long work on Hegel's concept of contradiction –can never be totally resolved, it marks its effects in what I call the text in general, in a text which can never be governed by a referent in the classical sense, that is, by a thing or by a transcendental signified that would regulate its movement (Derrida, 44).

Edward Said criticizes Derrida and Foucault regarding their views on text and textuality. To Said, text is mystified through deconstruction and power relations and its meanings ought to be revealed according to him. What text hides, what it connotes should be revealed and its meanings should not be left blurred.

> If the text hides something, or if something about the text *invisible*, these things can be *revealed* and *stated,* albeit in some other form, mainly because the text

> is part of a network of power whose textual form is a purposeful obscuring of power beneath (or in) textuality and knowledge (savoir).

The meaning of text, besides its ideological bearings, is determined by structural demands and conventions. Text's relations to its parts, lexical, semantic and logical compositions, do not have a rigid consistency. This is why you may not know the meaning of the text even if you have the proficiency of its parts. In this sense, text suggests a unity, a unity meanings of which are open to be generated and reconstructed. David Herman comments on creating meaning or meaning of text.

> Texts mean in a way that is not strictly componential; in contrast to your knowledge about sentence meaning, you don't necessarily know the meaning of a text if you know the meaning of its parts and relations, logically specifiable, into which those parts can enter.

The pleasures of reading are inseperable from narrative suspense, relevations that we come across in almost all narratives. Barthes defines text of pleasure in *Pleasure of the Text*: "the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, it is linked to a *comfortable* practice of reading" (14). The text comes from the culture, links the past to present. Although text is partly ideology, representation and various subjects, a web that serves to make reading practice pretty. Mehmed Uzun, in representing and reconstructing Kurdish textuality appeals to almost all the discussions and views mentioned.

In most of his works text becomes the central subject and his narrators recurrently elicit textuality of the Kurdish literature and its textual position in World Literature. The textuality of a text produces knowledge about it.

Kurdish culture is regarded as a "sub-culture" in Turkey, therefore an intensified engagement with local cultures and subcultures is a major factor that affects storytelling in the Kurdish language. The fact that Uzun's novels, to some degree, are instructive is related to producing knowledge on Kurdish culture. From the text to the reader, there is a construction of identity. Every action in his novels is a signifier which moves from one role to another to create a narrative discourse. This narrative discourse or cultural construct is an attempt to transform Kurdish textuality to mainstream writing.

What is read, how it is read, what are codified and shown and why details and descriptions are kept to maximum in Uzun's narratives become central questions. The play of textuality determines structure in the act of writing. The range of interpretations and the system of literary conventions compose the sphere of the narrative. Thus, to bring together the sights and sounds Uzun adopts conventions of oral cultures in which visual and audial qualities preoccupy the pivotal place.

Myths mystify events and phonomena, Uzun attempts to demystify mythical grounds of Kurdish oral culture by means of textual operations, the voice of mystified object turns into the voice of knowledge. This is an attempt to make mysteries visible. Nevertheless, a new mystery replaces the old myths in his works, that is the "the mystery" of text and textuality. The notion of word (gotin), which refers to written sources and material are mentioned recurrently in his novels, particularly in *Call of the Tigris*. Mystic voice turns mystic text and it gives rise to a myth of nation. Nationalism is always more stressful in the written tradition of Kurdish than oral modes especially beginning with Ehmedê Xanî.

Moreover, for his works, in recovering the primordial meaning of the sign, five stages of textual operation are put into practice. Action, setting, hermeneutic, referential and symbolic operations constitute the novelistic expression and creative act. The very

relationship between text and context is problematized. We have concrete phenomena in the historical reality, time and space are given in his novels. Yet, this reality is an abstraction of the reality of life. His texts are descriptive rather than prescriptive.

All of Uzun's novels have central narrators. They discuss the problematic of writing and storytelling and the system of fiction in which they exist. Do his texts and narrators imply a certain organization? Action refers to an implied organization, actions are inscribed in a text and narrated. Setting signifies space, time and mood of story. Hermeneutic suggests interpretation of text and theory. It also represents certain narratively organized sets of occurrences.

How did dengbêj use these components of narrative? First of all, degbêj performance is an entertainment and literary activity of Kurdish- Sunni peasants as well as serving a religious and didactic function. Productive forces of dengbêj has an agrarian character. In Uzun's context dengbêjs are involved in political discussions and their narrations are ramified, fragmented and detached. They revalidate myths and represent a collective force which can be cyrstallised by means of a social and cultural transition.

Set of relations between individual artist or narrator is put forward. Here, there is individual subject versus collective force. Storytelling is a social activity in this sense. Therefore, dengbêj's one potential function could be diffusing knowledge.

> …it seems much more likely (difficult to describe) that any philosophy or critical theory exists and is maintained in order not merely *to be there* passively around everyone and everything, but in order to be taught and diffused, to be absorbed decisively into the institutions of society or to be instrumental in

> maintaining or changing or perhaps upsetting these institutions and that society (Ray).

Manuscript and orality interaction was an important literary fact in Renaissance dramatic texts. Flexible text was driven forward against scholastic, stable texts. We encounter textualization of life in these scriptures. Print and hence textual revolutions in the Renaissance led to the development of knowledge and most importantly vernacularism. Perhaps, the most featured aspect of Mehmed Uzun's writings is also vernacularism, like Italian humanists of that time. Linking one text to many others and applying narrative to scripture or printing material has led to semantic and grammatical changes as well as projection of the conditions.

> Renaissance dramatic textuality- in the broadest sense- is thus predicated on an understanding of the text as unbounded, multiplicitous, malleable, adaptive and mercurial. These are all qualities which mark the text as a product of what we can characterise (drawing on Raymond William's classic formulation) as a culture in which oral and scribal values are, if no longer dominant, then strongly residual (Murphy, 196).

Based on these discussions on text and textuality it can be said that Mehmet Uzun is by all means, a pioneer in creating the Kurdish novel, especially for the ones written in the Kurmanji dialect. "A speech-writing integrity and an idiocratic lyricism are predominant" (Alpay, 240) in his writings. That's to say, text and voice play in his novels. His stylistic approach to novels marks his narratives. His poetics is based on rewriting Kurdish textual and cultural heritage in a new form and with a new content.

Mehmet Uzun cannot be regarded as "the founder" of the Kurdish novel, but his novels mark a demarcation which holds together several dialects of Kurdish. He borrows

words from all dialects and makes up a predominantly Kurmanji novel language. His role as a "founder" can be determined by this assumption. This is why we can claim that, as novelists like Ibrahim Ahmad and Erabê Şemo wrote novels too and they were no less serious than Uzun to introduce Kurdish novel new experiences, the assumption that Uzun was the first and most mature representative of the Kurdish novel is questionable. Ahmadzadeh as well has ideas that are in the same vein. He problematizes the emergence of the Kurdish novel as the production of a stateless culture (13) in his doctoral study and objects to the assumption that he is the founder of the modern Kurdish novel.

II. *YOU* AND OTHER TEXTS

Mehmet Uzun's *You* makes often reference to both world and Kurdish literature. The narrator addresses his story to the character and they are in conversation throughout the novel. The voice of the narrator, the identity of the narratee are blurred, and the 1st and 2nd narrators recount the story together. At times, the narrator addresses the protagonist as "you" and at times as "he". Also the protagonist, whose name is not mentioned in the text, observes the prison life and array of characters who represent Kurdish political and literary movements. Almost all characters around the protagonist denote a problem concerning Kurdish culture: "From Memé Alan to Delalé Beriye, every kind of song was available in their repertoire." (17) Referring to some other prisoners, the narrator picks up characters that are dealing with art, music, and culture. Other texts are used and codified and they become dominant signifiers. To connect text to interpretation certain conventions are postulated and the play of textuality becomes a play of politics. The slogans that are used by Turkish officials and Kurdish figures reveal that the narrator reflects several points of view:

"__ Hail to our great and brave president!

___ May our Republic prevail forever!" (20).

These phrases made by Turkish officials are observed by the protagonist and they are compared to slogans of Kurdish resisters. Both situations are about using text regardless of the fact that they are simple political slogans: "Your townsmen liked it. The state and its servants got mad because of that. Policemen and soldiers of the state would go there, cover with black dye and burn them. A few days later, slogans would be at that same place. (21)

The police officer at the prison interrogates the protagonist, he reads Lorca's poem (51) and is blamed for doing that. The protagonist satires this: "…after 36 years of Lorca's murder, he was killed one more time in your prison cell under the rain of Kurdistan,… (52). The interrogation continues, the subject is the same, it is about writers, politicians, poets. The prisoner and protagonist of the novel gets through his mind a question by referring to the use of unconnected names by the officer to blame him over communist propaganda: "Who is Tchov, who is Lenin, how come they became friends? (53). After that, a crucial discussion on Kurdish and its written texts are triggered by the policeman's question: "Hmmm, Do you understand Kurdish? Are there texts you read and write in Kurdish? (54).

There exists a need for storytelling in the novel. Dialogism, intertextual dimension and transcription of oral literature is reflected through the following question by the protagonist. The response is also an indication of it: "In this dark cell, Stories go well, don't they? (59).

There are a lot of questions passing through the protagonist's mind. Dramatized essay form, linear moving of the plot, weak suspense and poetic language mark the structural character of the text. Other characters as well discuss politics and picture their environment. Other texts play a central role in understanding and revealing what passes through the

protagonist's mind. A lot of pastiches provide insight to Uzun's novels in terms of interpreting old texts.

Narrating a musical version of Memê Alan and describing the scene in which a dengbej prepares to perform, the narrator has a sentimental tone, it is a prelude to narrative-performance. Details of this performance mix the ritual of performing, memory, and psychological state of dengbêj and physical description.

> My father'd take a flute (bilur) out, come back to his corner and sit in, for a while play the flute. He'd squeeze it, make it sound soft and clear and let it go. None of us would make a sound, the living room would be filled up with the sound of flute. Then, he'd slowly open his eyes and turn his head and look at us, the room; we, impatiently would be attached to the song and he gently, like one does with her coy mistress, would put it on his knees and start singing (67).

Pastiches are used by means of monologues and they are not limited to old epopes like Memê Alan. The protagonist also remembers political, patriotic songs like this one on Kurdistan. Again, the tone is sentimental and nostalgic feelings are pervasive, with the insistent use of a musical aesthetic to mark the protagonist's position :

"Oh Heart…

Rise and turn your face to Fatherland Kurdistan" (96).

Form, time and narrative, the three structural elements are subject to shifts throughout the novel. There is a shift from "you" to "he", from second to third. The distance between narrator and the protagonist determines this shift of perspective. Point of view, as Todorov

states, is related to the "vision" we have of the events evoked by the text clearly and this determines our work of construction to the text (71).

Geographical context and sense of geography are essential for Kurdish authors as "Kurdistan" does not have definite borders. There is always a sentimental concern among Kurds living in different countries. In *You*, other prisoners and portraits from Kurdish resistance helping Iraqi Kurds are depicted in that way.

> … That one is the first person who used Kurdish alphabet in Turkey and translated Memê Alan into Turkish, that's him. A few people sitting over there, they are peasants. Do you know why they are here? Because they helped the Iraqi Kurdistan movement, took them sugar, salt and flour (123).

Mehmet Emin Bozarslan is among important Kurdish intellectuals transcribing Memê Alan from the Arabic alphabet to the Latin alphabet. He has many other translations and transcriptions, namely again translation of Mem û Zîn and Şerefname. In the prison the narrator mentions him without giving his proper name. This clearly indicates that there is a description of real life and real characters under the guise of a fictional environment. Although most of his characters are represented by their real names, some figures taking part in the novels are not represented by their names like Bozarslan, so it can be said that roman à clef style partly has been used by him.

In one statement in *You*, the protagonist says: "What did our old men and ancestors say?" (131). This refers to old traditions and traditional dramatization; what ancestors say is also decisive for storyteller and narrator.

In the following pages, the main character finds a notebook and starts to write his impressions of the prison. He needs a text to record his memories, aesthetise and elegise his

pains. He is not satisfied with orality anymore contrary to his attitude in the beginning parts of the novel where he continuously longs for oral stories and songs. Text within a text is loosely constructed.

The first page of the diary is about Diyarbakır "On the first page, you had written, with fine and capital letters, and in Turkish, NOTES OF DİYARBAKIR IN RUINS" (135). Presenting the state of Diyarbakır city without seeing it from a closed place, an elegiac voice writes the course of the diary. Conventions of writing and forms of fiction serve to build the diary's argument.

The protagonist's conversations with Apo focus on the economic "exploitation of Kurdistan." "In Turkey, each year 3.5 billion tons of oil is drilled and 99 % percent of it is taken from Kurdistan. Also, 67 % of mining operations in Turkey are in Kurdistan" (160). Most of the Kurdish opponents living in the diaspora tend to assess Kurdish question as a result of exploitation. Apo, a figure who briefly appears in the novel believes that the poverty of Kurds mostly stems from this exploitation. The role of Turkish laws and attitudes against the Kurdish movement on cultural and economical backwardness of Kurds cannot be denied but a self-critcism by Kurds about the poverty of their region is also of great importance.

Questions, shouts and statements of silence, indicated by dots, during torture show the intensity of the situation in which the narrative takes place.

"Ha….haa…hé…ho.. hoo…hooo

__ What is your first name

…….

Ha….haa…hé…ho.. hoo…hooo

Say your birthday

……..

Ha….haa…hé…ho.. hoo…hooo

Your job…”

The novel’s textual structure and the intertextual features it endows highlight the plot, narrative mode, distance and general qualities a written narrative should have. Moreover, the narrator or the protagonist, distance is blurred at this point, needs a platform, a text to weave his ideas, memories and they place special emphasis on the textualization of the Kurdish language. Narrator’s views and wishes epitomize this fact: “ Wish your notebook were with you...And now in this cell without a pen and a notebook, a book, a watch you are all alone” (188).

III. PERSISTANCE OF ORALITY

Dengbêj song and ballad are examples of narratives performed without a writing system. The genres and qualities in oral performance present clues about the material handled in oral composition : “The genres of epic and ballads consist of concrete, easy to image words and ideas” (Rubin, 60).

In speech, there is fragmentation, however in written text there is a kind of integration. This is why oral tradition is more sequential.

The archetypal quality of the Homeric epic as texts has been evaluated by many scholars. They exist as the main narratives of the antiquity. Why *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are texts is a matter of material literary culture and orality in text.

> The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are texts, not behaviors of a known single person or group…Except for fragments, papyri, and citations in other works, the first transcription and almost every transcription or copy of a transcription that followed for about a millennium and a half are lost…We have little solid evidence external to the texts about their performance or about their tranfer to writing…The culture described in the epics must be inferred from texts and artifacts rather than observation. The language is dead. It is a historical accident of the strenght of Homeric scholarship, aided by the complex metrical constrains of the genre, that Homeric epic played a central role in the development of the study of oral traditions" (Rubin,195).

The question of listening or hearing voices in texts is related to the text's narratological organization, interpretive modes of written text, and text's verbal function. When understanding is compared to knowledge and differences are propounded, the speaker's position and notion of voice are set forth.

> The question of hearing voices in written texts is always going to be a matter of understanding rather than knowledge, and Fludernik is surely in her contribution to this issue to figure such hearing as "an interpretative move." In *Towards a Natural Narratology*, Fludernik probably takes the *narratological* notion of voice about as far as it can go, regarding voice "the linguistically generated *illusion* of a voice factor which can be defined emprically by a complex set of interrelated textual and contextual features and is corroborated by a mimetic reading of the text that stimulates the projection of a speaker or reflector function" (TNN 344). To insist on the over-hearing in written text or composite, overdetermined voices which do not point to a single, ordinary

> speaker function is perhaps to posit a notion of voice that's no longer compatible with, or simply irrelevant to, the concerns of narratology. But the only true test of such a notion will be the type of understanding it enables in the reading of narrative (Aczel).

III. I *One Day of Evdalê Zeynikê*

Productive practices and the relationship between a narrator and his patron are conspicuous in Uzun's novels concerning the lives of oral narrators. Support by noblemen was necessary for the feudal narrator. Celadet Bedirxan patronizes Fermanê Kîkî, the main narrator of the novel. Social forms and codes for literary production in Kurdish culture lies in this reciprocal relationship between storyteller and aga. Quite different from political patronage, literary patronage was pervasive in pre-modern societies as aristocracy dominated them.

In this novel by Uzun, the revealing nature of feudal sponsorship, first person narration is applied and the distance is determined. A collective way of storytelling is in the foreground.

Kîkî is his tribe's name, as there is no surname, his title is given in that way. Kîkî narrates stories of Evdalê Zeynikê, another famous dengbêj. Zeynikê says: " Yes, it is true, I am a dengbêj and poet. I just serve to sing strans, songs, recount tales, parables, memories and parlances" (10). This way, the genres an oral interpreter employs are reflected. It is not surprising since he is talking about his own fiction and there is the repetitive movement in constructing the text.

Allah appears as a character, as someone who is remonstranced: “Great Allah turned away from Kurds-forsake Kurds” (11). There is referring on the imperial yoke of Ottomans and a religious sign which indicates Kîkî’s position. Historically, Kîkî is expected to be a religious figure, yet in Uzun’s novel he adopts another position by empasizing folkloric values instead of religious ones.

Kurdish nationalism and patriotism is not dominant in oral performances but in this text, nationalism is enunciated by referring to Bedirxani family’s political position besides their literary missions: “On the one hand they are firmly attached to the political movement, on the other to Kurdish language and literature” (12). The family’s role in using artistic devices and possibilities for the sake of awakening a national identity is evident and the author’s political character is what is told in the novel again and again.

The economy and economic relations shaping society is not questioned much throughout the novel, but political relations between the artist and power are depicted. The narrator or author is also the parlor of cultural rights and a political essayist.

There is a struggle for overcoming the limited opportunities which the Kurdish written tradition offers. That is what the narrator discusses to some degree.

A blind narrator masks the author and there is one more narrator. The shift of narrators, from Kîkî to Evdal, marks the starting point for narration of a cycle of stories.

A new version of an old epope, Xecê and Siyabend, is told by presenting the action through the main narrator’s consciousness. Again the protagonist calls attention to act of the narrative itself.

Like Kazancakis who wrote the sequence to *Odysseus*, success is hard in writing sequences to classical works, as Ong puts it. It is a sequence to *Odysseus*, what Joyce did is

not writing the sequence. In this case a modern variation of an old epope is narrated, not a sequel.

As for the rerlationship between religious contes and folkloric tales, it can be asserted that what has been done in this novel is to emphasize folkloric motifs rather than religious themes. At times, this tends to create a clash between the folkloric-secular position and the religious one. Nevertheless, there are a lot of allusions to religious stories. For example, the author makes an unimportant mistake about who belongs to the *Zebur or Psalms*. In the novel it is told that it is Solomon's book yet it should be of David (89).

Not surprisingly, there is again a reference to *Memê Alan*. Why *Memê Alan* is a central source in Kurdish folklore? The role of Ehmedê Xanî, who wrote a variation of this epic, *Mem û Zîn*, is indisputable as Xanî's books were studied in medreses and promoted by scholars. However, the same cannot be said about Erebê Şemo's interpretation or a modern variation another Kurdish epic, *Dimdim*, which is about Kurdish resistance against Iranian-Safavid Empire in 17th century. *Dimdim* is not as popular as Xanî's interpretation of story of Mem û Zîn. This is because of the fact that Mem û Zîn is claimed by all Kurds regardless of their religious or ideological view. However, Erebê Şemo's effort is little known among conservative literary milieus. Another reason why *Dimdim* is less popular could be due to the fact that it has more two-dimesional characters.

Armenian- Kurdish relations have wavered. For *One Day of Evdalê Zeynikê* the narrator tends to reflect on a society where Kurds and Armenians live as good neighbors. Armenian- Kurdish marriages are another dimension concerning this relationship. The question arising here is whether a Muslim Kurdish woman could marry an Armenian man.

Apart from the social and cultural issues mentioned, the novel discusses its own textuality and narrative method as well. For example, in Evdalê Zeynikê, in the narrator, Kîkî's, view: "He was an artist. Meditating, remembering, creating, crafting were his talents…" (47). Stages and elements of creating a text, basically, are presented and talents mentioned are about oral narratives. Also, the relationship between artist and text in the novel suggests the author's insights for storytelling.

The novel is about a life story told in a single day and almost no psychological details are expressed. Besides technical aspects of storytelling, folkloric motifs and politics of that time are presented and the author's, protagonist's or narrator's political positions are not neutral. All three characters glorify and purify Kurdish resistance in the poltical and cultural setting. However, in spite of its realistic tone the novel is a rewriting of an old romance and not an example "formal realism." As Selim Temo states: In this way, reality bears a more "transmittable" quality (188). The reality of his novels, detailed descriptions, similes do not always represent conventional realism. His realism is more transmittable as it is in oral narratives.

A wounded crane is cured by hands of Evdal as crane, nature and man reflect a series of relationships found in many folktales. Zeynikê lived in a 19th century Kurdish town where the relationship between animals and man were more effective. Another issue concerning representation of the nature involves rivers in the Middle East. The Tigris and Euphrates are important rivers in the Middle East and they are regarded as rivers of Kurds by many Kurdish authors. They serve as geographical landmarks of a distinctive culture. Rivers symbolize and crystallize the search and craving for an independent Kurdistan.

As well as nature's role in folktales, we can seek the roots of national literature in folklore even though it is not so explicit and stressed as it is represented in textual culture. In

oral traditions, the roles of agas and beys (lords) are more concretized rather than an abstract notion of nationalism. Evdal sings and tells for a landlord, Tahar Pasha.

The story narrated by Evdal from the mouth of Fermanê Kîkî has an unhappy ending for Xecê and Siyabend which correponds to real events as Kurds had a desperate resistance against Ottomans and local enemies. Thus, for Xecê, Siyabend, Meyro and Bengin, it can be said that their stories are associated with the destiny of Kurds against their "enemies."

The narrator's mind is occupied with the question of text and textuality. Kîkî says: " As you know it oral and written narrations do not actually compromise, oral narration is life, written narration is shadow of life" (69). Orality-literacy clashes to his view. The vivacity of orality versus the abstract entity of textual literacy are compared, life and its shadow should coexist in his view. Yet, as an oral storyteller Kîkî tends to place emphasis on the power of orality.

Dengbêj narrated to more distinguished people like Sümbül Mehmet paşa and Tahar paşa as stated in the novel. Class relations were always important, especially in a 19th century Kurdish town.

Uzun's politically engaged narrators do not have objectivity, and the question of belief and political view exist in all of his novels. Here, Tahar Khan has been portrayed as an ideal leader. Like Mir Bedirxan, Tahar Khan is a defender of the Kurdish land and culture. Also some notable religious men were feudal collaborators in his view. Some Kurdish rulers are depicted in a negative sense depending on their relationships with Ottomans. Ottomans are portrayed as destroying cultural institutions as stated in the novel. They do not only oppress Kurds politically but get involved in cultural destruction.

A minor character Şex Sile appears as another dengbêj and his audience is described: "He wasn't dengbêj of beys or Sor mirs but of travelers, caravanserais" (79). Class conscious dengbêjs represent and dramatize facts about his audience.

Evdal establishes kind of a school of storytellers, creating an ecole of storytelling. It is a free academy where women were educated, but at that time it was not possible to send girls to madrases or other institutions.

Three generations Evdal, Temo and Temo's son bring out a lineage of culture transfer. Oral culture is celebration of this *continuum*, as Evdal says his happiness is Kurdish language and songs.

The pastoral idealism of Kurdish oral and textual poems and stories reflect the agrarian character of Kurdish literature. *One Day of Evdalê Zeynikê* places the story of Xecê and Siyabend at the center and adds layers of interpretation that have been added over the years since the first narratives concerning their love story.

Another ineteresting fact about characters in the novel is the fact that they are absolutely good like Tahar Beg or absolutely evils like some Ottomans and their Kurdish collaborators. There is no neutrality of the narrator. It can be said that no author can be completely impartial, yet author's or narrator's view concerning his characters in this novel leaves no room for a discussion on character's goodness or badness as they are absolutely determined.

Kurdish Yezidis have been attracting modern Kurdish writers and scholars as they have pre-Islamic roots like Zarathustra belief. They are important to construct a nation that has pre-Islamic roots against a strong Sunni Orthodoxism which supports Arab or Turkish friendship based on religion.

One of example of such a Sunni-Muslim in the novel is Egid beg. He is another example of an absolutely bad character as he insulted Yezidis and the Yezidi mythology.

As stated before dengbêj narration is in principle based on style and formalistic tendencies shape the narrative as an oral vehicle of culture and originality is not important as it is for the novel. The conventional dengbêj narrative is the production of an aristocratic ideology. The conflict between aristocratic, conservative and secular ideologies is observed in Uzun's novels as this one. For antiquity similar assumptions can be put forward regarding class-audience relations. Apuleius's *Metamorphese* is one example.

> Oral storytelling creates a community, similarly to the way in which formal *recitationes* created an authorized community. Dupont suggests that these oral storytelling communities were produced in response to those elite, aristocratic literary communities (173). Literary culture was splitting apart, forming an aristocratic community through education and rhetors' declamation, and a decidedly non-aristocratic culture passed through these other venues (Gorman).

Poetics and politics of Uzun represented in his writings focus on the operation and elaboration of Kurdish textuality, his point of interest is to rewrite textual culture within new contexts, in doing so he adopts the language shaped by the early journals in Kurdish: "Early Kurdish literature was primarily poetic. Although a few examples of prose can be documented for the nineteenth century, Kurdish prose is largely the creation of journalism" (Hassanpour, 59).

III. II. *Death of an Old Rind*

There is a constant dialogue between the narrator, Serdar, and the character, Old Rind, in *Death of an Old Rind* as in *You*. Kurdish peasant and intelligentsia are practising art from different perspectives, they seek to reach a compromise between urban and rural culture, hence a compromise between textual and oral.

The story has a novella size and its tone is poetic and sentimental. Technical devices employed present clues on traditional and modern fiction. The text is again a central artifact shaping the thematic tendecies of the novel. A need for crafting texts in his own language is one of the narrator's desires when talking about his library in exile: " I looked at books, I really wanted that a very old book written in my language be there. I wanted it to share my loneliness" (41).

Like in Evdalê Zeynikê's case there is an old, blind man reminiscent of Borges. Rind represents someone who has a bohemian, vagabond life style and has a predominant place in Islamic, Middle Eastern culture. Rînd is a generic character in all Middle East poetry. Kurdish, Persian, Ottoman and Arabic poetry have rind characters and the most famous poet promoting Rind culture is Hafiz. In this novel, Yahya Kemal Beyatlı's poem "Death of Rinds" signifies that rinds share common aspects in all Midlle East culture.

The bohemian here is an artist without an inferiority complex: "I wouldn't say we are better than other societies. But our criterion is in harmony with us and our society and we act with regard to that" (51).

The main character, old rind, deals with music, art and poetry, which are some vehicles for revitalizing the past. The urban and provincial artists are men of literature, they discuss through letters literary matters like Melaye Cizîrî, a prominent Kurdish poet who

wrote poems in the traditional style. These names, poets from the classical period of Kurdish, appear in all of Uzun's novels.

The old rind is a cultivated one having a bohemian life. He travels in Europe and observes different cultures. Serdar, narrator in the novel becomes a writer later. Oral stories and love of reading follow him throughout his artistic pursuits. Serdar realizes that oral culture is not enough to awaken interest in reading.

Old rind records old stories he sings in bands, a transition from orality to textuality is obvious. An intertextual construction encapsulating European and Middle Eastern conventions of narrating, literary and pastoral idealism lie at the core of the novel.

III. III. *CALL OF THE TIGRIS*

Biro is the strongest dengbêj type among Uzun's characters. *Call of the Tigris* again discourses voice of text and textualization of voice. Dengbêj, memory and collective memory in the society from the perspective of storyteller or the narrator are presented. The narrator presents occasions from a rhetorical concern by discussing textual dimensions of the novel.

The narrator or protagonist focuses on a political figure, he has an admiration for the Bedirxan family and Mir who uprise against the Ottomans even though they were allies before. Endeavor for political correctness and morality in the novel create an uneasiness for Biro, protagonist and narrator of the novel. As well as its political dimension, themes of textual idealism and pure art lie in the prose and poetry of the work.

Stories and singing take place during special events called şevhubêrk or şevbêrk, which means spending the night together or night gathering. This is a socio-cultural event

through which folktales, romances, and songs are narrated. The only instrument used, albeit rarely, was a kind of flute contrary to Alevi culture in which saz-tanbour is permitted to be used. Sunni belief does not tolerate the use of instruments for entertainment. Only the tambourine has been favored, accompanying the human voice, for some Sufi gatherings. Most dengbêjs were also dervishes and Sufism played an important role in their literary views. Dervish types in Islamic Turkish and Kurdish culture has traditionally been favoured.

The novel discusses its system of storytelling. Writing a novel cannot happen spontaneously and the event of telling a story through a novel requires a long process and research is necessary for building a story. You cannot build a novel just based on imagination or inspiration that is its main differance from oral stories. Mehmed Uzun studied Mesopotemian and Latin-Greek culture before writing this novel. Latin poets and orientalists like Henry Layard seem to be helpful for him in order to understand the realities of Mesopotamian history.

Religions of the Middle East appear as one of the main themes throughout the novel. Generally, predominant orthodox Sunni belief is voiced by many dengbêjs in their stories as their listeners were religious people, and dengbêjs were respectful figures in Kurdish tribes as they told religious contes as well. Yet, even the act of dengbêj's storytelling is regarded as frivolous, so there are a lot of dengbêjs ceasing to sing after they return from the Hajj. Uzun attempts to overturn this traditional view of dengbêj by placing emphasis on the folkloric role which is cihefly entertainment.

Multi-culturality and Bedirxani Kurdish-Ottoman Emirate's position concerning religious diversity is contentious. In this novel, Biro evokes a multi-cultural Kurdistan, though Chaldee, Armenian and Yezidi massacres occurred at the time of Mir Bedirxan. He seems to

have a balanced attitude toward Mir and he has an admiration and respect for him. Yet massacres are also condemned without mentioning Mir's role.

Biro has humanist pursuits. He is both a bohemian dengbêj and studies at the most strict medresah of the Botan tribe, Medresa Sor, where cassocks were educated. This signifies a paradox. Biro criticizes Sunni orthodoxism but the most important texts of Kurdish literature are taught in this institution and most of their authors are Sunni-Muslim. Many verse narratives are scattered in the text. Almost all characters die and this is mentioned in the beginning. Fiction games mark the course of the plot. Biro wanders in a textual labyrinth and builds a language that is sensitive to the suggestions of Kurdish textual literature.

There were, some of them still stand, many medreses scattered around Kurdistan. The students were called feqî, feqe, suxte, agird or shagird in Kurdish. Some well-known medresahs are Sitrabas Medrese of Diyarbakır, the Red Medrese (Medresa Sor) Cizre, the Medrese of Bayezid and Medresah of Shemdinan. Medresahs of Ikhlasiye, Shukriye, Sherefiye and Shemsiye, Hizan, Bêdar, Müks, Findik, Akhtepe, Norshin, Gimgim, Farqîn, Hawêl, Siirt, Hasankeyf, Palu, Okhin, Van were some other historical educational institutions where Islamic studies were taught (Zinar). The language of education was Arabic but Kurdish and Persian were also important languages of study. Kurdish textual culture was kept alive through manuscripts of some classical texts that were read in those schools. Most of the nationalist figures of Kurdish culture were also educated at these institutions.

The narrator of the novel as well discusses Kurdish, Classical Persian, Latin-Greek and European literatures, but Turkish literature is not seen except for discussions on meddah between Biro and the Turkish soldier who takes him to İstanbul in captivity. Therefore Turkish literature has a signifying absence in this context. The absence of the Turkish literary

world can also denote the protagonist's apathy for Ottomans and Turks as they are regarded as the invaders of the Kurdish country.

Repetition and poetic prose pervade. Not events but poetic descriptions of objects, memories are stressed. Biro's voice is mystified, it encompasses all Kurdish tragedy: " My voice belongs to everybody, it is the voice of all things and epochs" (27). The question of how the ideal narration should be and artistic discussions dominate the course of dramatizations.

In dengbêj stories form and beauty of style are essential; story and narrative suspense fall behind them. Conventionally, modernist fiction and writing tend to ignore narrative suspense and thrill. However, as Umberto Eco puts it, reading a story, after all, means being seized by a tension, a thrill (13). Therefore in writing, forms employed change toward a new approach in which narrative suspense gains popularity.

Yezidi myths and the Yezidi holy book Mishefa Resh, Holy Black Book, Lalesh Valley, holy valley of Yezidis and God Azda and Meleke Tavis, the Devil symbolised by a peacock are important holy figures in Yezidi mythology and culture. Biro hides his identity by studying in a Sunni Medresah as a Yezidi. Like in *One Day of Evdalê Zeynikê*, Lalesh castle, Yezidi holy spaces are invoked. By giving knowledge on Yezidis, Uzun reminds readers of Yezidi.

Events and memories narrated are structured again by following a sequential order. The novel has quite unconventional characters like dengbêj Apê Xêlef, who in conservative Kurdish society enjoys his sexual adventures and liberties. Perhaps this is impossible in a traditional Kurdish society so Apê Xêlef is like a fantasy novel character.

Dengbêj's poverty and production is a problematic issue. He serves Mirs, agas, begs and still suffers from poverty. An artist serving noblemen is expected to have financial

prosperity contrary to Biro's case. There were rich and poor artists, naturally, in this 19th century Kurdish-Ottoman Cîzîra Botan Emirate.

The novel takes place at a time when relations between Kurds and Armenians became tense. However an Armenian character serves Mir and Mam sefo, as a consultant. Mam sefo is an Armenian who speaks " a very pure and literary Cîzîra Botan Kurdish"(59). He is an Armenian under the service of a noble Kurd and he embodies the cultural values of the Kurdistan and Kurdish language. Mam Sefo's role is tragic and ambivalent like Turkish-Armenians living in the 19th century Ottoman Empire. Some Armenians revolted and some prefered to remain loyal to Ottoman rule. A similar case exists for Mam Sefo though he ultimately remains loyal to Mir. Although he is an imaginary character, he has a tragic reality being caught up in betweenness.

When the narrator describes Mir's face, he reveals some facts about the economy, new society and the Emirate's positions and responses.

> From his face and looks you could see our new history, that would be also dome of my new life; unity, development, capital, peace, justice, independence and as a result of this new conflicts and clashes, especially against Ottomans who never want a powerful Mir in Kurdish land (75).

Alongside with Mir and Yezdin Sher, Sheikh Ubaydullay also revolts againts the Ottomans during Abdülhamit's reign after the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878. David McDowall defines him as "the first great Kurdish nationalist" (53). Ubeydullah was the head of the Nakshibendi order and wanted to found a Kurdish state with Christians living in the region.

Biro attempts to be the parlor/spokesman of Cîzîra Botan Kurds, in addition to his political and textual questions while studying at Medresa Sor. Accessibility of textual sources was limited to a narrow circle of scholars in medreses and their curriculum was limited in range as well, mostly to religious texts. However, classical poetry and mesnevis were among literary sources. Biro emphasizes Medresa Sor's historical role

> Almost all important names of Kurdish classical literature were cultivated in this medrese. Melaye Ciziri, who is famous for his Divan, studied, lectured as a medresah teacher, died and was buried here. Feqiye Teyran, a student of Melayê Ciziri, known for his poems and divan and who actually was a folk dengbêj, studied here (91).

More than a chain of events, this narrative is about how a dengbêj narrates. More than a story or novel, we have the impression that it is a dramatized essay collection on politics, history, narratives, and literature. However, all these prose, essay forms are organized and put into a textual unity.

There is a chapter entitled the voice of written narratives and oral narratives. For the narrator both have voices. Biro is shocked when he first sees "utterance in written form" (99).

Oral-textual controversy and the endeavour to compromise them occupies Biro: " The gate of knowledge through which I passed and reached the cultivated source of heart and mind, I have to say, tore apart both my heart and mind between oral and written narratives" (101).

Reading versus listening and writing versus speaking bring about radical shifts in literary styles. To catch up with poetry, prose will convey knowledge with better ways. Dramatized forms and structure of the incidents and rhetorical tasks will be more influential.

Biro's confrontation with text leads to a quest for perfection and the development of an artist is observed. The novel has bildungsroman features at times. Also, it is grotesque or naturalistic from time to time, especially in some sex and violence scenes which are almost pornographic.

The novel is also a Mesopotemian voyage. Kurdish parts of Mesopotomia are visited by the main characters. They discover their culture, past, geography, and identity. Kurdish speaking priests, Yezidis, and strange cultures for Sunni Kurds are investigated.

Mesopotamian mythology contains historical, cultural and symbolic knowledge of Arabic, Kurdish, Persian and Turkish civilizations. Some Kurdish writers and scholars tend to appropriate whole mesopotomian culture including Gilgamesh, at times neglecting the multiculturality of Mesopotamian mythology. Cemşit Bender as well sees Gilgamesh within Kurdish mythology. He states that according to E.Xemgin, before Noah's Arc docked at Mount Cudi, the name of the mountain was not that. It is Nezir or Nizir in old sources. After Noah's Arc arrived there the phrase Ci-di (Place-found in Kurdish) was used and this turned to Cudi which is the present name of the mountain (109). This might remind us of some Turkologues who claim that there are strong analogies between Turkish and Sumerian lexicons, hence languages. Finding analogies between ancient and modern language always raises problematic issues.

Criticism of closed Kurdish society is one of the novel's points of interest. It is interesting that Kurds are oppressed at that time but they have a semi-autonomous country. Cizira Botan Emirate in the 19th century and Kurds had the opportunity to enrich their textual culture as they had some educational institutions but in these schools Arabic and Persian were more important languages than Kurdish due to religious reasons. The 19th century was a period when Ottomans wanted to end Kurdish autonomy and strenghten centralization.

Word-voice tension is one of the main textual arguments which we find in all of Uzun's fiction. This tension appears as an essential subject shaping the form of Uzun's narratives. Tales and narratives that reflect interaction and tension between oral and textual do not forsake his protagonists as revealed in some quotations. The sentimental tone is all pervasive and the characters are in pain.

The setting of the novel shows variety. In the first volume of the novel events take place in Kurdish cities. However, in the second volume İstanbul, Crete and Damascus become exile cities where the novel takes place.

Finding similar traditions in terms of storytelling and use of language is one of the themes and is discussed in subplots of the novel: "The language of the Torah was the language of Dengbêjs of Jewish people, just like the language of Yezidi Holy book the Mishefa Reş, which is a language I know very well of Yezidi degbejs, qewal and feqirs" (47).

How a dengbêj should narrate, how he should achieve self-expression are critical conceptions the novel argues, and characters find themselves discussing the center of story they are in, which is the need for creating text or desire of textual involvement. Mam Sefo says: "For this reason, our people need the culture of word and narration" (67). Here, the narrator seems to adopt a didactic manner, he speaks like a didactic teacher, and promotes Armenian-Kurdish culture. Also the authenticity of dengbêj narration yields a dramatic, symbolic structure.

The novel's involvement with Yezidi myths and interest in Mesopotamian mythology are incarnated through Stêr's necklace and Melekê Tavis figures. Theological symbolism plays a remarkable part in constructing the symbolic layer of Uzun's fictionality.

After a direct quotation from a legend, Memê Alan, narrator gives the interior athmosphere of the novel which is the recurrent theme of his novels, desire for textualization and textual appearance in the fiction: "And maybe one day someone who knows literature and art of pen, which can turn orality to textuality, will hold the story of the hurt and record it in notes and books so that it can remain for each new epoch" (140). This shows why text is necessary for Biro the narrator and protagonist, who hides the artist or author behind his mask.

The conflict between religious and secular art is in the foreground and non-religious art is dominant. Actually, religions are evaulated in two categories: repressive and repressed ones. Yezidi, Chaldee, Nestorian, Jewish, Armenian Orthodox and Catholic are shown as repressed faiths and some strict interpretations of dominant Sunni belief represent a repressive one. Furthermore, in Uzun's novels taking place in the 20th century, the offical ideology of the Turkish republic becomes an apparatus of pressure.

A qualified and mature oral narrator is expected to grow students. Biro gives advice to listeners and young dengbêjs, it is to simplify their voices, words and expressions (173). But whether the novel has a pure style and language remains controversial, contrary to Biro's advice, novel tends to elaborate language and expressions. An evolutionary language is put under an experiment through a textual operation.

Another reason for repetitive acts is put into words by the narrator: "Life repeats itself oh hearers, world, events, time, age and fortune recur. That's why utterance, narrative and words are being repeated" (176). This thought can explain repetitions in the novel to some degree, life is circular and the narrative is too.

Relativity of stories and insertion meanings in narratives alongside with a subejctive notion of text within a cultural discussion about word, voice, utterance and discourses are presented.

Biro's choice among three beautiful girls and his relationships with them as well as his statements about idealist and realist love is among subplots of the novel. Finally, he chooses the Jewish girl Stêr, whom he saves from the Jewish massacre, as his wife. His manner of choosing among three beautiful girls is criticized and the situation also to some degree reveals questions concerning women in the Middle East.

Biro has an indecisive voice about authority, sometimes he criticizes mirs, begs, sometimes he praises Mir of Cîzîra Botan. His relation to religious text is more coherent. Throughout the novel literary production is regarded as sacred, texts produced for the purpose of literary or philosophical entity are more stressed instead of old religious ones. Also a literary connection between Greek and Mesopotamian culture is pursued and reflected by writings of Xenofon, Herodot.

At the end of the novel, a murder story is narrated, the plot shifts its ground and gains a detective novel characteristic. A mystery is created concerning who might have killed Stêr and a crime-thriller effect, a new genre appears surprisingly.

Frequently, the relationship between a politician and an artist, an engaged relationship, reminiscent of the patronage system of the Medieval Ages is not something to be found strange in Uzun's novels. Mir tried to be the new saladin, but failed. He was another ideal Kurdish leader indicating that the Kurds are in search of a savior.

Utterance and word as mystic statements exist in *Call of the Tigris* which is problematized during the novel. Finally as in *One Day of Evdalê Zeynikê* the struggle between

absolute good and absolute evil mark the typology of the novel. Hêmê, who kills Stêr, is an example of absolute villain while characters like Mam Sefo represent absolute good.

Being the voice of forgetten people, Biro takes the reader into a fictional-textual realm. At the end numerical symbolism constructed by seven is applied. Construction of text, organization of plots, opposition between good and evil and many subplots transforming narrative are shaped by terms like gotin (utterance), word, and text.

IV. CULTURE AND POLITICS

IV. I. *SHADOW OF LOVE*

To form a storytelling framework in which history can be represented is the pivotal argument of the *Shadow of Love* and *The Well of Destiny*. In these two documental works of fiction Uzun's characters migrate from texts to text, these two novels are denotations of this.

In most of his novels, characters and stories are connected to each other. They are relatives and comrades. Memduh Selim is Celadet Ali Bedirxan's friend. Celadet's grandfather Mîr Bedirxan is important figure of *Call of the Tigris*. It is evident that Mehmed Uzun studied the biographies and historical background for these two novels.

Memduh Selim is a Kurdish intellectual born in Van. In the beginning of the novel Memduh Selim's deathbed is described. He is in agony and experiencing flashbacks like Artemio Cruz's or Virgil's death are seen. He is also a man of exile. The narrator depicts him as a European Kurdish intellectual. European culture, especially French, is one of the pillars of his intellectual life like many other Ottoman writers, artists educated in İstanbul.

It is not biographical, the novel does not narrate his whole life story from birth to death but focuses on certain events. The combination of factual and fictional construct the plot of the story, it is not a "fictive biography." Many historical events are reflected throughout the novel. History, fiction and biography make their marks on the novel by making use of different perspectives.

> History is more often concerned with humanity in the plural than in the singular, with events and changes affecting entire societies, than those affecting the lives of individual beings. For this reason biography is often regarded as a minor historical genre, and by some even as "a simple form of historiography." Within fiction, by contrast, plots that center on the lives of single, more or less singular individuals shape the dominant generic modes known in French by the *roman de l'individu,* in German by the term *Figurenroman* (Dorrit, 18).

Besides having tendencies for writing poems and essays, Uzun attached importance to reinforce the Kurdish novel. His friend Steen evaluates his case: "Mehmed Uzun found his ideal narrative form in the novel. The novel is a bastard in a sense, because one uses parts that remind us of essays, poetic passages, dialogues and any literary narrative and time as he wishes to recount the ideas he wants to convey through a novel (Steen, 135). To develop textual possibilities of the Kurdish language and to construe new narrative paradigms in this language characterize his poetics.

Shadow of Love's character, as a text, is related to actantial representations of real characters within a "textual property." Realism of the novel is sought in realistic descriptions.

> "… "no textual property, syntactical, or semantic (or, consequently, narratological), that will identify a text as a work of fiction," because the

> fictional narrative is purely and simply a pretense or a simulation of factual narrative. The novelist, for example, plainly pretends to be telling a true story without seriously attempting to make the reader believe it, but also without leaving the slightest textual trace of that character of non serious simulation (Genette, 57).

The question of who is speaking, author, narrator or hero, marks the quest for voice. Voices can be determined by their narrative positions and distance in a story. The author's involvement and narrator's role have always been an ambiguous issue: "I am not sure that I remain within the bounds of narratology itself in evoking, under the heading of questions voice ("Who is speaking?"), the always thorny topic of the relations between narrator and author" (Genette, 69).

Historical events get included in the narrative from the beginning of the novel, the matter is familiar: Kurdish independence movements. Wilson's principles contained articles that could have led to the autonomy of Kurds and the narrator reminds readers of this: "Wilson principles, monsieur, Wilson principles… they are so important" (28).

Uzun's narrators seek an intertextual construction as well as political remarks and references to historical-political realities. The reference to Kavafis's line on Alexandria (33) is that these literary and political-historical experiences and interpretations are naturally purely subjective. When the narrator says "For a few years there has been a hope for Kurds to found a state" (34) He manifests his desire for a free Kurdistan. The Kurdish issue is an international one as France, Turkey, and Arabs discuss the Kurdish question.

Flashbacks and free associations develop new experiences from traditional narrative structures. The story begins from the deathbed and even in this "modern" novel the narrator refers to old epics.

> Binevşa Narin, epic of Binevşa Narin… Whenever he recalls it… He doesn't know why but that beautiful girl in the romance comes to his memory. Gazelle and Binevşa Narin… "*Man, Binevşa is a very pretty girl, her beauty cannot be compared to anyone. When she stands up thirty-three curves appear in her body. She has black eyes like ink on a paper; her forehead is broad like the moon over the sky; the scent of thirty-three kinds of peddlar perfumes are spread through her bosom and side* (50).

The old Kurdish story is told by a dengbêj through a musical style. The style is florid, poetic and sometimes exeggerated in typical dengbêj style. Memduh Selim also loves someone, a Circassian girl, and the relationship between Feriha and Memduh culminates in a disappointing love story, and this corresponds to his situation. After that the narrator starts to recount events in Memduh Selim's life using a linear narrating. The time sequences are 1922, 1925, 1927, 1930 and so on. There is a specificity in setting, correlation of time, linear movement and sequential ordering of time. Uzun focuses the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s.

Memduh Selim and Celadet Bedirxan discuss cultural issues in one of their meetings. This time the issue is the new alphabet: "Arabic alphabet or letters are suitable for the Kurdish language" (60). Uzun's two characters' lives intersect. Two publishers, politicians, and activists criticize Turkey's oppression of the Kurdish language and culture by emphasizing the need for action, resistance, and the unity of Kurds their decision to establish Xoybun (63). Xoybun had fierce battles with Turkish army. İhsan Nuri Pasha's military effort is

emphasized. Zîlan events, fights with Turks, the Ağrı rebellion take place and as as result of these Memduh bey becomes a political refugee as well.

French influence is pervasive. Lebanon and Syria, where most of the novel takes place, are in the hands of the French and this is reflected in their meeting: " Fine and delicate French women" (72). "…the air of the meeting is affective and sentimental" (82).

The Kurdish culture needs new heroes for liberation. Memduh Selim is depicted as one of them and associated with Alexander (83). Unlike Mîr Bedirxan who was an ideal political and military leader, Memduh Selim has. Cultural objectives.

The books he reads give clues about his literary taste and Flaubert's novels delight him: "These three books on the table arrived from France: *Novembre, L'education Sentimentale and Madame Bovary*" (102).

One more structural point and choice of language is about the use of excessive juxtaposition of words, images, and adjectives which indicates the operation of repetitive actions. Further, there is a tendency for "pure Kurdish" which is crystallized by this discussion in the novel: "Why don't you use dîrok? Dîrok is a pure Kurdish word that is clear and nice…" (151). Dîrok is a Kurdish word meaning history, an alternative word for it is tarîx which is of Arabic origin. Consciousness of language is what passes through Selim's mind while thinking about the state of affairs.

Major Collet and Memduh Selim are together. Major Collet is a French officer. When Memduh Selim is told not to get involved in politics anymore, he begins to laugh and states: " He should turn from Aristotle and read Moliére" (181). The state of affairs compel him to reflect upon black humor both for himself and the history of Kurdistan. A few lines from Daniel von Czepko, in *Sexcenta Monodisticha Sapientum* (1655), are voiced: "In the

beginning of the 1900s he had read a book by H.A. Giles; *Chuang Tzu*. In the book Chuang Tzu has been dreaming for 2500 years. In his dream, he is a small cuckoo and flying" (183). Different references from world literature, some of which are old texts, are presented by means of free associations.

Memduh Selim's position as an individual in the face of social and historical events fluctuate. "Social and historical figuration" of the character, the novelist's sense of historical reality, biography and novel, factual and fictional and theme of textuality mark the poetics in the novel.

The narrator addressing Memduh Selim again reveals his literary taste and background:" He was raised with Kurdish, Eastern and Western classics"(206). The amalgam of three cultures is placed at the surface of the novel. The last pages are on disappointing efforts by Kurdish activists. Despite military failures and other disappointing events, literature, old Kurdish texts always bolsters his morale .

Historiography, biography, text and the novel constitute literary combinations that enable the author to create a "a system of signification." These genres and elements create Uzun's poetics in this novel.

> Likewise for Riffaterre, every element in the text has significance and the coherence of the system of signification that the text employs is a mark of its "literariness." Yet while historical narratives are also literary artifacts, it would seem far fetched to say that references to reality are selected and discarded by the historian simply on the basis of their fittingness to the story to be told, as elements either suited or unsuited to the chosen narrative (although the example from White's analysis of Adam's autobiography would certainly

> support this idea). Thus the historian's commitment to referentiality should, it would seem, be reflected in the system of signification (Pihlainen).

Shadow of Love signifies fictional construction of a real character's life story. Intertextuality becomes a dominant vehicle for representing literary evolution of text in both local and universal levels.

IV. II. *THE WELL OF DESTINY*

Mehmed Uzun incorporates textual and visual thinking in this novel. We are aware of the time and place, as the exact years and dates of events are given. Ironically the character and author together narrate the novel. Compared to *Shadow of Love*, *The Well of Destiny* has a more biographical character. The novel's textuality is based on images that stimulate the narrator's imagination and focus on the important events in Celadet Bedirxan's life from birth to death. Objects, people, and places in these pictures are concrete memories but in the hands of a narrator they are also the source of imagination and nostalgia. Here, imagistic texture permeates into his poetics and an allusive style persists. The point of view shifts at times from third person to first person indicating the degree of distance between author-narrator or protagonist. Distinction between telling and showing is apparent when showing artistry of the work.

> Since Flaubert, many authors and critics have been convinced that "objective" or "impersonal" or "dramatic" modes of narration are naturally superior to any mode that allows for direct appearances by the author or his reliable spokesman. Sometimes, as we shall see in the next three chapters, the complex issues involved in this shift have been reduced to a convenient distinction

between “showing,” which is artistic, and “telling” which is inartistic (Booth, 8).

Uzun is in *his camera lucida*, interpreting pictures and showing his artistry. Long, detailed, physical descriptions and repetitions of adjectives, words, expressions, musicality, poetricality of language again construct the style of the narrator. The novel is a visual text in many senses.

The development of the Kurdish culture is the constant pursuit of narrator: “Mithat was following the footsteps of his father. He bestowed upon the Kurds a newspaper” (48). Mikdat Mithat is Celadet’s uncle, he founded the first Kurdish newspaper “Kurdistan” in Cairo.

Celadet Bedirxan became the father of the Latin-Kurdish alphabet with Roger Lescot. Celadet is motivated by his new insights and fresh cultural activities to Kurdish culture. Celadet’s and his brothers’ patriotic feelings are influenced by their grandfather Mir Bedirhan’s efforts, one of Uzun’s characters in *Call of the Tigris.*

An organic relationship between two authors, Mehmed Uzun and his author hero Celadet concerns language and the structure of novel indicates the literary zeal they show: “ …the relationship of Amojna Sitî with *the Well of Destiny* is about the language of the novel. Prince Celadet wanted to write his novel in Kurdish. Now, *the Well of Destiny* is being written in Kurdish” (51).

Amojna Sitî is a çirokbêj unlike many dengbêj narrators in Uzun’s novels. She is the storyteller of the family, representing home based literary events. Bedirxan’s relationship with Kurdish is shaped by Amojna Sitî’s (Aunt Sitî) impact. The folktales told by her become lodestars for his literary pursuits.

Bedirxan's brothers' first Kurdish lesson with written literature is a manuscript of Ehmedê Xâni's famous work *Mem û Zîn*. It is found in Mir Bedirxan's library in Cîzîre and there is a poem in it by Heci Qadiré Koyi, another nationalist Kurdish poet who lived in the 19th century and who was teacher of Emin Bey (Celadet's father) and his brothers (56). In accordance with Xanî's and Koyi's nationalist appeals Bedirxan's brothers are aware of the need for a leader who will unite Kurdish tribes. Abdülhamit's pan-Islamist policies are based on strategies to prevent the potential danger of seperation:" Kurds and Prince Bedirhan's family are our Muslim brothers. We are nearest and dearest…" (61). The rise of nationalism in Ottoman Empire is reflected through Celadet's perspective.

The novel is composed of pictures and interpretations of pictures. Each chapter exhibits and decodes a picture concerning different periods of Celadet's life. The fourth Picture examines pictures as historical documents: "Isn't a photograph itself in a sense history?" (90). A kind of immortality is achieved through photographs: "Death one more time suggests the immortality of the photograph" (126). The text can also be timeless, immortal writing-image interaction provide this interpretation.

The appearance of Greek poets in *Call of the Tigris* is associated with the narrator's interest in antiquity. In this novel Ovid and some other Latin poets attract Mehmed Uzun.

At the time of postwar policies regarding the Kurds in the Ottoman Empire, Memduh Selim Bey's magazine Jîn was publishing articles supporting Wilson's principles. Celadet's trip with Major Noel at the same time is a source of inspiration for his literary ambitions as well as political aims:"…if I had enough strenght, I'd love to novelize my trip" (145) he says to reveal his textual ambitions.

The sense of nature and winter in Kurdish cities visited during the trip are depicted. Major Noel writes his notes on his trip in English and publishes them in Basra in 1922 (147). British interests in the Kurdish part of Ottoman Empire, post-war engagements, and political conditions of the time are in the foreground.

The seventh picture narrates Celadet Bedirhan's next exile location. He is in Germany now reading German literature and culture, Goethe, Mahler. The narrator is sentimental and the narrative frame inspires nostalgia and a predominating rhytm. There, Celadet and his German girlfriend Monika discover their interest in Nietzchean philosophy. Celadet has also interest in Ovid, French and Western literature.

The real life story of a character with some fictional scenes in it can express a novel's character to a certain degree. That the novel is self reflexive reminds the reader of this fact: " There is a thin bridge, as thin as Sırat Bridge, between fiction and real life. That bridge can definitely be called "the bridge of dream and imagination." (163). The impact of religion and the use of religious symbols in language conjure up a bridge between literary and religious contes. *Sirat* is the thin bridge which, according to Islam, will be passed on Judgement Day by every person. It is said that it is as thin as a hair.

There are references toVictor Hugo's poem: "A ceux qui sont morts pour la patrie", to Lamartine: "le poete mourant" to Alfred du Vigny: "La mort du loup", and Charles Baudelaire:"Le balcon" (166) and to many other Kurdish epics, German and Latin writers which indicate the positing of the intertextual dimension in the novel. In this regard, Bedirxan's brothers act as intermediaries between East/Kurdish culture and West European culture: "Their manners are a bit Eastern/Kurdish, but greatly European. Their education and cultivation have made them act as a bridge between two worlds" (171).

The patriotism of Kamuran is associated with a cultural task: “I take that doctorate for my country. But where’s my country? (173). Safter and Celadet are translating poems from French to Kurdish: “How nice… We are going to translate a lot of poems into Kurdish that needs to be developed and renovated” (176). Many quotations and remarks by characters signify new literary and textual appeals shared by them.

One interesting point in terms of the relationship between protagonist and author is that one of the writers of the novel is also Celadet, the protagonist. He says, addressing the Kurdish question: “ There was no hope in the political arena. We always asserted: Language. Writing and reading in our language, with small letters. To Publish books, magazines, and newspapers…(178).

Meeting Jewish passengers on the ship, a conversation between Celadet and Jewish passengers about the oppressed languages takes place: “Language is the spirit of us, the Jewish” (190). Jews and Kurds were two people sharing a similar destiny in the thirties when this conversation took place.

Memduh and Celadet meet in Beirut discussing Jîn and İstanbul memories. The Şex Said uprising takes place at the same time and Said is hanged in Diyarbakır. Celadet’s passion for narrating abd creating text grows stronger “To whom could I narrate my father and his life and how, where could I write that?” (202). The tension between orality and textuality arises in this novel narrating modern history, too. The problems of Kurdish textuality is determined: there is a lack of readers educated in Kurdish.

Similar to *Shadow of Love*, the story tells again about Kurdish people gathering around Xoybun. The tenth Picture is about Xoybun that rebel against the Turks. In the 1920s and 1930s as Celadet puts it in the novel Kurdish people and society could think, live, and act

Kurdish and they were still not assimilated (215). That is why Xoybun could change Kurds' political and cultural history. Educated, modern Kurds like Celadet criticize Kurds' traditional rules, although Celadet's family has tribal ties too, urban-rural, cultured-peasant conflicts surface: "Kurds still don't know orgnanized struggle, they still assess isssues according to tribal rules…" (217).

As the "Citizens, Speak Turkish" campaign in Kurdish cities emerged and the means of cultural oppression intensified, Celadet is criticized for his westenized mentality and life because he drinks and has extramarital affairs with women.

Being unsuccessful in political and military endeavours, Celadet turns towards cultural struggle. The eleventh picture narrates Hawar's story. He was raised and educated in the Ottoman capital, İstanbul, yet he is estranged to the Ottoman culture due to exiles, changes in his intellectual life and this is reverberated in his visage: "His beard is not of the Ottoman style, it is European intellectual style: neat, well-kept" (234).

Celadet's room in Damascus is depicted, he is among his notebook, book, newspaper, magazine, pen and beard in Damascus, a country of Arab civilisation, a "Européen" Kurdish intellectual" (235) is seen in this contradictory situation which specifies an obsession of Europanization.

Perhaps Hawar is the first influential Kurdish magazine: "At that Kurds started to be recorded" (241). The textualization of Kurdish culture and Hawar's impact on this event is pointed out. And again Kurds are criticized for neglecting Hawar: "Kurds did not comprehend the significance of this magazine" (245). Celadet Bey and Ehmedé Fermanê Kîkî were two important literary figures of the magazine. One represents modern and the other traditional,

yet they are in search of compromise (247). Without Kîkî's voice and words: "it'd be impossible to weave *the Well of Destiny*" (251).

Abdülhamit's aim was to keep together Kurds and Turks by means of religous ties. This view was not appreciated by Kurdish intellectuals. "Oppressed nations preserve their existence through weapons: Language and religion… If the oppressed and oppressor have the same religion, then you have only one weapon in hand: language…" (272). Religion and language determine the relationship between oppressed nation and her oppressor. Ireland doesn't use Gaelic anymore, but her religion or church is different.

Regarding marriage issues, Celadet gets married to a domestic housewife, who is his widowed cousin Ruşen. She is a Kurdish woman after his affairs with Monika and Canan. Marrying to relatives is permitted and used to be common among Kurds. The purpose of marriage with relatives depended on the situation but the most important one was to reinforce family ties and economy.

Hawar's venture continues and in spite of criticism it is: "…platform of the People" (288). Yet the Kurds' ignorance and enmity (290) still goes on against themselves according to the narrator. "Hawar's 3 years, 3 months, 3 days of story was doomed like many other stories recounting the Kurd's destiny" (291).

A new attempt to write "the first Kurdish novel" by Celadet: "Can I have a better day to start to write the first Kurdish novel?" (294) A craving for textualization is evident. Regarding Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, Celadet comments: " When are Kurds going to write a novel like that? Can't I try such a thing?" (296). He tries to write a novel entitled *Heyveron*, meaning fullmoon.

Commenting on photographs and images continue. Taking photos was regarded as sin by some Muslims in the early times of photograph taking (305). The fourteenth photo narrates Ruşen and Celadet and their ongoing marriage. Language persists to be the pivotal discussion: "…language subsists on three basic principles: Alphabet, grammer and dictionary…" (306). Roger Lescot and Celadet together focus Kurdish grammer and publish a grammar book. Meanwhile Ultra-nationalism in the Turkish press is rising.

The focus of the Narrative again shifts and the distinction between showing and telling in the text is stressed: " Pity, photographs don't talk, they just show" (332). Text can both be shown and narrated.

One important political event for Kurds mentioned in the novel is Mahabat's rise and fall after World War 2, in 1946. A socialist organization, Komala, played an important role in founding this short-lived Kurdish republic in Iran. In this atmosphere, Celadet compares his father to Garibaldi: "Grandpa, Garibaldi of Kurds…" (340). Memories and melancholy accompany political and historical discussions.

Kurdish society in Damascus and lives of agas, beys, mullah are portrayed. Generally, they are criticized because of their feudal ties and set of relations. After listening to an erotic, funny story by Müslüm aga he says: "Their job was telling tales. They only tackled tales. Reading, writing, meditating, creating work, civilization… They were away from such things" (356). Complaining about Kurds' average intellectual level, Celadet feels alienated from his people and their "narrow" sense of humor.

The last photograph is about death, taken in 1951, after 58 years of life. After failed *Heyveron*, he wants to write *the Well of Destiny*: "My life had begun beside a well and now it

was coming to an end beside another well" (388). Irony in wells mark the end of a turbulent life.

The novel is chiefly interpretating and depicting photographs which suggests it is getting involved in images. So the reading of the image is a textual problem: "… there remains the problem of ideological (in the very wide sense of the term) or ethical connotation, that which introduces reasons or values into the reading of the image.(Barthes, 29). Ethichs and ideology of image is hidden in this text by Mehmed Uzun and there is an invitation to visualize. Text is also a process of demonstration and an activity of production (Barthes, 157).

Image is one of the substances of the text. It exists in narratives with its unique principles and the narrative's boundaries are not definite as Barthes states: "Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances (79).

V. EPIC IN THE AGE OF NOVEL

Can *Light Like Love Darkness Like Death* be studied in a chapter discussing the interaction between epic and novel? The novel is primarily on war and love, a meditation on text and symbolism of literature. The structural consequences for a narrative and text are taken into consideration it is seen that the novel's pursuits lead to a discussion on literary genres and epic.

Third person narration is applied and the narrative point of view is reflected using memories as flashbacks in the plot. Questions of who tells the story and how the story is told seem to occupy the narrator's mind. The story is constructed chapter by chapter, it can be counted in the lineage of realistic fiction. The descriptive and poetic characteristics of the

novel are observed through the repetition of adjectives, sounds and sights which form a poetic effect. The narrative is produced and positioned within this framework.

It does not have a real direct referent. Uzun could be saved from being persecuted because of the fact that the novel does not have a real direct referent and it takes place in an imaginary country. He used this argument in his defence speech against punishment for writing this book.

Many questions are posed by the narrator: "Baz is baffled; what kind of strange feelings are those arising from her? Are these sensations of death that arise from her? What shall Baz do, what shall he say?" (19) Many other questions continue to be posed pondering the existential process of the characters.

The novel can be read as an allegory of the current political and military situation of Turkey. General Serdar represents the military character of Turkey. The Great country and the mountain country are also allegorical names representing the the situation in Turkey.

Baz (falcon) and Kevok (dove) form an antimony that completes with one another. The wild and innocent nature of their human character is reflected through their symbolic names. Dreams and reality are mixed to some degree. The relation to Turkey's realities are exhibited in the scenes of the evacuation of villages and peasants forced to migrate. The devastation of the ecosystem of Kurdish villages due to war and trauma from are discussed in detail.

The prohibition of Kurdish texts and publications in Kurdish is at the surface of the narrative: "Many journals, magazines, books and publications have been prohibited" (54). "However, in the beginning of the dead man's life there is a new and alive life mode; and one of those dead is hero of our novel" (75). The novel begins narrating death, the heros' destinies

are given in the beginning, and the reader is aware of their death which is a kind of dramatic irony.

Death, exile and darkness cultivate grotesque atmosphere and an unwholesome, pathological relationship between Baz and Mader (an old wise woman). This relationship gives rise a mutilated experience. Mader is an old fallen woman and mistress of a soldier, Baz. Mader means mother in Persian and like other names in the novel, it has been emblematized.

A quotation from the novel presents French reality and influence. Considering that the novel is an allegorical novel taking place in two imaginary countries, Welatê Mezin and Welatê Çîya, appearance of France besides two symbolic countries in the text mark the characters' interest in French culture and its historical, cultural penetration.

> Kevok and Jîr are students. Both of them study in the faculty of French language and literature. It is Jîr's fourth, Kevok's third year. The fact that they study French is not without reason. The French language and literature is quite important for the Great Country. Some cities of which, like Antakya, were a French colony about- more or less- six years. The administrative, political and social organization and system of the country, almost all institutions, were devised according to France. The influence of French language, culture, literature, thought, and codes can be seen quite obviously (97).

The course of the French rule in the cities of Turkey and Syria, an Ottoman province before WWI, was not the same in all occupied cities. In most of the cities that are in Turkey now it lasted about three years from 1918 to 1921, until the Ankara Treaty. Contrary to the

author's statement, Antakya was under French rule for about 20 years from 1918 to 1938, not for six years.

Victor Hugo's poems on patriotism in three languages, French, Turkish and Kurdish, lures Jîr and Kêvok. Cultural problems worry them: "Isn't langauges our country tred down? Aren't our language of fathers and ancestors, our culture, our very existence under brutal menaces? Aren't they getting lost?" (109). The narrator is also a part of this questioning of literature and asks: "Why do all these mountain people sing strans all the time" (135). Self-reflexivity of the novel occupies an important place in the narrator's symbolic representation of real life events.

Formulations on the meaning of epic and its relation to the novel has been argued by many critics. Especially in the 19th century, the novel was regarded as a modern perpetuation of the epic by Hegel, Henry Fielding and many others. Although it is not stated and represented too explicitly, this novel as well has reflections on the connection between the novel and epic genres. Thus, discussions on literary forms and genres reach a point where the narrative itself is analyzed in terms of its function.

> What's literature? If literature can't be the song of light and life, then what's literature for? If literature can't regenerate words, make words lively and with the help of lively words enlighten the world; then the function of literature, *quand mêmê,* in my opinion, lies in that (153).

Literature should have a function. A didactic view of the narrator appears again, the language used is reminiscent of an epic style: "…with this language of epos…" (141). The characters have three languages: Welate Mêzin's language, Welate Çîyaye's language, and French and all have interest in literary issues like epic as it is stated in the novel: "Literature,

novel should be illuminating, sprinkle light" (159). " You must know epic of Gilgamesh, I guess, you've heard it?" (159). The epic, its language, style, and intertextual connections all surface, literature and light have the same meaning in the literary context expressed here. The epic is not just a poetic style and oral but also an expression and narration of aesthetic and culture, therefore it is also a literary culture.

The criticism of the lack of old epics and folklore in "modern" literature is put into question addressing modern society and its literature for it despises epics and folklore : " In the spanking literature that you create, the name of that epope is 'folklore.' And folklore, for you, is not fine literature. This kind of discourse is of barbars" (160). The association of epic and barbaric cultures existing in the subconscious of the "civilized" world is raised by Uzun in this novel. However, In another novel, *the Well of Destiny*, Celadet criticizes Kurds for not using and adapting conventions of modern literature.

Baz becomes a woman warrior and guerilla. She is the only female protagonist created by Mehmed Uzun. There are a few novels depicting Kurdish guerilla life. One of them is Mehmet Sebatlı's *The Hurricane Battalion* (*Kasırga Taburu*) which narrates lives of Kurdish rebels and depicts events from the perspective of the PKK. It does not have psychological reflections like Uzun's novel. Yet, war and the epic, individual sacrifice, and human life for the community are one of the themes of their narratives.

Kevok is recalling *Gilgamesh*'s story and his struggle. *Gılgamesh* is appearing as an Ur-narrative or source narrative in the story, Gilgamesh is perhaps the oldest written epic.

The new environment in which Kevok lives is described: "Mountain, that legend of rebel…" (231). Actually, she is questioning war, as she is not an ardent fighter but has a rebellious character.

Similar to Uzun's other novels, there is almost no narrative suspense. It is more like a long poem and elegy and we are aware of the end fitting for dramatic irony. The narrative apparatus is structurally determined by this irony. Kevok is "twice estranged", first while learning Turkish (language of Welatê Mezin in the novel), then while learning French. Both instances move her away from her native culture and language, yet Kevok is deeply influenced by the French language and French poets voicing freedom.

Baz, an officer in the Welatê Mezin's military, is tired of war, too. Mostly, epic narratives reflect wars. Some critics regard Tolstoy's novels as epics too because they narrate several stories in a text and have a wide array of types and characters. So, in Tolstoy's case, the emphasis is not on themes like war, love and heroic deeds, but on his storytelling manner and the extensity of his narrative scope. Here, in this novel, we have fewer characters and layers of narrative but the novel tends to create a grand narrative which aims to reflect the current political situation and its impact on people.

The relationship between Baz and Kevok Baz gains a new characteristic over the course of the novel. Baz is influenced by what Kevok sings and writes. Kevok writes poems and takes notes on the mountain. Her need for art is dominant.

Reading her writings Kevok says: "The stuff I've written is not dream or nonsense. Burning villages, trees and forests, murdered people, screams you hear all are facts, facts of this country" (302). The social realist perspective of Kevok's writings appear. Like *You*'s protagonist Kevok needs writing and creating a text. She comments on her own themes, there is text within text. Kevok can write in Kurdish.

The narrator poses questions to himself. They are about memory, the transmission of culture, and cultural problems. The detachment of Baz from the general understanding of

Kurdish/Wêlatê Çiyaye reality is another significant detail. He contradicts Wêlatê Mezin's official view on the issue. The class in power wants to destroy Wêlatê Çiyaye's culture and literature.

The French translation of *Gilgamesh* and some quotations are sent to the writer by Kevok in a carte-postale. She is requesting help from a mysterious writer by means of the oldest written epic. This is a situation which corresponds to the novel's pursuits: source of narrative and storytelling manners developed since the oldest epics. This indicates a meditation upon what literature is. Literature is associated with light, death, and resistance.

This novel byUzun has thematic affinities with "epics." It is a war story and its language is reminicient of epic narratives and contains many repetitions. The style is eloquent. But characters have a modern sensibility and psychological insights. The style is characteristic of the epic but the characters are not.

In the age of the epic, new concepts and themes have been associated with new gods and heroic deeds of characters mark the narratives concerning.

> The concept of the hero as well undergoes a transformation parallel to concept of god; it adopts new dimensions, but doesn't entirely abandon its old qualities. Therefore in epics we come across certain cultural layers that are seperate, at times conflicting, from each other. The essence of the Heroic Age is belligerency, and all old heroes struggle to adapt to the aspirations of this new order (Belge, 421).

The new novel versus the old epic, heroes of dark ages and the fragmented mind of modern man are observed from characters, events and situations in the novel. The text's

emerging relationship with the epic and the questioning of narrative fiction constitutes the corpus of this work.

The novelization of the epic and other genres is in close relationship with the use of language and literary vehicles. Traditional art, an artist's skill, and renewing form are put into practice in the event of making a novel.

> They become more free and flexible, their language renews itself by incorporating extraliterary heteroglossia and the "novelistic" layers of literary language, they become dialogized, permeated with laughter, irony, humor, elements of self-parody and finally- this is the most important thing-the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality (the openended present) (Bakhtin, 7).

Layers of fiction in novels servet o engulf the structure of the novel. It is evident that a novel's textual dynamics are determined by the history of literature and epics.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation tackled the manner of the novel's structure and storytelling as well as textuality in all of Mehmet Uzun's fiction because all of his novels present patterns, themes and representation giving clues to textual dynamics of fiction.

Uzun's narrators and characters predominantly struggle with superstructual matters like culture, ideology, philosophy, religion, political structures, and the power of the state.

However, the role of infrastructural problems like relations and modes of production are not predominant in his texts.

Uzun's characters employ their vernacular and attempt to compare their culture with Western culture. Nevertheless, a strong tie between the two does not exist and the gap between the humble textual heritage of Kurdish culture and the long history of Western textual culture creates a disharmony in his texts. His characters try to close this gap hastily. Also, his characters are too involved in politics and as a result fiction, literature, and dramatization stay in the background.

Based on this investigation it can be said that all of Mehmet Uzun's protagonists are political and literary essayists and artists. Biro, Bedirxanis, Memduh Selim, Evdalê Zeynikê, the old rind and Serdar are writers, artists, politicians and their views are realistic representations yielding to the fictionalization of historical discourse.

Uzun's writings and texts are more under the influence of the dengbêj aesthetic which is more formalist and less influenced by the çîrokbej aesthetic. It is too obvious that the dengbêj tradition and aesthetic is more penetretive in his poetics, but a comparison of this style with the çîrok narrational conventions discloses Uzun's certain stylistic preferences that are not at the surface of his plots. Thus, this inquiry also discussed to what degree Mehmet Uzun's narratives were influenced by these two main structures of narratives that have existed for centuries in three main dialects of Kurdish culture. Both styles manifest critical differences in terms of stylistic construction of a text, and this comparison could construe one of the standpoints of Uzun's storytelling, hence his textual creation.

The elaboration of literary Kurdish predominates his texts. However, music and dance are more influential and operative than literature and cinema in terms of representing and

expressing Kurdish culture in Turkey due to opressions on the use and institualization of language.

Textuality is one of the determining, perhaps the most pervasive, contexts of his writings. His protagonists/narrators recurrently argue text and textuality as stated in the above chapters. They discuss their textual organizations, problematize tension between orality and textuality and create an imaginary universe for the narratee or the reader. Also, how a text, narrator should be is handled by means of the dengbêj characters in his novels.

A stylistic and thematic analysis conducted in this dissertation focused on how Uzun narrated his novels. That is to say, my inquiry analyzed the means of narration, sources of narration, ideological and intertextual connections he employed in his creative, fictional process. The question of narrative *per se* was predominant. The narrator's or author's voice can be found in the character's mind. That is a similarity his protagonists share. There is a search concerning what narrator seeks, as in the case of Uzun's dengbêjs: "The dengbêjs themselves have similarly produced contradictory narratives about who they are and what they do, or what they should be and should do" (Yücel).

In his novels, discourse narratology and communicative strategies that evoke narrative world of the artists and demands of society in which they live have become central issues. As a result, a poetics of prose was investigated in his narratives. Investigation of item frequency, contextual information on historical events, and his textual addresses revealed that he lends an authenticity to the plot by means of historical and narrative discourses. Stylistic influences and a concept analysis of word-voice tension lead to interpretations by individual readers or collective audience. Individual reader sights literary creation from the text, book and the word while collective audience appraise voice and oral communication.

The text within the text brings to mind a quest for experimental texts in his fictional world. In *You* the protagonist needs a notebook and a means to organize to produce. Bîro is in search of textuality as an oral interpreter too.

The distance between narrator and narratee, shifts of perspectives, time and modes bring about Uzun's fictional and non-fictional prose. He has a particular way of viewing the Kurds and their problems. That is to say, in its *continuum* the message circulates, the message is continued in plotlines borrowed from historical events and biographical lives. The voices of the author, narrator, and hero correspond to each other. His heros are characters who he can sympathise with. Celadet, Memduh Selim, Old rind all are all real characters representing something from Uzun's life. That is to say they are speaking, narrating, arguing Uzun's cultural and political views. His narrators do not contradict himself and his heros. All three have the same voice.

The political presence of characters are dealt with through a certain manner and style in which they are written. The semantic potential in the text is revealed, fiction and truth exist in the same context. Semantic potential suggests signifying practices, a science of text, materialist reading of text and locating text.

Incorporating neighboring text, which implies the intertextuality of his works, is uncovered in a linear way and descriptive terms. The reader's confrontation with the author's text is achieved. At many points, his narrative manner and storytelling style can be compared to Yaşar Kemal's, as Yaşar Kemal as well pursues traces of Kurdish-Anatolian narratives in his writings and has always been noted for his remarkable use of oral traditions in textual context.

The external world and senses are investigated through an individual inquiry, the question of realism in the novel are shaped by conventions of fiction. The formal realism of Ian Watt is defined as the narrative method whereby the novel embodies this circumstantial view of life, because the term realism does not here refer to any special literary doctrine or purpose, but only to a set of narrative procedures which are so commonly found together in the novel, and so rarely in other literary genres, that they may be regarded as typical of the form itself (32). Yet, in literary work, ephemeral reality also exists, a reader's, hearer's or viewer's perception of realism depends on his position in the society as well as his individual experience of realism. All indicate that the author has philosophical and literay notions of realism at his disposal.

Uzun takes some of his plots from mythology, history, legends and old Kurdish classics. In some cases, he is directly using pieces as pastiches. Past history and experiences are mirrored in appropriate formal conventions.

First novels rejected previous literary forms, even mocked them like epics, romances, mesnevis; however, Uzun has an artistic and aesthetic tendecy for mingling old and new genres and styles. Poetic and pastoral ideals are not rejected in Uzun's poetics. An idylic world is evoked.

Individual's consciousness and the context of contemporary life is pervasive in *Light like Love Darkness like Death*. Other novels are historical, though they sometimes refer to comtemporary issues.

The material aspect of text has also come into question in the past two decades. The circulation of Kurdish books and texts increased in the 1990s due to changes in state policy against publications in the Kurdish language. However, the circulation of text has not had an

extensive impact as Turkey's Kurds suffer from semi-literacy and the majority of Kurds in Turkey are not familiarized with written Kurdish.

Series of images scattered through the text, especially in *the Well of Destiny*, mark the structure of the plot. While Celadet narrates his autobiography, Uzun engages in fiction. Autobiographical memoir and individual experience in the fictional realm coexist. Time, space and description of them, descriptive forces serve to achieve a sense of prose harmony indicating a mingling poetry with prose.

Comedy, tragady, and epic exist in the novels showing variety. *Call of the Tigris* has comedic elements and *the Well of Destiny* demonstrates tragic elements. Music, text and image obviously invoke a textual harmony. At times, adorned realistic descriptions and melodramatic qualities manifest themselves. All of his novels can be defined as "condition-of- Kurds" novels. Religion, orthodox Sunni Islam, and ethnic identity are examined.

The representation of Kurds in Turkish literature has been evaluated as biased (Rohat ,233) and in some examples they are even pictured as savage as in İlhan Selçuk's *Captain Selahattin's Novel* (*Yüzbaşı Selahattin'in Romanı*) (Kutlay, 142). Many more such examples can be located. In Uzun's novels the absence of Turkish literature and characters can be read as a reaction to these cases representing Kurds from an extremely nationalist viewpoint.

The narrative techniques of his novels and questions pertaining to suspense within the framework of fiction is taken into account in evaluating his stroytelling style. Suspense does not just occur in detective adventure stories but it is also a major component in modern fiction. The question of what happens next and delaying the answers lies at the heart of narrative fiction. In Mehmed Uzun's case, suspense is of secondary importance.

The set of narrative procedures applied and a close correspondence between life and art constitute Uzun's textual wandering. The rules for writing and crafting a text within a culture that has a weak textual heritage becomes one of the major arguments of his novels. A fictional autonomy is sought through displaying text's various appearances and voices.

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