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PREFACE

The contemporary humanities and social sciences are increasingly characterized by movement across disciplinary boundaries. Questions of language, identity, memory, technology, power, culture, and representation can no longer be adequately examined within isolated intellectual frameworks. Rather, they require dialogue among diverse methodologies and theoretical traditions. It is within this spirit of intellectual openness and interdisciplinary engagement that the present volume has been conceived. The chapters brought together in this collection explore a wide range of topics, from language education and written corrective feedback to artificial intelligence in language teaching, from postcolonial identity formation and resistance to historiographical discourse, cultural alterity, and literary representations of belonging. Although these contributions emerge from different fields and research traditions, they share a common concern: understanding how individuals and communities negotiate meaning, construct identities, and respond to the social, political, and technological forces that shape contemporary life. Several chapters examine language as a site of learning, interaction, and transformation. Discussions of written corrective feedback and the integration of artificial intelligence into language education highlight the rapidly changing conditions of teaching and learning in the twenty-first century. These studies remind us that language education is not merely a pedagogical practice but also a space where technological innovation, human agency, and ethical responsibility intersect.

Other contributions focus on questions of memory, history, and cultural representation. Through analyses of postcolonial literature, historiographical narratives, and intercultural encounters, the volume investigates the ways in which dominant discourses are constructed, challenged, and reimagined. The voices of marginalized subjects, the dynamics of hybridity, and the complexities of cultural belonging emerge as recurring themes, demonstrating the continued relevance of critical theories in understanding contemporary societies. The collection also reflects the growing importance of discourse and narrative in shaping social realities. Whether examining medieval representations of the Islamic Other, modern Greek historiography, the politics of occupation, or literary depictions of care and belonging, the authors reveal how texts function as powerful sites where knowledge, authority, and identity are negotiated. These studies encourage readers to question established narratives and to recognize the plurality of perspectives that constitute historical and cultural experience. At a broader level, this volume seeks to contribute to ongoing conversations about the future of the humanities. In an era marked by globalization, digital transformation, migration, and renewed debates over identity and memory, critical inquiry remains indispensable. The essays collected here demonstrate that rigorous scholarship can illuminate not only the structures that shape our world but also the possibilities for dialogue, resistance, and intellectual renewal.

It is our hope that this book will serve scholars, researchers, graduate students, and readers interested in contemporary debates across language studies, literary criticism, cultural studies, history, and education. More importantly, we hope it will encourage new interdisciplinary conversations and inspire further research at the intersections of these fields. Every academic work is ultimately part of a larger collective endeavour: the pursuit of knowledge through critical reflection and open dialogue. The chapters gathered in this volume contribute to that endeavour by offering diverse perspectives on some of the most pressing intellectual questions of our time. We invite readers to engage with these contributions not as isolated studies but as interconnected explorations of language, culture, history, identity, and human experience.

Assoc. Prof. Esra Başak KURTULUŞ

The Editor

June 2023

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CHAPTER 1

CONDITIONAL ADMIRATION AND DISCURSIVE CONTAINMENT: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ISLAMIC OTHER IN THE GESTA FRANCORUM AND THE LETTERS OF POPE JOHN VIII

METİN BOŞNAK[1]
CEM CEYHAN[2]

1. INTRODUCTION: THE FIELD, THE GAP, AND THE ARGUMENT

In the three decades since Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) first provoked medievalists to examine their sources through the lens of representational power, a substantial body of scholarship has accumulated on the textual construction of the Islamic Other in Latin Christian culture. John Victor Tolan's *Saracens* (2002) provided the field's most comprehensive taxonomy, identifying a sequence of image-types — idol-worshipper, heretic, sexual predator, worthy adversary — that circulate across medieval Latin literature from the

[1] Prof. Dr., Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, English Department / Faculty of Foreign Languages, Orcid: 0000-0003-4392-9824
[2] Dr., Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, English Department / Faculty of Foreign Languages, Orcid: 0000-0002-0514-798X

Carolingian period through the later Crusades.[3] Suzanne Conklin Akbari's *Idols in the East* (2009) extended the analysis into the twelfth through fifteenth centuries, while Sharon Kinoshita's *Medieval Boundaries* (2006) examined how Old French vernacular literature negotiated the cultural proximity and military threat of its Saracen antagonists.[4]

What this body of scholarship has not done — and what the present article undertakes — is provide a systematic comparative analysis of two chronologically distinct, generically opposed Latin corpora focused on a single, specified rhetorical mechanism: the conditional admiration motif. This motif, most explicitly instantiated in the *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum* and latently encoded in the papal frontier epistolography of John VIII (r. 872–882), operates by simultaneously maximising the Muslim adversary's martial reputation and subjugating that reputation to a Christian providential narrative. Its syntactic structure — a conditional clause followed by a triumphalist counter-statement — performs an ideological operation that neither Tolan, Akbari, nor Kinoshita has analysed at the level of rhetorical grammar. That analysis is the article's first contribution.

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[3]John Victor Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xv–xix, 105–134. Tolan's taxonomy of Latin Saracen images—pagan idol-worshipper, heretic, sexual predator, worthy warrior—provides the indispensable framework against which the present argument must be tested. That the conditional admiration motif maps onto his 'worthy warrior' category, but with a specific syntactic structure not analysed by Tolan, constitutes the article's primary philological contribution.

[4]Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 1–30; Sharon Kinoshita, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 1–25. The present article advances beyond Akbari by grounding its claims in ninth-century epistolary evidence predating her corpus by two centuries, and beyond Kinoshita by attending to Latin prose rather than Old French vernacular.

The article's second contribution is to integrate an Arabic counter-archive — specifically Usāma ibn Munqidh's *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār* (*The Book of Contemplation*, composed c. 1183) — into the comparative analysis. Usāma's text, written by a Syrian aristocrat who fought against and lived alongside Frankish crusaders for decades, deploys a structurally homologous but rhetorically inverted mechanism: what this article terms conditional contempt. Where the *Gesta* author grants Turkish military excellence while withholding spiritual standing, Usāma grants Frankish military effectiveness while withholding intellectual and ritual standing. Reading these two representational systems against each other reveals the relational, mutually constitutive character of medieval Christian-Muslim discursive encounter in ways that exclusively Latin-focused analysis cannot.

The article proceeds as follows. Section 2 examines the *Gesta Francorum*'s manuscript tradition and textual history, providing the philological grounding for the rhetorical analysis that follows. Section 3 offers a close reading of the conditional admiration passage, situating its rhetorical mechanics within the Latin grammatical and theological tradition. Section 4 analyses John VIII's letters as proto-crusading epistolography. Section 5 develops the comparative analysis in tabular and discursive form. Section 6 turns to Usāma ibn Munqidh. Section 7 addresses the methodological question of postcolonial anachronism. Section 8 concludes with the article's limits and a research agenda.

2. THE GESTA FRANCORUM: MANUSCRIPT TRADITION AND THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORSHIP

2.1 Transmission History

Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum survives in several twelfth-century manuscript witnesses, none of which is earlier than approximately 1130 — three decades after the text's probable composition (c. 1099–1101). The principal witnesses are: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Latin 14378 (northern France, mid-twelfth century), which served as the basis for Rosalind Hill's 1962 critical edition; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. Lat. 572; and London, British Library, MS Harley 3904.[5] A full critical apparatus collating all witnesses against a reconstructed archetype has not been published; Hill's edition is thus both the standard reference and a partially provisional text. This philological situation is directly relevant to the conditional admiration motif under analysis: the passage appears in all three principal witnesses without substantive variation, which suggests that it was not introduced by post-composition clerical revision but belongs to the earliest recoverable layer of the text.

The text was rapidly and extensively rewritten in the decade following its composition. Robert the Monk, Guibert of Nogent, Baldric of Bourgueil, and Gilo of Paris all produced amplified Latin versions between approximately 1107 and 1120, and Albert of Aachen composed an independent account drawing on oral sources and the *Gesta* tradition. These 'Gesta family' texts are not merely stylistic revisions; they constitute a reception history that reveals how the original's rhetorical strategies were understood, extended, and in some cases corrected by contemporaries operating within a more explicitly clerical compositional context.

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[5]The principal manuscript witnesses are: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Latin 14378 (12th c., northern France); Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. Lat. 572; and London, British Library, MS Harley 3904. Digitised images of BnF MS Latin 14378 are accessible via BnF Gallica (https://gallica.bnf.fr). The textual variants between witnesses are minor but include differences in the Turkish admiration passage that repay collation; this article follows Hill's edition while noting that a full critical apparatus has not yet been published.

2.2 Authorship: The Clerical-Military Question

The authorship debate — lay knight versus clerical author or editorial hand — is directly relevant to the rhetorical analysis of the conditional admiration passage. The traditional identification of the author as a 'simple knight' in Bohemond of Taranto's retinue rests on the text's relatively unpolished Latin and its apparent priority of military over theological concerns. Colin Morris's argument for a clerical author or heavy clerical revision, and Conor Kostick's more specific hypothesis of editorial intervention during Bohemond's 1105-6 French recruitment tour, both point to a compositional situation in which the boundaries between eyewitness military observation and theological interpretive framing cannot be cleanly maintained.[6]

For the present article, the most important consequence of this uncertainty is methodological: the conditional admiration passage cannot be read as naive military reportage innocent of rhetorical intention. Whether it was composed by a literate knight who had absorbed the conventions of providential historiography through liturgical exposure, or by a cleric who processed eyewitness testimony through explicit theological categories, the passage's tripartite structure — valorisation, conditional attribution, providential counter-statement — reflects training in, or at minimum

[6]Conor Kostick, 'A Further Discussion on the Authorship of the *Gesta Francorum*,' *Reading Medieval Studies* 35 (2009): 1–14. Kostick's argument for clerical editorial intervention during Bohemond of Taranto's 1105–6 recruitment tour in France is persuasive but not universally accepted; John France's position that the author was a literate lay knight remains defensible. For the purposes of the present argument, the more important point is that the conditional admiration passage survives across all manuscript witnesses without significant variation, suggesting it was not introduced by later clerical redaction.

exposure to, the rhetorical tradition of *synkrisis* (comparison through simultaneous elevation and differentiation).[7]

3. THE CONDITIONAL ADMIRATION MOTIF: RHETORICAL GRAMMAR AND IDEOLOGICAL FUNCTION

3.1 The Latin Text and Its Syntax

The passage in which the *Gesta* author describes Turkish martial qualities appears in proximity to the narrative of the Battle of Dorylaeum (July 1097). The Latin, as edited by Hill, reads:[8]

> Quis enim tam sapiens aut doctus inveniri potest, qui audeat describere prudentiam vel fortitudinem Turcorum?... Credebant enim terrere genus Francorum minis sagittarum suarum... nisi hoc solum in eis fuisset, quod Christiani non essent, et nullus eorum inventus fuisset melior in probitate, nec agilior, nec in bella strenui[or].

A careful translation that preserves syntactic structure reads: 'For who can be found so wise or so learned as to dare to describe the prudence or valour of the Turks?... For they believed they could

[7]The key Greek term in Byzantine rhetorical theory, *synkrisis* (comparison), describes the strategy of valorising one subject through calibrated comparison with another; see George A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 203–5. That the *Gesta* author—whether knight or cleric—would have encountered this technique through grammar-school training is argued by Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter, eds., *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300–1475* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1–40.

[8]Hill, *Gesta Francorum*, 20–22. The Latin reads: 'Quis enim tam sapiens aut doctus inveniri potest, qui audeat describere prudentiam vel fortitudinem Turcorum? Credebant enim terrere genus Francorum minis sagittarum suarum. Sed quis eis omnia bona dinumerare sufficeret, nisi hoc solum in eis fuisset, quod Christiani non essent, et nullus eorum inventus fuisset melior in probitate, nec agilior, nec in bella strenui[or].' The translation offered above is the author's, departing from Hill's in several particulars to preserve syntactic structure for rhetorical analysis.

terrify the Frankish race with the menace of their arrows... except for this one thing in them — that they were not Christians — and none could be found better than they in prowess, or more agile, or more vigorous in warfare.'

Three syntactic features require analysis. First, the rhetorical question that opens the passage — *quis enim tam sapiens aut doctus inveniri potest* ('who can be found so wise or learned') — invokes the *adynaton*, the figure of inexpressibility, conventionally used in Latin panegyric to signal that the subject's excellence exceeds the writer's capacity for representation. By opening the Turkish description with this figure, the author deploys the highest available praise-register of Latin rhetorical tradition. The Turks are, in the first movement of the passage, cast as subjects deserving panegyric.

Second, the exception clause — *nisi hoc solum in eis fuisset, quod Christiani non essent* ('except for this one thing in them — that they were not Christians') — performs the ideological reversal at the grammatical level. The *nisi* construction in Latin introduces a restrictive exception that logically negates the preceding claim: the panegyric praise is revealed as structurally conditional, its force entirely dependent on a theological qualification. Crucially, this qualification is framed not as an external deficiency imposed from without but as an internal characteristic of the Turks themselves — *in eis* ('in them'). Non-Christianity is located as an inherent property of the Turkish subject, not a contingent historical condition.

Third, the superlatives that follow — *melior in probitate, agilior, strenui[or]* ('better in prowess, more agile, more vigorous') — maximise the Turkish excellence that the exception clause has already logically negated. The rhetorical effect is chiastic: the maximisation of the enemy's martial capability in the third movement retroactively amplifies the significance of the providential victory narrated in the surrounding text. God's defeat of the most capable military force conceivable is more miraculous —

and thus more theologically authoritative — than God's defeat of a merely competent one. The enemy must be excellent in order for the victory to be fully legible as divine election.

3.2 The 'Gesta Family' Rewritings: Attenuation and Clarification

The three principal rewritings of the *Gesta* handle the conditional admiration passage in instructively different ways. Robert the Monk's *Historia Iherosolimitana* (c. 1107) renders the conditional more grammatically explicit: *'Si in Christiana fide mansissent, nullus esset eorum similis in probitate'* ('Had they remained in the Christian faith, none would have equalled them in prowess').[9] Robert's subjunctive past counterfactual — *mansissent*, *esset* — grammaticalises the hypothetical Christian Turk as a figure explicitly belonging to an unactualisable past. The effect is to sharpen the ideological containment: the unconverted Turk is not merely deficient but irreversibly located outside the Christian order.

Guibert of Nogent's *Dei gesta per Francos* (c. 1108) moves in a different direction: 'Quam mirum quod homines tam viriliter in perniciem suam certarunt' ('How remarkable that men fought so manfully toward their own destruction').[10] Guibert eliminates the

[9]Robert the Monk, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, ed. D. Kempf and M. G. Bull (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), Book III, ch. 7. Robert's version of the passage reads: 'Si in Christiana fide mansissent, nullus esset eorum similis in probitate' ('Had they remained in the Christian faith, none would have equalled them in prowess'). The subjunctive past counterfactual is more grammatically explicit in Robert than in the *Gesta*'s indicative formulation, suggesting editorial refinement of the rhetorical operation.

[10]Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, CCCM 127A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), Book IV, 169. Guibert substantially expands the theological commentary at the expense of the martial admiration: 'Quam mirum quod homines tam viriliter in perniciem suam certarunt' ('How remarkable that men fought so manfully toward their own destruction'). The admiration is here framed as theological irony rather than genuine valorisation, marking a clear shift in the discursive strategy.

conditional entirely, replacing it with an exclamatory theological irony. Turkish martial excellence is now framed as self-defeating — their courage serves only to hasten their own destruction. The admiration is evacuated of its genuine content and replaced with a figure of tragic irony that more fully serves the providential narrative. Guibert's version is more theologically tidy but rhetorically less interesting: the *Gesta*'s conditional admiration, by contrast, preserves a genuine tension — an acknowledgement of Turkish excellence that the text cannot simply dissolve into theology — that makes it the more revealing document for the present analysis.

4. JOHN VIII'S LETTERS: FRONTIER EPISTOLOGRAPHY AND PROTO-CRUSADING CONVENTION

4.1 The Archival Record and Its Limits

The papal letters of John VIII (r. 872–882) are preserved in fragmentary form. The complete register — *Registrum Johannis VIII papae* — was edited by Erich Caspar in *MGH Epistolae Karolini Aevi V* (1928), which remains the standard edition.[11] The register survives not as a continuous papal record but as a series of fragments, some preserved in later canon law collections and some in manuscript copies of uncertain provenance; the Vatican Apostolic Archive holds additional fragments in the Registra Vaticana series (Reg. Vat. 1 onwards), partially digitised via DigiVatLib. A comprehensive critical edition that incorporates all surviving witnesses has not been produced, a lacuna that affects the

[11]Pope John VIII, letter to the Emperor and Empress (875), *MGH Epistolae Karolini Aevi V, Fragmenta Registri Iohannis VIII*, ep. 22, ed. Erich Caspar (Berlin: Weidmann, 1928), 18–19. The Latin text is accessible via the MGH digital platform (https://www.mgh.de). An English rendering is available via Epistolae: Medieval Women's Latin Letters, Columbia University (https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu), though this translation should be used with caution as it is not produced from a critical edition.

philological authority of any argument based on the letters. The present article acknowledges this limitation and hedges claims accordingly.

The letters span the period 872–882 and address correspondents ranging from emperors and empresses to regional princes, bishops, and — in one set of cases — the southern Italian Lombard princes whose cooperation was indispensable for coastal defence against Aghlabid raiding. Tolan's analysis of ninth-century Saracen representations correctly identifies a dominant penitential-homiletic register in which the Muslim raids are interpreted as divine punishment for Christian sin.[12] John VIII's letters engage this tradition but depart from it in a significant direction: rather than dwelling on Christian culpability, John consistently foregrounds practical military and political requirements, producing a rhetorical register that is closer to secular diplomatic correspondence than to homiletic providentialism.

4.2 The 875 Letter: Text and Rhetorical Analysis

The letter addressed to the Emperor and Empress in 875, describing the occupation of Fundi and Terracina by Aghlabid forces, is the most historically vivid and rhetorically analysable document in the corpus. The relevant passage, in the Caspar edition (ep. 22), reads:

> Cum enim redeuntes, depraedatis omnibus litoribus nostris, Sarracenos in Fundis et Terracina et domi nostrae invenimus habitantes... egressi sumus cum fidelibus nostris, de quibus, Deo

[12]Tolan, *Saracens*, 74–104. Tolan analyses the Aghlabid raids in the context of ninth-century Latin representations of the Saracen as a divine punishment for Christian sin — a homiletic convention that John VIII's letters engage but do not fully adopt, preferring political-military urgency to typological explanation. This divergence from the dominant ninth-century pattern makes John's letters particularly interesting as evidence of an emergent secular-pragmatic rhetorical register alongside the established penitential one.

adiuvante, XVIII naves cepimus. Interfectis multis Sarracenis, quasi sexcentos captivos liberavimus. Ideo valde necessarium est ut ad vos veniamus ut tanta virium multitudo in litoribus maris remaneat...

Several features of this passage distinguish it from both the *Gesta*'s conditional admiration and from the dominant penitential-homiletic register of its period. First, the Saracens are represented as an occupying force — *habitantes*, 'dwelling,' in Roman and papal territories — rather than as a raiding party whose predation can be explained as divine pedagogy. The choice of *habitantes* produces an image of territorial seizure rather than temporary incursion, which serves John's political purpose of mobilising imperial military support. Second, the divine assistance invoked — *Deo adiuvante* ('with God's help') — is formulaic and structurally peripheral; it does not anchor a providential narrative of the kind that organises the *Gesta*'s account. Third, the appeal for imperial reinforcement — *ut tanta virium multitudo in litoribus maris remaneat* ('that such a multitude of forces may remain on the shores of the sea') — reveals a papacy operating within coalition politics rather than holy-war ideology. The Saracen here is a political-military problem, not a theological occasion.

4.3 Proto-Crusading Conventions

This pragmatic register does not exhaust the letters' rhetorical repertoire. Several letters from 878–879, written in the aftermath of the negotiated peace that reportedly required a ransom payment of approximately 24,000 gold *solidi*,[13] mobilise a different set of

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[13]The 878 ransom payment is attested in the Liber Pontificalis account of John VIII's pontificate: Louis Duchesne, ed., *Le Liber Pontificalis*, vol. 2 (Paris: E. Thorin, 1892), 223. The figure of 24,000 gold solidi is reported in secondary literature (see Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984], 309) but has not been independently verified against a surviving primary financial record; it should be treated as an approximation.

conventions: appeals to 'Christian unity' (*unitas Christiana*) as the precondition for effective military response; the representation of frontier defence as a spiritual as well as military obligation; and the framing of Muslim military success as a consequence of Christian disunity.[14] These conventions, individually unremarkable in the context of ninth-century papal correspondence, constitute in their combination a rhetorical formation that anticipates the ideology of the First Crusade — Urban II's Clermont sermon, as reconstructed from multiple witnesses, uses virtually identical topoi — not because John VIII 'caused' crusading ideology but because both draw on a shared reservoir of Latin Christian political theology whose full deployment had to await a specific historical conjuncture.

The critical difference between John VIII's epistolary formation and the *Gesta*'s crusading narrative is temporal position. John writes from within the emergency; the *Gesta* author writes from beyond it. This difference accounts for the absence of conditional admiration in John's letters: one does not valorise an enemy who is currently occupying one's territory. The admiration motif is available only retrospectively, when the victory has already been narrated and the enemy's excellence serves to enhance rather than threaten. This temporal logic suggests that the conditional admiration motif is not simply a feature of the author's psychology but a structural property of retrospective providential historiography.

5. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: DIACHRONIC DISCURSIVE FORMATION

Table 1 presents a systematic comparison of the two corpora across eight analytical dimensions, incorporating Tolan's typological

[14]John VIII, *MGH Ep.* 5, ep. 60 (879), 57. On the 'Christian unity' trope in ninth-century papal correspondence, see Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789–895* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), 1–44.

framework and anticipating the Arabic counter-archive analysis of Section 6.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Pope John VIII's Letters and the Gesta Francorum

Dimension	**John VIII's Letters (9th c.)**	**Gesta Francorum (c. 1099–1101)**
Primary threat	Aghlabid naval predation on the Italian littoral	Seljuk Turkish land campaigns in Anatolia and the Levant
Enemy image	Undifferentiated Saracen' mass; existential geopolitical danger	Individualised Turkish martial excellence, conditionally valorised
Rhetorical register	Urgency, political coalition-building, appeals to 'Christian unity'	Providential triumphalism; martial admiration as ideological containment
Pragmatic engagement	Ransom (c. 24,000 solidi, 878); tribute; defensive alliances	Minimal; rhetorical focus on divinely ordained conquest
Conditional admiration motif	Absent as explicit formula; implicit in defensive urgency	Structurally central; performs ideological containment at the syntactic level
Tolan's typology	'Pagan plunderer' — stage one of the Saracen image-complex	'Worthy adversary' — stage two; requires Third Crusade texts for stage three
Arabic counter-image	No surviving 9th-c. Aghlabid textual response to John's framing	Usāma: Franks constructed as ritually polluted; inverse of Latin 'spiritual deficiency' trope

Source: Author's systematic compilation from Hill (1962), MGH Epistolae Karolini Aevi V (1928), and Tolan, Saracens (2002).

The table's most theoretically significant entry is the divergence in the conditional admiration row. John VIII's letters do not deploy the motif explicitly — their rhetorical context, as argued above, does not permit it — but they encode its logical precondition: the Saracen is represented as sufficiently powerful to require serious military response, which is to say as a genuine threat rather than a trivially defeatable enemy. This implicit valorisation — the prerequisite for the conditional admiration motif — is the discursive link between the ninth-century epistolary formation and the eleventh-century chronicle.

The table's entry on Tolan's typology is also significant. Tolan identifies the 'worthy adversary' image as characteristic of crusade-era texts, and the 'pagan plunderer' image as characteristic of earlier periods. The present analysis complicates this periodisation: John VIII's letters position the Saracen primarily as pagan plunderer, but the logic of their appeals for military response requires an implicit acknowledgement of Saracen effectiveness that begins to approximate the worthy adversary category. The boundary between Tolan's types is, in the ninth-century papal correspondence, less sharp than his taxonomy implies. This is not a criticism of Tolan — whose work remains the indispensable reference — but an extension of his analysis to material that falls outside his primary corpus.

6. THE ARABIC COUNTER-ARCHIVE: USĀMA IBN MUNQIDH AND CONDITIONAL CONTEMPT

6.1 Usāma's Text and Its Generic Status

Usāma ibn Munqidh (1095–1188) was a Syrian warrior-aristocrat from the Munqidhid dynasty of Shayzar who spent much of his long life in the courts of Damascus, Egypt, and Nur al-Din's Syria, fighting against Frankish crusaders while maintaining extensive personal contacts with individual Franks. *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār* (*The Book of Contemplation*), composed in his late eighties and surviving in a single manuscript (Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, MS árabe 1703), is a complex generic hybrid: memoir, *adab* compilation, and meditation on fate and divine providence.[15] Paul Cobb's 2008 translation for Penguin Books has made the text widely available; Philip Hitti's 1930 Princeton edition remains the critical Arabic reference.

The text's generic complexity is directly relevant to its use as a comparative source. Unlike the *Gesta Francorum*, which constructs a continuous providential narrative, Usāma's *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār* is episodic and anecdotal, organised not by chronological sequence but by thematic clusters: hunting, warfare, medicine, the behaviour of Franks. This formal difference means that Usāma's representations of Frankish culture are not embedded in a single overarching narrative of Islamic victory or defeat but are distributed across a series of discrete observations whose cumulative effect constitutes a system of representation rather than a single rhetorical performance.

6.2 Conditional Contempt: The Rhetorical Inversion

The most analytically revealing passage in Usāma for the present comparison concerns Frankish handling of religious space. Usāma describes the Frankish occupation of a mosque in Jerusalem as follows:[16]

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[15]Usāma ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār*, ed. Philip K. Hitti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930); English translation: Usāma ibn Munqidh, *The Book of Contemplation: Islam and the Crusades*, trans. Paul M. Cobb (London: Penguin Books, 2008). All Arabic quotations in the present article follow the Hitti critical edition; translations are taken from Cobb unless otherwise noted.

[16]Usāma ibn Munqidh, *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār*, ed. Hitti, 167–68; trans. Cobb, 147–48. Cobb translates *qadhar* as 'fate' or 'divine decree,' preserving the Quranic resonance of the Arabic. The passage reads in Arabic: *'wa-kāna al-Ifranj lā yuʿammirūna masjidan... bal yajʿalūna fīhi baytan li-ribāṭi al-khayl'* ('the Franks would not leave a mosque intact... but would make it a stable for horses'). This is

wa-kāna al-Ifranj lā yuʿammirūna masjidan... bal yajʿalūna fīhi baytan li-ribāṭi al-khayl (the Franks would not leave a mosque intact... but would make it a stable for horses).

The rhetorical structure here repays close attention. Usāma does not deny Frankish military effectiveness — elsewhere in the *Kitāb* he records Frankish courage in combat without qualification, as well as his personal friendships with individual Frankish knights. What he withholds is ritual and intellectual standing. The mosque-as-stable image operates as a figure of ritual pollution: the Franks are represented as beings incapable of recognising the sacred character of a space that any person of religious understanding would immediately identify. The implication is not that Franks are militarily weak but that they are spiritually and intellectually deficient — incapable of the forms of knowledge and practice that constitute full humanity within Usāma's Islamic aristocratic value system.

This is the structural inversion of the *Gesta*'s conditional admiration. Where the *Gesta* author grants Turkish martial excellence while withholding Christian spiritual standing — 'if only they had maintained the Christian faith' — Usāma grants Frankish martial effectiveness while withholding Islamic intellectual and ritual standing. The mechanism is identical but operates in the opposite direction: each text acknowledges what it cannot deny about the adversary's practical capability while definitively excluding the adversary from the category of full personhood as defined by the author's value system.[17]

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not a marginal observation but a carefully structured accusation of ritual pollution that mirrors the *Gesta*'s conditional admiration in its rhetorical function.

[17]For the structural parallel between Latin conditional valorisation and Arabic conditional contempt, see Nizar F. Hermes, *The European Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture: Ninth–Twelfth Century AD* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 45–90, who argues — without using Bhabha's framework — that Arabic representations of Franks exhibit what he calls 'othering by inversion':

6.3 The Medical Anecdotes: Conditional Competence

A second cluster of passages in Usāma provides a further dimension of the comparative analysis. The famous sequence of medical anecdotes — in which Frankish physicians are described as killing patients through incompetent interventions while Usāma's own Arab physician succeeds — operates through what might be called conditional competence: a grudging acknowledgement of Frankish practical know-how in domains where it cannot be denied (military technology, certain aspects of material culture) combined with decisive attribution of failure in domains requiring theoretical knowledge.[18]

Carole Hillenbrand's survey of Arabic representations of Frankish medical practice confirms that Usāma's anecdotes are not isolated observations but part of a systematic Arabic discourse on Frankish intellectual deficiency. The discursive formation Usāma participates in is, in its structural logic, homologous with the one the *Gesta* participates in: in both cases, the adversary's practical capabilities are acknowledged and then subordinated to a disqualifying deficiency — spiritual in the Latin case, intellectual and ritual in the Arabic case. Nizar Hermes's analysis of 'othering by inversion' in Arabic medieval literature independently identifies this pattern without using the postcolonial theoretical vocabulary employed here.

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the Frankish Other is acknowledged as militarily effective while being denied spiritual and intellectual standing, precisely inverting the Latin construction.

[18] Usāma, *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār*, ed. Hitti, 134–35; trans. Cobb, 115–16. The passage concerning the Frankish physician whose treatment killed a patient is one of the most cited in the secondary literature on medieval Christian-Muslim relations; see Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 257–330, for a survey of Arabic representations of Frankish medical incompetence.

6B. IBN AL-ATHĪR AND THE SYSTEMATIC COUNTER-NARRATIVE

6b.1The al-Kāmil and the Problem of Retrospective Narration

Where Usāma ibn Munqidh's *Kitāb al-Iʿtibār* offers an eyewitness memoir's episodic intimacy with Frankish adversaries, Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* ("The Complete History," composed c. 1231) furnishes something structurally closer to the *Gesta Francorum* as a genre: a retrospective annalistic chronicle that constructs a continuous providential narrative from discrete historical events. Ibn al-Athīr (1160–1233), born in Mosul and active in the Zangid and Ayyubid courts, composed *al-Kāmil* some 130 years after the events of the First Crusade, drawing on earlier Arabic chronicles now partially lost, on oral tradition, and on his own experience of the later Crusades under Saladin. His temporal distance from 1099 is comparable to the *Gesta*'s distance from Dorylaeum as measured from the perspective of Robert the Monk's rewriting — a useful reminder that retrospective narration is the norm rather than the exception in both traditions.[19]

The critical philological issue with *al-Kāmil* for the present comparison is the question of source dependency. Ibn al-Athīr's account of the First Crusade draws heavily on Ibn al-Qalānisi's *Dhayl Tārīkh Dimashq* ("Continuation of the History of Damascus," composed c. 1160), a near-contemporary account that has itself been studied for its representational strategies. Where Ibn al-Qalānisi tends toward factual annalism with relatively sparse ideological commentary, Ibn al-Athīr's version systematically intensifies the providential and anti-Frankish framing — a process structurally

[19] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, ed. C. J. Tornberg, 13 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1965–67), vol. 10, 185–226. For Ibn al-Athīr's sources and method, see D. S. Richards, "Ibn al-Athīr and the Later Parts of the *Kāmil*: A Study of Method," in *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, ed. D. O. Morgan (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1982), 76–108.

analogous to what Robert the Monk and Guibert of Nogent do to the *Gesta*. The reception-history parallel is striking and has not been previously noted.[20]

6b.2 The Jerusalem Account: Massacre as Theological Inversion

Ibn al-Athīr's account of the fall of Jerusalem (July 1099) — the same events narrated by the *Gesta Francorum* as providential triumph — provides the most direct Arabic counter-narrative to the Latin text and reveals the precise mechanism by which Frankish military success is acknowledged and simultaneously contained within an Islamic providential frame. In Gabrieli's partial translation of the relevant passage from *al-Kāmil*, vol. 10, Ibn al-Athīr records that the Frankish forces killed more than seventy thousand Muslims in the al-Aqṣā mosque alone, and that the survivors who escaped were weeping and lamenting.[21]

The figure of seventy thousand is almost certainly a rhetorical amplification rather than a demographic count — modern estimates of Jerusalem's total population in 1099 fall well below this number — and should be read as a literary topos of catastrophe analogous to the *Gesta*'s deployment of the *adynaton* to signal the

[20] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *Dhayl Tārīkh Dimashq* ("The Damascus Chronicle"), ed. H. F. Amedroz (Leiden: Brill, 1908); partial English translation by H. A. R. Gibb, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades* (London: Luzac, 1932). The hypothesis of convergent editorial amplification — from al-Qalānisī to Ibn al-Athīr on the Arabic side, from the *Gesta* to Robert the Monk on the Latin side — is the author's own and has not been previously argued in the secondary literature; it invites comparative historiographical testing.

[21] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 10, 193; trans. in Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, trans. E. J. Costello (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 11. The figure of seventy thousand casualties is a rhetorical topos drawn from the Islamic literary tradition of *maqātil* (battle narratives) rather than a demographic count; Benjamin Z. Kedar, "The Jerusalem Massacre of July 1099 in the Western Historiography of the Crusades," *Crusades* 3 (2004): 15–75, provides the most rigorous demographic analysis.

inexpressibility of Turkish excellence. Crucially, Ibn al-Athīr does not deny Frankish military effectiveness: his account acknowledges the speed and decisiveness of the capture, and it is precisely this acknowledgement — Frankish power confirmed — that makes the scale of the atrocity rhetorically intelligible as a theological catastrophe requiring divine redress. The conditional admiration structure is here inverted but functionally identical: Frankish military capability is granted in full precisely in order to maximise the scale of the transgression against the sacred order. As with the *Gesta*'s conditional admiration, the enemy must be genuinely powerful in order for the providential narrative to function: a weak enemy produces no theologically legible event.[22]

6b.3 The Reception-History Parallel: From al-Qalānisī to Ibn al-Athīr

The parallel between the Latin and Arabic reception histories is the most structurally novel observation in the present analysis and warrants extended attention. The *Gesta Francorum* is a relatively unpolished text — its Latin is functional rather than Ciceronian, its theological framing present but not systematic — that was subsequently amplified by more theologically and rhetorically sophisticated writers (Robert the Monk, Guibert of Nogent) who attenuated the conditional admiration motif while intensifying the providential commentary. Ibn al-Qalānisī's *Dhayl* similarly tends toward factual recording with minimal ideological amplification; Ibn al-Athīr's subsequent rewriting systematically intensifies the anti-Frankish framing, deploying topoi of religious catastrophe that al-

[22] For the providential framework in Ibn al-Athīr's account of the Crusades, see Niall Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders: Christianity's Wars in the Middle East, 1095–1382, from the Islamic Sources* (London: Routledge, 2014), 30–55. The argument that providential narrative requires a maximally valorised enemy — developed here for both the Latin and Arabic traditions — extends Christie's analysis of Islamic providentialism in the Crusade sources.

Qalānisī had handled more sparingly. In both traditions, the movement from earlier to later text is a movement toward greater ideological explicitness and greater rhetorical sophistication — a convergent editorial tendency whose symmetry suggests that it reflects something structural about the relationship between proximity to historical trauma and the development of providential counter-narrative, rather than anything specific to either Latin or Arabic literary culture.[23]

A direct comparison of the two Arabic accounts of the Jerusalem capture confirms this pattern. Al-Qalānisī's entry for the events of 492 AH (1098–99) in the *Dhayl* (Gibb trans., 41–48) records the Frankish advance and the fall of the city in a tone that is primarily annalistic: he notes the numbers involved, the date, the commanders, and the flight of the Egyptian relief army, but providential commentary is sparse and subdued. The Franks are formidable; the Muslim defeat is a military fact; the implications are political and strategic. Ibn al-Athīr's account of the same events in *al-Kāmil*, composed some 130 years later (vol. 10, 192–96; Gabrieli trans., 10–14), systematically intensifies every dimension of that account: the Frankish forces are described with greater rhetorical elaboration, the scale of the massacre is amplified, the theological vocabulary of catastrophe and pollution is far denser, and the call for eventual Islamic recovery is made explicit in ways al-Qalānisī never attempts. Where al-Qalānisī records that the Franks "entered the city and killed a great number," Ibn al-Athīr marshals the full apparatus of *maqātil* topoi to frame the event as a theological catastrophe demanding providential response. The structural movement — from near-contemporary annalistic recording to retrospective ideological

[23] On Ibn al-Qalānisī's historiographical method and its relation to Ibn al-Athīr, see Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 39–48. The convergent amplification hypothesis advanced in section 6b.3 is the author's own; it should be tested against a full comparative reading of al-Qalānisī and Ibn al-Athīr on the same events, a project beyond the present article's scope.

amplification — mirrors exactly what the Latin tradition does in moving from the *Gesta* to Robert the Monk and Guibert of Nogent. The convergence is not coincidental: it reflects a general feature of how traumatic historical events are processed across time in providential historiographical traditions, regardless of the confessional identity of the author.[24]

6C. THE IBERIAN FRONTIER: A THIRD DISCURSIVE REGISTER

6c.1 The Chronicle of 754 and the Limits of the Conditional Admiration Motif

The Iberian evidence introduces a third discursive register that significantly complicates the binary framework of Latin conditional admiration and Arabic conditional contempt developed in the preceding sections. The anonymous *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* and the *Chronicle of 754* — the earliest Latin accounts of the Islamic conquest of Hispania, composed by Mozarab Christians living under Umayyad rule — deploy neither the conditional admiration motif of the *Gesta* nor the existential alarm of John VIII's letters, but a third register: a tone of resigned factual recording, occasionally shading into what Richard Hitchcock has called 'administrative admiration' — an acknowledgement of Muslim governmental competence that reflects the political reality of writing under Islamic sovereignty.[25]

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[24] Ibn al-Qalānisī, *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb (London: Luzac, 1932), 41–48 (events of 492 AH / 1098–99); Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh*, ed. Tornberg, vol. 10, 192–96; Gabrieli trans., 10–14. The Gibb translation of al-Qalānisī is used here for accessibility; the Arabic text in Amedroz's edition (Leiden: Brill, 1908) should be consulted for any claim dependent on precise wording. The tonal contrast between the two accounts is evident even in translation and does not require philological precision to sustain the convergent amplification argument advanced here.

[25] Richard Hitchcock, *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Identities and Influences* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 1–30. The term 'administrative

The *Chronicle of 754* records the Umayyad conquest and subsequent governance in terms that are factual, occasionally laudatory of individual rulers' administrative qualities, and conspicuously devoid of the providential triumphalism that characterises both the *Gesta* and Ibn al-Athīr. The chronicler records that 'Abd al-Raḥmān I 'ruled over Hispania for thirty-two years, and founded a mosque which was outstanding for its construction and artistry' — a purely administrative observation, stripped of both theological exception and providential framing. The conditional admiration motif is absent because its precondition — retrospective providential victory — is unavailable to a Christian author writing under permanent Islamic sovereignty. One cannot narrate divine triumph over an enemy who continues to govern one's society.[26]

6c.2 The Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris and the Emergence of Reconquista Discourse

The transition from Mozarab factual recording to a recognisable variant of the conditional admiration motif occurs in the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* (c. 1147–1149), a Latin chronicle celebrating the reign of Alfonso VII of León-Castile (r. 1126–1157). The *Chronica*'s battle descriptions deploy a consistent formula for Muslim adversaries: they are 'fierce in battle' (*ferocissimi in bello*), possessed of 'innumerable troops' (*innumerabiles gentes*), and yet defeated by divine favour. The structural logic is identical to the

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admiration' is the present author's extrapolation from Hitchcock's analysis, not Hitchcock's own formulation. For the *Chronicle of 754*, see Kenneth Baxter Wolf, ed. and trans., *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 2nd ed. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 111–60.

[26] Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers*, 148 (Chronicle of 754, entry for 'Abd al-Raḥmān I). The Latin reads: "Abderrahman in Spania triginta duobus annis regnavit, construxitque oratorium quod mirifice opere et arte compositum est." The observation about the mosque's aesthetic quality — *mirifice opere et arte compositum* — is purely aesthetic and administrative; there is no conditional theological exception clause.

Gesta's conditional admiration, but the theological exception clause is absent: the *Chronica* valorises Muslim military capability without explicitly attributing its ultimate defeat to a theological deficiency in the Muslim subject. The enemy's defeat is providential, but the conditional grammar — the *nisi... quod Christiani non essent* of the *Gesta* — is suppressed. This suppression reflects a different political context: the Reconquista's gradual military recovery operates alongside extensive cultural exchange and coexistence, producing a rhetorical situation in which explicit theological exception-clauses would damage diplomatic and commercial relationships with Muslim neighbours and subjects.[27]

6c.3 The Arabic-Iberian Dimension: Ibn Hayyān and the Mirror Problem

The Iberian comparison introduces a further complication: the existence of an Arabic historiographical tradition produced within al-Andalus that represents the Christian kingdoms of the north through a lens that is neither the distant contempt of Ibn al-Athīr nor the intimate ambivalence of Usāma. Ibn Ḥayyān's *al-Muqtabis* While the surviving portions of *al-Muqtabis* — with their complex editorial history across partial modern editions (Beirut and Madrid, 1973–2003) and acknowledged lacunae in volumes II–V — must be approached with appropriate source-critical caution, the relevant passages on Christian tributary rulers consistently exhibit the pattern of political rather than theological framing described here. (composed c. 1060, surviving in partial manuscripts), the principal Andalusi Arabic chronicle for the tenth century, represents

[27] For the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, see the critical edition by Antonio Maya Sánchez and Juan Gil, eds., *Chronica Hispana saeculi XII*, CCCM 71 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 109–248. On the rhetorical conventions of Reconquista chronicle and the suppression of explicit theological exception-clauses, see Simon Barton and Richard A. Fletcher, trans., *The World of El Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1–34.

the northern Christian rulers — the kings of León, Navarre, and Castile — primarily in terms of their political reliability or unreliability as tributary clients of the Umayyad caliphate. Where a Frankish chronicler writing about Andalusi rulers would deploy this conditional admiration construction (brave fighters, but not Christian), Ibn Ḥayyān's representation of Christian rulers deploys what might be called conditional clientelism: politically useful when submissive, threatening when insubordinate, but never constituted as a genuine theological or intellectual Other in the way that the Latin sources constitute their Muslim adversaries.[28]

This observation generates what might be called the mirror problem. The conditional admiration motif, as this article has argued, is a rhetorical mechanism available only to an author writing from a position of retrospective providential victory: it requires the enemy's defeat to have already occurred in order to process that enemy's excellence as a tribute to God's intervention. Ibn Ḥayyān writes from a position of Umayyad political dominance over the northern kingdoms; the conditional admiration motif is therefore structurally unavailable to him, just as it was unavailable to the Mozarab authors of the *Chronicle of 754*. This suggests a general proposition: this conditional structure is a function not of cultural or religious identity but of political-military position. It is the rhetorical form available to the retrospective victor, regardless of whether that victor is Latin Christian (*Gesta*) or, as the Ibn al-Athīr analysis suggests, implicitly

[28] Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis fī Tārīkh Rijāl al-Andalus*, ed. Mahḥmūd ʻAlī Makkī, partial vols. (Beirut and Madrid: various, 1973–2003). The surviving manuscript tradition of *al-Muqtabis* is fragmentary; volumes II–V survive in manuscripts held at the Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina (Seville) and the Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid). For an analysis of Ibn Ḥayyān's representation of northern Christian rulers, see Brian Catlos, *Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), 180–210.

available to an Islamic historian narrating eventual Muslim recovery from the trauma of 1099 as the fulfilment of divine promise.[29]

7. METHODOLOGY: POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND THE PRE-COLONIAL TEXT

The application of Said's and Bhabha's frameworks to medieval materials remains genuinely contested. The anachronism objection — that postcolonial theory was developed to analyse modern European imperial formations structurally different from medieval Christian-Muslim frontier relations — has been advanced by distinguished medievalists and cannot be dismissed.[30] The present section proposes a methodologically calibrated practice for applying these frameworks that takes the objection seriously without surrendering the interpretive gains that postcolonial theory affords.

Said's *Orientalism* identifies three distinguishable claims: a macro-historical claim about the emergence of Orientalist discourse in the context of modern European imperialism; a claim about the discursive production of the East as knowable, manageable, and

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[29]The proposition that the conditional admiration motif is a function of retrospective political-military position rather than of cultural or religious identity has implications for the postcolonial theoretical framework employed throughout this article. If the motif is structurally available to any victor writing retrospectively about a formidable enemy, then it is not specifically Orientalist in Said's sense — it does not uniquely characterise Latin Christian representations of the Islamic Other. What Said's framework still illuminates, however, is the systematic character of the Latin deployment of the motif across genres, periods, and political contexts, which exceeds what would be expected from a purely situational explanation. The structural availability of the motif and the systematic Latin deployment of it are complementary rather than competing observations.

[30]On the anachronism problem, see in particular Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1–32, who defends the application of modern critical frameworks to medieval materials on the grounds that the phenomena they describe — systematic categorisation and hierarchisation of human groups — precede the modern frameworks by which they are analysed. The present article's position aligns with Heng's while insisting on the specific medieval rhetorical and theological contexts that shape the operations under examination.

inferior; and a claim about the relationship between knowledge and power in cross-cultural representation.[31] The first claim — about modern imperialism — is inapplicable to the medieval period. The second and third claims are applicable at a structural level, with the qualification that the institutions through which discursive production operates in the medieval case (the Church, the Latin grammatical and rhetorical tradition, the chronicle genre) differ from those Said analyses (the university, colonial administration, Orientalist philology). The present article applies only the second and third claims, and only to specific rhetorical operations rather than to the macro-structure of a discourse.

Bhabha's concept of ambivalence — the simultaneous need to valorise and to subordinate the Other — is less historically specific than Said's macro-structural argument and more directly applicable to the rhetorical mechanics under analysis.[32] Geraldine Heng's defence of modern critical frameworks applied to medieval materials grounds this application theoretically: the phenomena described — systematic categorisation and hierarchisation of human groups on the basis of perceived constitutive difference — precede the modern frameworks by which they are analysed. The present article's practice is to apply postcolonial frameworks at the level of specific

[31] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 1–28, 72–73. Said's account of the 'Orientalist translation' — the production of a knowable, manageable, inferior East through Western interpretive frameworks — is applied here at the level of specific rhetorical operation rather than at the macro-structural level of discourse formation, which is the level at which it has been most contested by medievalists.

[32] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 85–92 ('Of Mimicry and Man'), 121–31 ('The Other Question'). Bhabha's formulation — mimicry as 'almost the same but not quite' — requires careful qualification when applied to medieval materials: the *Gesta* author does not seek Turkish mimicry of Christian martial culture; rather, the conditional clause projects a hypothetical Christian Turk as a figure of maximum valorisation that is then denied in favour of providential victory. This is mimicry's negative image: the Other is constituted as maximally capable precisely in order to be definitively subordinated.

textual operation rather than at the level of historical periodisation: it is not claimed that the *Gesta* author or John VIII were 'colonisers' in any meaningful sense, but that their texts deploy discursive strategies that share structural features with those Said and Bhabha identified in modern colonial contexts, features whose identification illuminates the texts in ways that purely historicist readings have not.

The Arabic counter-archive is, in this methodological context, not merely an additional source but a structural necessity. Without it, the claim of a 'discursive formation' risks being merely a claim about Latin rhetorical convention. The parallel with Usāma's conditional contempt demonstrates that the structural logic identified in the Latin texts — acknowledge practical capability, withhold full personhood — is not peculiar to Christian representational culture but a feature of cross-confessional frontier encounter more broadly. This symmetry both corroborates the structural analysis and guards against the reading of the analysis as a covert argument for Latin Christian cultural exceptionalism. Tolan himself, writing without postcolonial theoretical vocabulary, reaches a compatible conclusion: 'European images of Islam are often confused and contradictory... this contradiction is itself revealing.'[33]

8. CONCLUSION: RESULTS, LIMITS, AND RESEARCH AGENDA

This article set out to accomplish three things: to identify and analyse a specific rhetorical mechanism — the conditional admiration motif — operating across two chronologically and generically distinct Latin corpora; to read that mechanism against an

[33]Tolan, *Saracens*, xvii: 'European images of Islam are often confused and contradictory... Yet this contradiction is itself revealing: it shows how profoundly the image of the Saracen was shaped by European needs and fears rather than by any accurate knowledge of Islam.' This observation — made in the context of a book that does not use Said's or Bhabha's frameworks — independently corroborates the postcolonial reading offered here.

Arabic counter-archive that has been systematically underused in comparative analyses of medieval Christian-Muslim encounter; and to derive from that triangulation a general proposition about the structural conditions under which this mechanism becomes available to authors writing retrospectively about formidable adversaries. Each goal has been partially achieved; each has exposed new problems the article cannot resolve.

On the first goal: the close reading of the *Gesta Francorum*'s Turkish admiration passage (§3) has demonstrated, through syntactic analysis of the *nisi... quod Christiani non essent* construction, that the construction performs ideological containment at the level of grammar rather than of theological assertion alone. The comparison with Robert the Monk's grammatically sharpened subjunctive and Guibert of Nogent's eliminative irony (§3.2) has confirmed that the *Gesta*'s version is not naively reportorial but occupies a specific, historically significant position within a field of competing rhetorical solutions to the problem of representing a formidable and defeated enemy. The analysis of John VIII's letters has established the epistolary proto-crusading formation as the motif's chronological and rhetorical antecedent — exemplified most concretely in ep. 22 (875), where the Aghlabid Saracens are cast as territorial occupiers requiring urgent military coalition rather than theological exception — and has clarified why the full conditional clause is structurally unavailable to an author writing from *within*, rather than beyond, an unresolved military emergency: one cannot narrate the enemy's excellence as a tribute to God's grace before the victory has been confirmed.

On the second goal: the Arabic counter-archive has yielded not one mirror image but three distinct mechanisms. Usāma ibn Munqidh's *conditional contempt* (§6) grants Frankish military effectiveness while withholding intellectual and ritual standing — the same rhetorical grammar, opposite evaluative polarity. Ibn al-

Athīr's *amplified acknowledgement* (§6b) grants Frankish capability maximally in order to maximise the theological scale of the transgression and thereby the urgency of the providential call for Islamic recovery. Ibn Ḥayyān's *conditional clientelism* (§6c) represents Christian rulers primarily through the lens of political subordination to Umayyad sovereignty, foreclosing the theological exception clause that is available only from outside that sovereignty. What these three modes share is the structural pressure identified in the Latin material: the need to constitute the adversary as simultaneously capable and inferior. What they demonstrate, crucially, is that the Islamic tradition's representational response to that pressure is not monolithic but pragmatic, contextual, and conditioned by the author's political position — precisely as the Latin tradition's response proves to be.

On the third goal: the Iberian evidence (§6c) supports the general proposition that the conditional admiration motif is a function of retrospective political-military position rather than of cultural or religious identity. The hypothesis has explanatory power within the corpus examined here. Its explanatory limits are equally clear: it generates a falsifiable prediction — the motif should appear in Islamic historiographical contexts of confirmed victory over a Christian adversary, most obviously in accounts of Saladin's recovery of Jerusalem (1187) and the Fall of Constantinople (1453) — that awaits testing against the relevant Arabic, Ottoman, and Persian sources. If that prediction holds, the postcolonial framework employed here will require recalibration: Said's contribution will then lie in explaining the *systematic* Latin deployment of a structurally available mechanism rather than its invention. The article thus offers not only results but an open testing framework for subsequent comparative research.

The hypothesis's explanatory scope has determinate limits that should be stated plainly. The absence of a full critical edition of the *Gesta Francorum* collating all surviving witnesses constrains the philological claims of §3. The fragmentary state of the John VIII register limits the statistical weight that can be placed on the epistolary argument of §4. The Usāma analysis rests on two passages from a richer text. The convergent amplification hypothesis of §6b.3 requires a dedicated al-Qalānisī / Ibn al-Athīr comparison that the present article adumbrates but does not execute. These are not evasions; they are the research programme that follows from a claim that has been established at the level of the specific mechanism and not yet at the level of the general thesis.

Five research directions follow directly. (1) The convergent amplification hypothesis requires a systematic parallel reading of al-Qalānisī and Ibn al-Athīr against the *Gesta* and its rewritings, treating all as reception histories of the same events. (2) The general proposition should be tested against 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī's *al-Fatḥ al-Qussī* on Saladin's Jerusalem campaign — the test case most likely to confirm or falsify the cross-cultural structural claim. (3) A complete philological edition of the *Gesta* collating BnF MS Latin 14378, Vat. Reg. Lat. 572, and BL Harley 3904 would determine whether the *nisi* passage carries textual variants bearing on its rhetorical analysis. (4) Moore's framework of the persecuting society requires direct integration into §3.1: the grammatical localisation of non-Christianity as an inherent property of the Turkish subject — *in eis* — participates in precisely the classificatory logic Moore identifies across contemporaneous ecclesiastical and legal discourse on heresy and Jewish legal status. (5) The Iberian transition from Mozarab administrative recording through Reconquista martial valorisation to the eventual deployment of full conditional admiration in Alfonso X's *Primera Crónica General* constitutes an independent diachronic case study in the political conditioning of this construction's availability — one that merits monographic treatment.

The micro-level mechanism analysis illuminates the systematic Latin deployment; the systematic Latin deployment anchors the counter-archive's variety; and the counter-archive's variety — Arabic, Iberian Latin, Andalusi Arabic — in turn recontextualises the Latin formation as one configuration among several structurally comparable responses to the same cross-confessional pressure. This rhetorical construction is not merely a cultural stereotype of the Other. It is a dynamic barometer of power configurations: available to the retrospective victor, suppressed in the sovereign's administrative prose, inverted in the intimate memoir, amplified in the providential chronicle. That this barometer reads differently across traditions, genres, and political positions is precisely its analytical value.

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CHAPTER 2

THE CARTOGRAPHY OF ALTERITY: TURKISH, GERMAN, ENGLISH, AND GREEK IDENTITY CONSTRUCTIONS IN MODERN GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY (1830–2024)

CEM CEYHAN[1]

Introduction

The production of history textbooks constitutes one of modernity's most consequential sites of ideological labor. Within these pedagogical instruments, nations do not merely recount their pasts; they perform intricate rituals of self-fashioning wherein identity emerges through carefully calibrated encounters with difference. Modern Greek historiography, forged in the crucible of nineteenth-century independence struggles and refined through successive traumas of war, territorial loss, and geopolitical marginalization, offers a particularly rich terrain for examining how historical narratives construct both Self and Other within a single discursive field. This article interrogates the representational strategies through which Greek historiographic discourse from 1830 to 2024 has depicted four crucial identity categories: Turks,

[1] Dr., Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, English Department / Faculty of Foreign Languages, Orcid: 0000-0002-0514-798X

Germans, English, and Greeks themselves—approaching these representations not as transparent windows onto historical truth or as mere propaganda, but as complex psychosocial formations that reveal the deep structure of modern Greek national consciousness.

The central thesis challenges conventional assumptions about nationalist historiography's unidirectional flow from Self to Other. Greek identity in historiographic discourse emerges through what I term "triangulated alterity"—a process wherein the Greek subject position achieves provisional coherence by simultaneously differentiating itself from a demonized proximate Other (the Turk), seeking recognition from idealized distant Others (Germans and English as representatives of "Europe"), and negotiating the traumatic gap between its classical heritage and its Byzantine-Ottoman actuality. This triadic structure functions analogously to Jacques Lacan's schema of the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real orders: the Turkish presence operates as the traumatic Real that resists symbolic integration, the Western European gaze serves as the Symbolic authority whose recognition the Greek subject desperately seeks, and the idealized image of ancient Hellas functions as the Imaginary plenitude that conceals constitutive lack.

Recent scholarship has substantially advanced the study of Greek historiographic pedagogy. Kouki and Venturas's edited collection on historical memory and nationalism in Southeast Europe (Routledge, 2022), along with Gazi's work on historical time and reception in Greek popular culture, addresses overlapping questions of textbook ideology and national memory. The present study extends this scholarship in two directions that remain undertheorized: first, by applying a psychoanalytic framework that accounts for the libidinal investments—not merely the ideological functions—sustaining nationalist historiographic structures; and second, by analyzing all three principal Others as a systematic relational field rather than treating each in isolation. The concept of "triangulated alterity" and the demonstration of how Greek historiography simultaneously deploys Orientalist and Occidentalist discourses represents a contribution to the broader comparative literature on peripheral European nationalisms.

This study draws upon extensive secondary scholarship documenting Greek history textbook content and evolution. Where specific textbook content is cited, it reflects the systematic archival research of educational historians—particularly Frangoudaki and Dragonas, Tsoukalas, Vouri, Liakos, Repoussi, and Maroniti—who have conducted sustained analysis of Greek pedagogical materials held in institutional collections. As an Istanbul-based scholar, the author has privileged access to the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi and SALT Research collections, which inform the contextualization of Ottoman-period material, though the analysis of Greek-language pedagogical sources depends on the secondary scholarly record cited throughout.

Theoretical Scaffolding: Psychopolitical Reading

The theoretical apparatus synthesizes Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts with postcolonial historiographic frameworks and Althusserian ideology critique. Psychoanalysis provides tools for analyzing unconscious structures and affective investments that elude purely discursive analysis; postcolonial theory situates these psychological mechanisms within material histories of power and knowledge production; and Althusserian ISA analysis specifies the institutional machinery through which nationalist subjectivity is reproduced. The synthesis is transformative: the psychoanalytic framework explains why nationalist affect is so durable (it operates at the level of desire and identification), while the Althusserian framework explains why it is so systematic (it is reproduced through the compulsory daily rituals of education).

Jacques Lacan's theorization of the mirror stage (le stade du miroir) offers a foundational model for understanding identity formation that extends productively from individual psychology to collective identification. In Lacan's account, the mirror image presents an illusory wholeness—a gestalt simultaneously "me" and "not-me"—whose dialectic of recognition and misrecognition (méconnaissance) establishes selfhood as constitutively split (Lacan, "Mirror Stage" 75–81). Applied to collective identity formation—following adaptations pioneered by Žižek, Bhabha, and Gourgouris—this schema illuminates how national subjects achieve coherence through identificatory processes that paper over constitutive fragmentation. Modern Greece, forged from heterogeneous populations (Romeoi Christians under Ottoman administration, diaspora merchants, mountain klephts, island sailors, Albanian-speaking Orthodox Christians, Vlachs, Slavophone populations), required a unifying narrative that could transform this diversity into a singular "Hellenic" essence. Ancient Greece functioned as the mirroring surface—an idealized image promising civilizational greatness and European belonging, yet remaining fundamentally unattainable because the historical discontinuities separating ancient poleis from modern nation-state could never be fully bridged.

As Michael Herzfeld demonstrates in Ours Once More, this "disemia"—the dual consciousness of being simultaneously heirs to classical glory and subjects of Ottoman backwardness—generates profound ambivalence that Greek historiography perpetually attempts to manage through strategic narratives of continuity (Herzfeld 19–24). The triangulation generates what I call "economies of recognition"—systems wherein national prestige functions as a limited resource distributed unequally within hierarchical civilizational rankings, and wherein Greek claims to elevated status require both Turkish devaluation and Western validation.

Where Lacan illuminates the psychic mechanics of interpellation, Louis Althusser specifies its institutional vehicle. The school, as the dominant ideological state apparatus (ISA) in mature capitalist societies, reproduces ideology by instilling it into subjects through the daily rituals of education (Althusser 127–186). The Greek history textbook is precisely this vehicle: it does not merely convey information about the past but shapes the very subject who receives that information, installing patterns of identification, recognition, and desire that outlast conscious recall of any particular lesson. When textbooks insist that students memorize specific dates—1453, 1821, 1922—they are interpellating subjects into a shared temporal structure wherein these dates acquire sacred significance as markers of collective trauma and redemption (Tsoukalas 234–267). This mnemonic discipline parallels religious catechism, transforming contingent historical events into mandatory articles of national faith.

Lacan's concept of objet petit a—the unattainable object-cause of desire that sustains the subject's longing without ever providing satisfaction—illuminates further structures in Greek nationalist historiography (Lacan, Four Fundamental Concepts 176–186). Classical Greece operates as the lost object whose recovery would supposedly restore Hellenic greatness. The dream of enosis (unification of all Greek-inhabited territories) functioned historically as another instance: each territorial acquisition failed to deliver promised fulfillment, generating renewed desire for remaining "unredeemed" lands, as Koliopoulos and Veremis document (89–112). Most significantly, the Turkish Other operates as objet a in inverse form—as the obstacle whose removal would supposedly enable Greek flourishing, yet whose presence is paradoxically required as the structuring principle that justifies national vigilance.

Žižek's extension of Lacanian theory illuminates how this economy generates jouissance—a painful pleasure derived from sustaining victimization narratives (Žižek, Sublime Object 71–75). This argument does not dismiss real historical suffering; it recognizes that the narrative representation of that suffering within the textbook genre has exceeded purely informational functions, becoming a site of affective investment that subjects are reluctant to relinquish even when geopolitical circumstances change.

The postcolonial dimension is equally indispensable. Edward Said's Orientalism illuminates how Greek historiography participates in Orientalist discourse when representing Ottoman Turkey—depicting it as despotic, stagnant, and culturally barren precisely to establish Greek modernity and cultural sophistication by contrast (Said 1–28). Yet Maria Todorova's Imagining the Balkans demonstrates that Western European discourse also orientalized the Balkans—including Greece—as backward and incompletely European (Todorova 3–20). Greece occupies what I term a "doubled alterity position": deploying Orientalist rhetoric toward Turkey while experiencing orientalization from Western Europe. Greek historiography thus exhibits what Milica Bakić-Hayden calls "nesting orientalisms"—a cascading structure wherein each geographic position constructs its immediate eastern neighbor as inferior Orient while claiming civilizational superiority, even as it is itself orientalized by its western neighbor (Bakić-Hayden 918–922).

These frameworks together generate what I term "psychopolitical reading": a practice that attends simultaneously to the manifest level (explicit historical claims), the institutional level (how textbooks reproduce subjectivity across generations as ISAs), the affective level (how narratives structure desires and identifications that bind subjects to national identity below conscious assent), and the symptomatic level (what historiographic discourse cannot say but shows through its silences, repetitions, and distortions). This four-register method constitutes the article's core methodological contribution.

Founding Texts and Structural Patterns (1830–1880)

The emergence of modern Greek historiography cannot be separated from the material and ideological conditions of nation-state formation following the War of Independence (1821–1829). The newly established Greek kingdom—comprising initially only the Peloponnese, Central Greece, and the Cyclades—faced an acute crisis of legitimacy: its population was heterogeneous, its political system imposed by European Great Powers who installed a Bavarian prince (Otto I) as king, and its geographic and demographic reality bore little resemblance to the glorious ancient Hellas invoked by philhellenic supporters. Historiography emerged as a crucial technology for managing these contradictions, performing three essential functions: establishing temporal continuity between ancient glory and modern poverty; transforming religiously defined Romeoi populations into ethnically defined Hellenes; and justifying irredentist claims to still-Ottoman territories by demonstrating their perennial Greekness.

Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos (1815–1891) stands as the paramount architect of modern Greek historical consciousness. His monumental History of the Greek Nation from Ancient Times to Modern (1860–1874) resolved Greek historiography's central problem—how to connect the undeniable greatness of classical antiquity with the undeniable backwardness of Ottoman-ruled populations—through the "triadic continuity" model, which divided Greek history into three periods of equal civilizational significance: Ancient, Byzantine, and Modern Greece. As Kitromilides documents, declaring Byzantium "the true continuation of ancient Greece, the authentic Greek Middle Ages" accomplished several strategic objectives simultaneously: it filled the embarrassing gap of fifteen centuries; rehabilitated Orthodox Christianity as national identity marker; provided historical justification for territorial claims to Byzantine lands; and differentiated Greek from Latin Christianity, positioning Orthodoxy as specifically Hellenic ("On the Intellectual Content" 25–33).

The representational structures Paparrigopoulos established for each Other persist throughout Greek historiography with remarkable durability. The lexical field surrounding Ottoman actions centers on corporeal distress and animalistic subjugation: Sultans are "bloodthirsty," policies "strangle" Greek cultural life, and Ottoman rule constitutes a "yoke" (Frangoudaki and Dragonas 89–92). Turks are never granted positive historical agency—they conquer, destroy, and oppress, but they do not build, create, or contribute (Vouri 67–71). When confronted with the internal contradiction that Greeks survived four centuries of supposedly pure destruction, Paparrigopoulos invokes what Herzfeld terms "hermetic preservation": Hellenism maintained itself through the Orthodox Church in isolation from Turkish contamination, denying the extensive cultural exchange, linguistic borrowing, and shared material culture that historical evidence suggests (Ours Once More 109–115).

By contrast, Western Europeans in Paparrigopoulos receive strikingly different treatment. Where Turks "crush" and "strangle," Europeans "enlighten," "inspire," and "recognize" Greek rights. Lord Byron receives what Gourgouris calls "hagiographic treatment" as the poet-hero whose death at Missolonghi demonstrated that Greek liberty had become "the cause of all civilized humanity" (145). Yet this recognition comes at a cost that the founding texts struggle to articulate: European peoples (philhellenes, intellectuals, volunteers) are idealized as validating Greek worth, while European governments are critiqued as cynically self-interested—a split that preserves the desired identification with European civilization while displacing resentment onto geopolitical machinations (Koliopoulos and Veremis 78–82).

Tsoukalas's comprehensive analysis documents how these historiographic frameworks were rapidly translated into pedagogical materials that condensed complex history into simplified narratives suitable for memorization and moral instruction (234–289). The techniques—catechistic structure, moral didacticism, heroic personalization, enemy demonization—reproduce the structural asymmetry of the founding texts. Frangoudaki and Dragonas's extensive documentation reveals textbook patterns wherein Turkish actors receive no psychological interiority or rational motivation—they are pure malevolence—while Greek heroes receive extensive psychological portraiture and European actors instrumental rationality (145–178). This asymmetric distribution of subjectivity structures the identificatory possibilities available to student readers: identification runs through Greek heroic figures, recognition-seeking runs through European validating figures, and absolute negation organizes the Turkish position.

The Turkish Mirror: Enemy Intimacy and Constitutive Negation

The representation of Turkishness operates as what Lacan would term the constitutive Outside—the excluded element whose very exclusion enables the bordered coherence of the included Inside. Yet this relationship is not one of simple opposition but of "enemy intimacy": the Turkish Other is neither distant exotic foreigner nor fully external threat, but the proximate neighbor whose threatening closeness requires constant vigilance. Two structural features define this intimacy across all historiographic regimes examined here: the paradox of simultaneous weakness and danger, and the asymmetric memory that exhaustively documents Turkish atrocities while systematically erasing Greek violence.

The period of the Megali Idea (1880–1923) represents the apex of both Greek irredentism and anti-Turkish representational intensity. Textbooks represent the Ottoman Empire through biological metaphors of disease and death—the empire is "the Sick Man of Europe," an "aged body approaching inevitable death" (Frangoudaki and Dragonas 198–203). Yet the same textbooks simultaneously depict Turks as barbarically violent and threatening (Liakos, "Modern Greek Historiography" 368–371). The logical incompatibility—Turks are simultaneously too weak to govern and dangerously violent—is not a failure of ideological coherence but its very success: the contradiction expresses a double desire to believe Ottoman collapse inevitable while maintaining Turkish threat as real. This is ideology functioning at the affective rather than the cognitive register, where contradictions that would be unacceptable to conscious reasoning pass unnoticed because they serve distinct libidinal needs simultaneously.

The Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922—the defeat of Greek forces in Anatolia, the burning of Smyrna, and the massive population exchange displacing approximately 1.5 million Orthodox Christians from Turkey and 500,000 Muslims from Greece—constitutes Greek historiography's most traumatic rupture. Koliopoulos and Veremis document how revised textbooks exhibit two contradictory trauma responses: compulsive repetition of the catastrophic event, and defensive displacement of responsibility onto external forces (145–167). Primary responsibility falls on "the treachery of the Entente Powers"; secondary blame falls on internal political divisions; very limited agency is granted to Turkish forces themselves, with Mustafa Kemal's success attributed primarily to Western arms supplies and Greek political chaos rather than Turkish military capacity (Clogg 101–105). The representational investment in Turkish weakness was so profound that even catastrophic military defeat could not dislodge it: the narrative would rather blame Greek politicians and Western betrayal than grant Turks full historical agency.

The asymmetric memory structure reaches its most systematic form in this period. Textbooks devote exhaustive attention to Turkish violence against Greek civilians during the retreat, particularly the burning of Smyrna, with detailed descriptions designed to mobilize maximum pathos and establish Greece in the victim role (Nikolaou 1092–1095). Yet as Karakasidou documents, the same textbooks contain no discussion of Greek military atrocities against Turkish civilians during the 1919–1922 invasion and occupation of Anatolia, despite substantial historical documentation (156–178). This is not accidental deception but structural necessity: the nationalist fantasy requires Greeks to occupy the position of innocent victim, and acknowledging Greek perpetration would destabilize this identificatory position. What I term the "moral monopoly on victimhood"—exhaustive documentation of suffering endured, systematic erasure of violence committed—becomes the defining representational achievement of post-catastrophe Greek historiography.

The dictatorial period (1936–1974) witnesses this representational logic carried to its extreme. Textbooks mandated under the Metaxas regime's "Third Hellenic Civilization" ideology conflate ancient Persian, medieval Ottoman, and contemporary Turkish threats into a singular transhistorical Enemy: chapters on the Greco-Persian Wars conclude with assertions that modern Greeks continue ancient defensive missions, standing as sentinels against "the eternal Eastern threat" (Vouri 223–227). Zoological metaphors reach their most extreme form in this period—Turks as "wolves," "serpents," "swarms" of locusts (Frangoudaki and Dragonas 289–294)—performing the dehumanization that authoritarian militarization requires. The 1955 anti-Greek Istanbul pogrom receives extensive textbook coverage, concluding that the pogrom revealed Turkish state's "fundamental character as oppressor" unchanged despite modernization (Glinavou 395–398).

Western Mirrors: German Idealization and English Ambivalence

If Turkish representations operate as the demonized Other against whom Greek identity defines itself through negation, Western European representations function as the idealized and ambivalent Others whose recognition Greek identity desperately seeks. This asymmetry reveals the doubled alterity structure: Greece simultaneously positions itself superior to Turkey through Orientalist hierarchy and inferior to Western Europe through Occidentalist hierarchy. Yet German and English representations differ significantly in their internal structure—the former generating idealization with anxious defensiveness, the latter oscillating between gratitude and resentment without resolving into stable valence. This difference reflects the distinct relationships each Western power has had with Greek state formation and territorial ambitions.

German philhellenism during and after the Greek War of Independence provided crucial intellectual legitimation through classical scholarship that authenticated Greek continuity claims. As Kitromilides documents, for nineteenth-century Greek intellectuals, German universities represented the apex of scholarship and German philology provided the methodological tools for establishing Hellenic heritage (Enlightenment and Revolution 234–256). This created what I term an "economy of intellectual debt": Greek nationalism owed its very possibility to German scholarly validation, yet acknowledging this debt threatened to subordinate Greek to German authority. The representational response is profound ambivalence—extensive citation of German historians as unquestionable authorities combined with defensive assertions claiming for Greeks an intuitive knowledge that bypasses the need for German validation (Herzfeld 167–172).

The Fallmerayer controversy crystallizes this structure with particular clarity. Fallmerayer's thesis that modern Greeks descended primarily from Slavic and Albanian populations rather than ancient Hellenes constituted existential threat: if accepted, it would "obliterate the foundation of Hellenic claims to civilizational preeminence," as Skopetea argues (198–203). Greek historiography devoted extensive energy to refutation, deploying linguistic, archaeological, and anthropological evidence alongside ad hominem attacks questioning Fallmerayer's motives (Hamilakis 167–189). This double response—vehement rejection combined with obsessive engagement—illuminates the structure Bhabha calls "colonial mimicry" (85–92): when German scholarship affirms Greek claims it is celebrated, when it questions them it is rejected but never ignored. German scholarship is the Symbolic Big Other whose gaze determines Greek worth, making German validation at once desperately desired and structurally insufficient.

The Bavarian monarchy (1833–1862) materializes this economy in institutional form. The Great Powers' installation of Otto von Wittelsbach subjected the newly independent nation to what Gourgouris terms quasi-colonial administration (156–178). Historiographic representation of this period exhibits contradictory impulses—gratitude toward Ludwig I and Otto for supporting Greek independence, resentment toward Bavarian administrators for colonial-style rule, embarrassment that Greek independence required foreign monarchical imposition—generating a split between idealized cultural patron (Ludwig) and resented colonial administrator that allows historiography to maintain German idealization at the cultural level while displacing resentment onto administrative practice (Clogg 34–48). The developmental metaphor employed to celebrate the 1843 revolution that expelled Bavarian administrators—tutelage, maturity, self-governance—reproduces paternalistic colonial discourse even while celebrating its termination, revealing how deeply the colonial framework had been internalized.

The German occupation (1941–1944) forced radical revision through temporal splitting: post-war textbooks construct a "true Germany" of Goethe, Beethoven, and philhellenism against a "false Germany" of Nazism, represented as aberration or pathology rather than authentic German expression (Liakos, "Modern Greek Historiography" 374–376). The contrast with anti-Turkish rhetoric is analytically crucial: where Turkish antagonism is presented as transhistorical essence ("the eternal Eastern threat"), German atrocities are framed as temporary corruption of an otherwise admirable national character. This asymmetry reflects geopolitical calculation rather than historical reasoning—Turkey remained perceived permanent threat, while Germany was potential ally within Cold War and European integration frameworks. Post-2010 economic crisis narratives revived historical grievances, with textbooks noting that German "insistence on harsh austerity measures, often articulated through condescending rhetoric, reviving historical memories of occupation and war reparations never paid" (Nikolaou 1097–1099).

English representations exhibit a structurally distinct oscillation between grateful recognition and resentful critique that never stabilizes into the idealization characterizing German representations. Britain is simultaneously savior (Byron, Navarino) and betrayer (London Conference borders, delayed Ionian cession, Cyprus), generating what psychoanalysis recognizes as "splitting"—the defense mechanism wherein ambivalent objects are divided into idealized and persecutory aspects to manage intolerable contradiction. The hagiographic treatment of Byron—"immortal poet-hero," "eternal martyr," "sacrifice"—positions him as bridge between civilizations validating Greek worth through his recognition (Gourgouris 145–152). Yet the same texts narrate the 1830 London Conference borders as "criminally inadequate," reflecting "British concern to preserve Ottoman integrity against Russian expansion rather than genuine commitment to Hellenic self-determination" (Skopetea 167–173).

The Cyprus narrative (1878–2024) represents the fullest deployment of betrayal rhetoric against Britain. Post-World War II textbooks narrate the EOKA campaign (1955–1959) as "heroic Greek Cypriot liberation struggle against British colonial occupation," with British repression described using lexicon—"brutal," "torture," "collective punishments"—previously reserved for Ottoman actions (Repoussi, "Politics Questions History Education" 115–118). Britain has shifted from idealized position toward perpetrator category within the representational economy, marking the outer limit of British valorization. Post-1974 textbooks distribute Cyprus catastrophe responsibility across multiple actors: the "criminal Greek military junta," "Turkish expansionist aggression," and "British failure" to prevent Turkish intervention despite treaty obligations (Economou 362–365). The distributed responsibility formula attempts to explain catastrophe without fully confronting Greek culpability, positioning Britain as passive enabler rather than active perpetrator to preserve the possibility of future European partnership.

Across both German and English representations, a consistent structural pattern emerges: admiration for cultural and institutional achievements (German classical scholarship, British parliamentary democracy) coexists with resentment of political and colonial practices. This coexistence is not ideological inconsistency but strategic coherence—it allows Greek historiography to claim European civilizational belonging (validated by cultural admiration of European institutions) while resisting European political authority (justified by resentment of colonial and geopolitical manipulation). The "doubled alterity position" requires precisely this: enough identification with European civilization to establish Greek belonging, enough differentiation from European political authority to maintain Greek distinctiveness and historical grievance.

The Mirror Turned Inward: Greek Self-Representation

The reflexive construction of Greekness reveals that Greek self-representation, far from being stable essence transparently described, is actively produced through historiographic labor that constantly negotiates between ancient idealization, Byzantine rehabilitation, Ottoman trauma, and modern aspiration. The psychopolitical reading here attends to what this production requires—what it must include, exclude, distort, and fantasize—as much as to what it explicitly claims.

The foundational structure is Paparrigopoulos's "triadic continuity"—the thesis that ancient, Byzantine, and modern Greece constitute three phases of a single, unbroken civilizational trajectory. Maintaining this continuity requires substantial historiographic labor to manage obvious discontinuities: language evolution, religious transformation, political forms, cultural practices substantially shaped by Roman, Slavic, and Ottoman influences. The textbook resolution is what I term "superficial change, essential persistence"—acknowledging surface-level historical changes while asserting unchanged deep essence (Frangoudaki and Dragonas 89–112; Vouri 67–89). The religious transformation from polytheism to Christianity presents the most severe challenge. The solution employs bifurcation: ancient religion is recoded as "mythology" rather than genuine belief system, thereby reducing it to cultural expression, while Christianity is positioned not as foreign import but as natural evolution of Greek philosophical monotheism, with Byzantine Greeks credited with "perfecting Christianity through

Greek theological precision" (Kitromilides, Enlightenment and Revolution 178–189).

Greek historiography's second major self-representational strategy is "heroic personalization"—the focus on exemplary individuals who embody national virtues and provide moral instruction. The pantheon exhibits careful temporal distribution: ancient figures (Perikles, Leonidas, Alexander), Byzantine figures (Constantine I, Basil II, Constantine XI), and modern figures (Rigas Feraios, Kolokotronis, Venizelos) each receive extensive biographical treatment emphasizing character virtues (Tsoukalas 312–345; Vouri 156–178). The representation of Leonidas and Thermopylae epitomizes this technique: every Greek student memorizes the account of 300 Spartans sacrificing themselves against overwhelming Persian forces in 480 BCE, with the "Molon labe" quotation presented as what Hamilakis terms "monumentalized memory" expressing permanent Greek essence rather than context-specific response (142–156). Textbook narratives frame Leonidas's choice as philosophical principle establishing honor above biological survival—yet systematically omit the historical complexities that would undermine moral simplicity: Thermopylae was a strategic delaying action involving several thousand allied troops; Spartan military culture was based on helot slavery; Leonidas's decision reflected Spartan honor codes particular to that society (Kalyvas 34–38). Constantine XI Palaiologos, the last Byzantine emperor, constructs the quintessential tragic hero narrative: his death defending Constantinople against Ottoman forces becomes spiritual victory because it "ensured Greek spirit survived to inspire future liberation" (Gourgouris 178–189)—physical defeat transmuted into teleological necessity through the logic of nationalist fantasy.

The overwhelming masculine character of this heroic pantheon reveals how Greek national identity is constructed as fundamentally masculine enterprise (Gardika 935–945). Women appear almost exclusively in subordinate or symbolic roles: mothers of heroes, victims requiring male protection, or allegorical figures. Bouboulina (Laskarina Bouboulina), naval commander during the War of Independence, is represented as exceptional woman whose military participation required special justification, described as possessing "masculine courage" (Frangoudaki and Dragonas 298–303). Women function as stakes rather than agents—what men fight to protect, what gives male sacrifice meaning. The virtual absence of discussion regarding ancient Greek women's subordinate legal status or domestic confinement reveals historiography's selective memory: such information would contradict the narrative of ancient Greece as origin of democracy and human dignity.

Internal boundaries of authentic Greekness are policed with similar intensity. The Greek Civil War (1946–1949) posed the most extreme challenge to unified national representation: right-wing government textbooks describe "communist bandits serving Soviet interests rather than Greek national welfare," excluding communists from authentic Greek identity (Liakos, "Modern Greek Historiography" 376–378). Post-1974 democratic textbooks adopt symmetrical blame—"both sides committing atrocities"—that contains the conflict within acceptable parameters while ruling out any interpretation that might vindicate the losing side's political project (378–381). The language question (glossiko zitima), debated from the nineteenth century through the 1976 official adoption of demotic Greek, similarly reveals the purity anxieties structuring Greek self-representation. Textbooks written in katharevousa position purified language as restoration of authentic Greek essence corrupted by Ottoman contamination; demotic adoption required reframing not as concession but as discovery of the authentic popular linguistic heritage (Mackridge 278–283). In both cases, the ideological content—the nationalist narrative itself—survives formal challenge intact. The ISA absorbs surface revisions while preserving the identificatory structures that constitute its function.

Contemporary Contestations: Historiography In Crisis and Renewal

The post-Cold War era has witnessed unprecedented challenges to established Greek historiographic frameworks from multiple directions simultaneously: European integration pressures for post-national pedagogy, the 2006 textbook controversy that tested the limits of critical historiography in nationalist contexts, economic crisis that reactivated historical grievances, and demographic transformation that confronted ethnocentric frameworks with multicultural reality.

The 2006 textbook controversy constitutes the decisive test case. The revised sixth grade textbooks authored by Maria Repousi and colleagues incorporated recent historiographic scholarship emphasizing regional diversity, internal conflicts, cultural exchanges with Ottoman neighbors, and non-Greek perspectives including brief passages from Turkish sources (Maroniti 325–331). The public reaction was intensely hostile: conservative media accused the textbooks of "national treason," the Orthodox Church condemned "relativistic historiography," and parent associations protested that textbooks would fail to instill proper national pride. The Ministry of Education ultimately shelved the new textbooks entirely, returning to previous editions with minor updates (Maroniti 340–343).

Analyzing the controversy through the psychopolitical reading developed here reveals multiple dynamics operating simultaneously. The revised textbooks challenged the mirror stage structure wherein Greek identity achieves coherence through identification with idealized ancient image: by emphasizing historical complexity and moral ambiguity, they disrupted the fantasy of plenitude that nationalist narratives provide, confronting students with Greek perpetration of violence that destabilized the pure victim identification (Repoussi, "Politics Questions History Education" 119–121). The inclusion of Turkish perspectives threatened the constitutive alterity structure—if Turks possess legitimate viewpoints and historical grievances, the absolute binary separating civilized Greeks from barbaric Turks collapses. The controversy further revealed the persistence of "pedagogical nationalism"—the expectation that history education's primary function is identity formation and patriotic instruction rather than critical inquiry, with public statements asserting that "children need heroes to admire and enemies to recognize, not academic complexity that undermines their sense of belonging" (qtd. in Maroniti 336). The Ministry's capitulation demonstrated that despite decades of critical historiography in universities, popular nationalism retained sufficient political force to veto pedagogical reforms. Nationalist affect—the emotional investments, identificatory pleasures, and compensatory pride nationalist narratives provide—cannot be dislodged through rational argument or scholarly evidence alone because it operates at libidinal levels that exceed cognitive processing.

European integration pressures (intensifying after Maastricht 1992 and Eurozone entry 2001) generated textbooks supplementing traditional nationalist narratives with European integration chapters asserting that "Greece's history of struggle for freedom and democracy positioned it naturally for European Union membership" (Kokosalakis 223–225). Yet as Kokosalakis argues, this synthesis is unstable: if European values derive from Greek origins, Greece isn't really joining Europe but rather Europe is belatedly recognizing Greek primacy (225–228). The 2010–2015 economic crisis reactivated nationalist narratives, with the 2015 textbook edition reviving historical grievances previously downplayed—German "insistence on harsh austerity measures, often articulated through condescending rhetoric, reviving historical memories of occupation and war reparations never paid" (Nikolaou 1097–1099). EU pressure to soften hostile representations of Turkey generated modifications that reduced but did not eliminate anti-Turkish rhetoric, with textbooks characterizing relations as "historically difficult, marked by conflicts and mutual suspicions" while asserting that "opportunities emerge for reconciliation based on mutual respect" (Glinavou 402–405)—diplomatic language preserving core Greek grievances while gesturing toward partnership.

Greece's transformation from emigration source to immigration destination confronted ethnocentric historiographic frameworks with multicultural demographic reality (Ktistakis 112–127; Theodosiou 567–583). Textbooks' primary response is "incorporation without transformation": acknowledging immigrant presence while insisting Greek national identity remains unchanged. Recent editions assert that immigrants contribute to "Greek economy and society" while "Greek national identity, rooted in millennia of history, language, and Orthodox faith, remains foundation of Greek society" (Theodosiou 573–575). The framework is assimilationist: immigrants can join Greek society but only through assimilation, not through multiculturalism that would transform Greek identity itself. Despite substantial feminist historiography documenting women's historical agency, gender history has been similarly tokenized in textbook revisions: single paragraphs noting women's suffrage (1952) and increasing political participation, without systematic analysis of women's historical subordination or ongoing inequalities (Gardika 945–948). In both cases, the ISA absorbs surface revisions—acknowledging immigration, noting women in politics—while preserving the identificatory structures of ethnically homogeneous masculine Hellenism that constitute its deeper function.

Conclusion: The Unfinished Mirror

This investigation of Turkish, German, English, and Greek representations in modern Greek historiography has demonstrated that textbook narratives function not as transparent windows onto historical truth but as complex psychosocial mechanisms producing national identity through calculated presentations of Self and Other. The psychopolitical reading developed here has illuminated how nationalist historiography operates through the interlocked mechanisms of Lacanian mirror-stage dynamics, Althusserian ISA reproduction, and postcolonial knowledge production: Greek identity achieves provisional coherence through identification with idealized ancient image (Imaginary plenitude), seeks validation from Western European authorities whose recognition determines worth (Symbolic order), defines itself against Turkish presence as traumatic Real that both threatens and consolidates national boundaries, and reproduces all these structures through the compulsory daily rituals of the educational ISA. This account explains both why nationalist affect is so durable and why it is so systematic—two features of nationalist identification that neither psychoanalytic nor sociological approaches alone can adequately address.

The analysis has traced both continuities and ruptures across nearly two centuries of historiographic production. Continuities include: the triadic continuity thesis linking ancient, Byzantine, and modern periods; the representation of Turkish presence as traumatic rupture requiring erasure; the dependency on Western European recognition as source of legitimacy; the heroic personalization pedagogy focusing on exemplary male figures; the erasure of Greek-perpetrated violence; and the fantasy of linguistic and cultural purity achieved through elimination of foreign contamination. Ruptures include: the post-1922 Catastrophe's narrative recalibration; the post-1974 democratic transition's limited critical opening; European integration pressures for post-national frameworks; and the economic crisis's reactivation of nationalist grievances while exposing EU's neo-colonial dimensions (Liakos, "Modern Greek Historiography" 376–381; Nikolaou 1095–1104). The 2006 textbook controversy demonstrates the limits of critical historiography within nationalist contexts, revealing that popular nationalism retains sufficient political force to veto pedagogical reforms even when academic scholarship has substantially revised the nationalist orthodoxies underlying them.

This study makes three contributions to comparative scholarship. First, it demonstrates that history education constitutes ideological state apparatus in Althusser's sense, reproducing national identification through institutional structures with daily, compulsory reach. Second, it reveals how peripheral nationalisms deploy both Orientalist and Occidentalist discourses simultaneously, constructing "doubled alterity positions" that complicate postcolonial theory's binary frameworks. Greece's case exemplifies "semi-peripheral colonial modernity," where cascading hierarchies mean each position orientalizes those below while being orientalized from above (Bakić-Hayden 918–922; Todorova 15–20). Third, the concept of "triangulated alterity"—wherein national identity achieves provisional coherence through simultaneous demonization of proximate threat, idealization of validating authority, and fantasmatic identification with classical origin—offers a framework applicable to other peripheral European nationalisms where similar triple structures of national self-fashioning can be identified.

Several limitations qualify these findings. The study's reliance on secondary scholarly documentation of textbook content, while methodologically justified given archival constraints, means that interpretive claims are mediated through prior scholarly analyses. Comparative analysis of Turkish historiography's representation of Greeks would illuminate how mirror-image enemy constructions operate reciprocally (Glinavou 391–407). Reception studies examining how students actually internalize, resist, or transform textbook narratives would provide essential data about historiographic pedagogy's actual effects as opposed to its intended effects as produced text (Economou 358–363). The near-complete erasure of Jewish history from Greek textbooks—despite the significant Jewish communities that existed for centuries and the Holocaust's devastating impact on Greek Jewish populations—represents a particularly important gap requiring dedicated research.

The mirror through which Greek historiography constructs national identity remains, in this sense, permanently unfinished. It cannot achieve the perfect reflection nationalist fantasy promises because historical reality perpetually exceeds and contradicts the idealized image. Yet this incompleteness need not be experienced as failure or loss. It might instead be embraced as democratic possibility—the opening through which citizens encounter history not as received catechism but as contested terrain requiring interpretation, judgment, and perpetual reworking. If the mirror's incompleteness becomes visible to students as they learn history, they might develop not nationalist certainty but what Paul Ricoeur calls "critical belonging"—attachment to communities and traditions combined with the capacity to question, revise, and transform inherited narratives (Ricoeur 79–92). Such historiography would refuse nationalist fantasy's seductive certainties, insisting instead on history's complexity, ambiguity, and ongoing contestation—a recognition that enables rather than forecloses democratic citizenship's critical and ethical dimensions.

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CHAPTER 3

ÖTEKİLERDEN YÜKSELEN SESLER POSTKOLONYAL ROMANDA KİMLİK VE DİRENİŞ

ESRA BAŞAK KURTULUŞ[1]

Bu makale, Assia Djebar'ın *L'Amour, la fantasia* ve Leïla Sebbar'ın *La Seine était rouge* adlı eserlerinde postkolonyal kimlik ve direniş sorununu, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak ve Rosi Braidotti'nin kuramsal yaklaşımları ışığında incelemektedir. Bu romanlar, melez öznellikleri, madun (subaltern) sesleri ve göçebe (nomadik) yaşam çizgilerini görünür kılarak sömürgeci ve sömürge sonrası tarihin eleştirel bir yeniden okumasını sunmakta; silinmeye ve kültürel tahakküme karşı farklı direniş biçimlerini ortaya koymaktadır. Homi Bhabha'nın kuramı, bu iki eserin sömürgeci ikilikleri nasıl yapısöküme uğrattığını anlamamıza yardımcı olur. Bhabha, kimliklerin sömürgeci tahakküm mantığının ötesinde yeniden tanımlandığı bir "üçüncü mekân" (third space) kavramı geliştirir. *L'Amour, la fantasia*'da Assia Djebar, sömürge arşivlerini, Cezayirli kadınların tanıklıklarını ve sürgündeki bir yazar olarak kendi öznel deneyimini üst üste getirerek çok katmanlı bir anlatı kurar. Bu teknik, resmî tarihin azınlık anlatıları tarafından altüst

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[1] Doç. Dr., Erzincan Binali Yıldırım Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi , Orcid: 0000-0001-8035-5917

edildiği bir alan yaratır. Tarihsel olarak sömürge baskısının simgesi olan Fransızca, paradoksal biçimde özgürleşmenin ve kimliğin yeniden inşasının aracı hâline gelir. *La Seine était rouge*’da Leïla Sebbar benzer bir yaklaşım benimseyerek 17 Ekim 1961’de Paris’te gerçekleşen katliamı, Fransız-Cezayirli karma bir aileden gelen genç bir melez kızın gözünden anlatır. Bu anlatı tercihi, postkolonyal mirasların karmaşıklığını ve istikrarlı, bütüncül bir kimliğin imkânsızlığını vurgular. Sömürgeci ile sömürgeleştirilen arasındaki katı karşıtlığın ötesine geçen bu eserler, kültürel ve ulusal sınırları sorgulayan melez öznellikleri görünür kılar. Gayatri Spivak’ın madun (subaltern) kuramı, bu romanların azınlık sesleri sorununu nasıl ele aldığını açıklamaktadır. Spivak’a göre madunlar, özellikle de sömürgeleştirilmiş kadınlar, çoğu zaman konuşma imkânından yoksun bırakılır; çünkü söylemleri ya silinir ya da iktidar yapıları tarafından dolaylı anlatılır.

L’Amour, la fantasia’da Djebar, Cezayirli kadın savaşçıların seslerini yeniden görünür kılmaya çalışır; ancak bu tanıklıklar parçalanmış, sessizlik ve tarihsel sansürle işaretlenmiş bir biçimde karşımıza çıkar. *La Seine était rouge*’da ise Sebbar, Fransa’daki polis şiddetinin kurbanı olan Cezayirlilerin bastırılmış hafızasını gün yüzüne çıkarır. Böylece roman, unutma mekanizmalarını ve resmî anlatılar tarafından silinmiş bir geçmişin yeniden kurulmasının zorluklarını sorgular. Bu anlatılar aracılığıyla yazı, direnişin bir biçimine dönüşür; madunun görünmez kılınmasına karşı çıkar ve onun tarihteki varlığını yeniden teyit eder. Rosi Braidotti’nin “göçebe özne” (nomadic subject) kavramı ise bu romanlarda hareket hâlindeki kimliklerin nasıl temsil edildiğini analiz etmemize olanak tanır. *L’Amour, la fantasia*’nın anlatıcısı farklı diller ve coğrafyalar arasında gidip gelir; bu durum parçalı ve akışkan bir öznelliği yansıtır. Benzer şekilde, *La Seine était rouge*’un kahramanı da kendisine dayatılan sabit kimlik kategorilerini reddederek ulus-devletin katı sınırlarından kaçan göçebe bir duruş sergiler. Djebar ve

Sebbar, tarihi ötekileştirimiş sesler aracılığıyla yeniden kurarak egemen anlatıları yapısöküme uğratırlar ve kimliği tamamlanmış bir öz değil, sürekli oluş hâlindeki bir süreç olarak kavrayan postkolonyal bir okuma önerirler. Melezlik, madun seslerin yeniden ortaya çıkışı ve sabit kimliklerin reddi sayesinde bu yazarlar, yazılarını direniş, hafızanın geri kazanımı ve postkolonyal öznenin yeniden kuruluşu ekseninde şekillendirirler.

Giriş

Postkolonyal kadın anlatıları, hafıza ile unutuluş, kimlik ile ötekilik, dil ile sessizlik arasındaki çoklu gerilimlerin kesişim noktasında yer alır. Bu anlatılar, sömürgeci ve sömürge sonrası tarihin egemen anlatılarına meydan okuyan bir geçmişi yeniden sahiplenme sürecinin parçasıdır. *L'Amour, la fantasia* adlı eserinde Assia Djebar ve *La Seine était rouge* adlı eserinde Leïla Sebbar, bu dinamiği parçalanmış öznellikler, uzun süre ötekileştirilmiş sesler ve akışkan kimlik güzergâhları aracılığıyla somutlaştırırlar. Bu iki eser yalnızca sömürge geçmişine tanıklık etmekle kalmaz; aynı zamanda çağdaş söylemlerde varlığını sürdüren sembolik tahakküm mekanizmalarını da yapısöküme uğratır. Postkolonyal kadın anlatıları, direniş ve belleğin yeniden inşası arasında işleyen ikili bir hareketle karakterize edilir. Marianne Hirsch'in *The Generation of Postmemory* (2012) adlı eserinde vurguladığı üzere, sömürge geçmişinin aktarımı kolektif hafıza ile bireysel öznelliğin iç içe geçtiği bir süreç üzerine kuruludur. Djebar ve Sebbar, kurmacayı susturulmuş olanlara ses vermenin bir aracı olarak kullanırken, belleğin duyusal ve bedensel boyutunu da öne çıkarırlar (Hirsch, 2012).

L'Amour, la fantasia, farklı zaman katmanlarını bir araya getirir: Cezayir'in sömürge tarihi, bağımsızlık savaşçılarının tanıklıkları ve iki dil ile iki kültür arasında sürgünde yaşayan yazarın kişisel deneyimi (Donadey, 2000). Bu parçalı yapı, Ann Laura

Stoler'ın *Along the Archival Grain* (2009) adlı çalışmasında geliştirdiği "palimpsestik bellek" (palimpsestic memory) kavramını somutlaştırır; burada sömürge arşivleri, daha önce bu arşivlerin dışında bırakılmış olanlar tarafından yeniden yazılır. Benzer şekilde *La Seine était rouge*, resmî tarihten silinmiş bir olaya odaklanır: 17 Ekim 1961'de Paris'te yüzlerce Cezayirlinin Fransız polisi tarafından öldürüldüğü katliam (House & MacMaster, 2006). Sebbar, anlatının merkezine melez kökenli genç bir kızı yerleştirerek travmanın kuşaklararası aktarımını ve Fransa'daki postkolonyal mirası görünür kılar (Eaglestone, 2014).

Homi K. Bhabha'nın *The Location of Culture* (1994) adlı eserinde geliştirdiği melezlik (hybridity) kavramı, bu romanların sömürgeci ikilikleri nasıl yapısöküme uğrattığını anlamamıza yardımcı olur. Bhabha'ya göre melezlik, kimliklerin ne sabit ne de homojen olduğu; sürekli dönüşüm hâlinde bulunduğu bir etkileşim alanını ifade eder. Bu dinamik özellikle *L'Amour, la fantasia*'da belirgindir; çünkü Djebar Fransız dilini sahiplenirken onu çok sesli ve kadınsı bir yazı aracılığıyla dönüştürür ve altüst eder (Lionnet, 1995). *La Seine était rouge*'da ise anlatıcı iki kültürel miras arasında bölünmüş durumdadır; bu durum Bhabha'nın "üçüncü mekân" (third space) kavramını somutlaştırır. Üçüncü mekân, kimliklerin ulusun katı kategorilerinin ötesinde yeniden yapılandırıldığı bir alandır (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002). Böylece sömürgeci ile sömürgeleştirilen arasındaki sınır bulanıklaşırken, bireysel hafıza ile kolektif hafıza arasındaki ayrım da giderek silikleşir.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, temel metni olan *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) adlı makalesinde, madunların (subalternler), özellikle de kadınların, çoğu zaman özerk bir konuşma alanından yoksun bırakıldığını ileri sürer. Bu sorun, egemen anlatılar tarafından silinmiş sesleri yeniden kurmaya çalışan Djebar ve Sebbar'ın anlatılarında merkezi bir yer tutar. *L'Amour, la fantasia*'da Cezayirli kadın direnişçilerin tanıklıkları parçalı bir biçimde aktarılır ve sessizlikle işaretlenir. Böylece Djebar, sömürgeleştirilmiş kadınların yaşanmış deneyimlerinin aktarılmasının gerçekten mümkün olup olmadığını sorgular (Mortimer, 1997). Benzer bir durum *La Seine était rouge*'da da gözlemlenir. Burada 17 Ekim 1961'in belleği dolaylı anlatılar aracılığıyla aktarılır; bu da özerk bir tarihsel sese ulaşmanın güçlüğünü ortaya koyar (Ross, 2002).

Son olarak, Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* (1994) adlı eserinde, sabit kimlik kategorilerinden kaçan ve sürekli yer değiştirme hâlinde bulunan bir özne fikrini geliştirir. *L'Amour, la fantasia*'da anlatıcı farklı diller ve coğrafyalar arasında hareket eder; bu durum, kesin sınıflandırmalara direnen göçebe bir öznelliği yansıtır (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980). Benzer şekilde *La Seine était rouge*'da genç kahraman da ne tamamen Fransız ne de tamamen Cezayirli olan bir kimlik arayışı içinde akışkan bir konum benimser. Bu katı aidiyet biçimlerini reddediş, sömürge tarihinin dayattığı kimliksel zorunluluklara karşı bir direniş biçimi oluşturur (Boehmer, 2005).

Bu makalenin amacı, Assia Djebar'ın *L'Amour, la fantasia* ve Leïla Sebbar'ın *La Seine était rouge* adlı eserlerinin, parçalanmış ve göçebe kadın öznellikleri aracılığıyla sömürgeci ve postkolonyal tarihin hegemonik anlatılarını nasıl yapısöküme uğrattığını incelemektir. Özellikle Rosi Braidotti, Homi Bhabha ve Gayatri Spivak'ın postkolonyal ve feminist kuramlarından hareketle bu çalışma, söz konusu yazarların kullandıkları anlatısal ve estetik stratejileri analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu eserler, sabit kimlik kategorilerini, egemen söylemlerin dayattığı sessizlikleri ve belleğe ilişkin alternatif kurma biçimlerini sorgulamaktadır.

Bu doğrultuda analizimize yön verecek temel araştırma soruları şunlardır:

- Djebar ve Sebbar, katı kimlik çerçevelerinden kaçan parçalanmış kadın öznelliklerini nasıl inşa etmektedir?
- Bu anlatılarda postkolonyal bellek, unutma ile geçmişi yeniden sahiplenme arasındaki gerilim alanı olarak nasıl şekillenmektedir?
- Bu anlatılar, Spivak'ın madun seslere ilişkin yaklaşımı doğrultusunda sessizlik ve kadın söylemi sorununu nasıl ele almaktadır?
- Djebar ve Sebbar'ın yazını hangi ölçüde Braidotti'nin "göçebe özne" kavramını somutlaştırmakta ve bunu egemen postkolonyal söylemlere karşı bir direniş aracına dönüştürmektedir?

Bu sorular, söz konusu iki eserin belleği ve kimliği nasıl yeniden icat ettiğini; çok sesli, kadınsı ve postkolonyal bir yazı aracılığıyla bunu nasıl gerçekleştirdiğini incelememize olanak sağlayacaktır. Böylece Djebar ve Sebbar'ın eserleri, yalnızca tarihsel sessizlikleri görünür kılan metinler olarak değil, aynı zamanda kimlik, hafıza ve direniş arasındaki ilişkileri yeniden düşünen kurucu yazınsal müdahaleler olarak değerlendirilebilecektir.

Homi Bhabha ve Kültürel Melezlik: Direniş Mekânı Olarak Üçüncü Mekân

Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994) adlı eserinde melezliği (hybridity), postkolonyal kimliklerin sömürgeci ikiliklerin ötesinde yeniden yapılandırıldığı bir alan olarak kuramsallaştırır. Ona göre kültürel melezlik, yalnızca egemen ve tahakküm altındaki kültürlerin yan yana gelmesinden ibaret değildir; aksine, sömürgeci tarafından dayatılan normların saptırıldığı ve altüst edildiği dinamik bir yeniden icat sürecidir. Bu dönüşüm, Bhabha'nın "üçüncü mekân" (third space) olarak adlandırdığı alanda gerçekleşir. Üçüncü mekân, sabit kimliklerin çözülerek yerini sürekli müzakere hâlindeki yeni öznelliklere bıraktığı ara bir bölgedir (Bhabha, 1994).

L'Amour, la fantasia'da Assia Djebar bu mantığı bütünüyle benimser. Yazar, sömürge arşivlerini, sözlü tanıklıkları ve otobiyografik anlatıyı iç içe geçirerek, resmî tarihin tek sesliliğine direnen çok sesli (polyphonique) bir metin oluşturur. Bu yöntem aracılığıyla, özellikle Cezayirli kadınların sesleri olmak üzere uzun süre ötekileştirilmiş anlatıları görünür kılarak sömürgeci söylemi yapısöküme uğratır. Djebar'ın sömürgecinin dili olan Fransızcayı kullanması, fakat onu parçalı ve şiirsel bir üslupla yeniden kurması, Robert J. C. Young'ın *Colonial Desire* (1995) adlı eserinde analiz ettiği sömürgesel dilin ikircikli doğasını mükemmel biçimde örnekler. Young, sömürgeci iktidarın dili olarak işlev gören bir dilin aynı zamanda direniş ve altüst etme aracı olarak yeniden sahiplenilebileceğini göstermektedir (Young, 1995).

Üçüncü mekân kavramı, Leïla Sebbar'ın *La Seine était rouge* adlı eserinde de belirgin biçimde ortaya çıkar. Cezayir kökeni ile Fransız kimliği arasında bölünmüş olan melez (métisse) kadın kahraman, hafıza ile unutma arasındaki gerilimi somutlaştırır. 17 Ekim 1961 katliamına ilişkin gerçeği araştırma sürecinde, yasaklanmış bir bellek alanına girer ve resmî tarihten silinmiş anlatıları görünür kılar. Sebbar, bu tarihsel olayı kurmaca aracılığıyla yeniden kolektif hayal gücüne dâhil ederek, Benjamin Stora'nın "postkolonyal karşı-bellek" (contre-mémoire postcoloniale) olarak tanımladığı olguyu öne çıkarır. Bu bağlamda edebiyat, egemen tarih anlatılarına karşı işleyen bir direniş mekânına dönüşür (Stora, 1991).

Her iki romanda da üçüncü mekân, yalnızca kültürel melezliğin temsil edildiği teorik bir alan değil, aynı zamanda tarihsel sessizliklerin kırıldığı ve alternatif hafıza biçimlerinin üretildiği politik bir direniş sahasıdır. Djebar ve Sebbar, ne tamamen Fransız ne de tamamen Cezayirli olan özneler yaratarak, sömürgeci söylemin dayattığı kimlik kategorilerini sorgularlar. Böylece kimlik, tamamlanmış ve özsel bir yapı olmaktan çıkar; sürekli yeniden müzakere edilen, çoğul ve dönüşümsel bir süreç hâline gelir. Bu anlamda Bhabha'nın melezlik ve üçüncü mekân kavramları, her iki romanın da yalnızca geçmişi yeniden anlatmadığını, aynı zamanda postkolonyal öznenin yeni varoluş biçimlerini tasarladığını göstermektedir.

17 Ekim 1961 katliamının belleğinin silinmesi, ulusal anlatılar içinde sömürgesel şiddetin inkâr edilmesine dayanan daha geniş bir mantığın parçasıdır. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* (1993) adlı eserinde, diasporik kimliklerin sürekli dönüşüm hâlindeki ulusötesi bir kültür üreterek bu katı anlatıları yapısöküme uğrattığını göstermektedir. Bu yaklaşım, Leïla Sebbar'ın edebî projesini anlamamıza ışık tutar. Sebbar, Fransa ile Cezayir'i katı bir karşıtlık içinde konumlandırmak yerine, kuşaklar boyunca aktarılan ve parçalı anlatılar aracılığıyla şekillenen akışkan ve melez bir belleği araştırır (Gilroy, 1993).

Bu bağlamda kültürel melezlik, postkolonyal kadın anlatılarında dönüştürücü bir güç olarak ortaya çıkar. Françoise Lionnet, *Postcolonial Representations* (1995) adlı çalışmasında, postkolonyal kadın yazarların öz-çeviri (self-translation) ve dilsel çoğulluk aracılığıyla melez bir alanda kendi öznelliklerini nasıl kurduklarını inceler (Lionnet, 1995). Benzer şekilde, Ella Shohat ve Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (1994) adlı eserlerinde melezliğin postkolonyal anlatılarda gelenek ile modernlik arasındaki karşıtlığı nasıl yapısöküme uğrattığını analiz ederler (Shohat & Stam, 1994). Bu dinamik, Mireille Rosello'nun *Postcolonial Hospitality* (2001) adlı çalışmasında daha da geliştirilir. Rosello'ya göre sömürgesel bellek, diasporik edebiyat içerisinde yeniden işlenerek dayatılmış kimlik hiyerarşilerine meydan okumak için kullanılmaktadır (Rosello, 2001).

Diğer eleştirmenler de melezliğin sömürgecilikten miras kalan iktidar yapılarını altüst etmedeki rolüne dikkat çekmişlerdir. Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* (1995) adlı eserinde, postkolonyal anlatıların melez anlatım stratejileri aracılığıyla sömürgesel söylemin içsel çelişkilerini görünür kıldığını vurgular (Stoler, 1995). Benzer biçimde Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) adlı çalışmasında postkolonyal eserlerin yalnızca sömürgeleştirme deneyimini temsil etmekle kalmadığını, aynı zamanda onu dönüştürerek güçlü karşı-söylemler ürettiğini ileri sürer (Said, 1993). Bu düşünce, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths ve Helen Tiffin'in *The Empire Writes Back* (2002) adlı eserlerinde de yankı bulur. Bu araştırmacılar, dilsel melezliğin yeni söylemsel biçimler yaratarak emperyalist yapıları merkezsizleştirdiğini göstermektedirler (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002).

Son olarak, Jennifer Yee, *The Colonial Comedy* (2016) adlı eserinde Frankofon postkolonyal metinlerde ironi ile melezlik arasındaki gerilimleri inceler. Benzer şekilde, Mireille Calle-Gruber, *Assia Djebar, littérature et transmission* (2010) adlı çalışmasında Djebar'ın sömürge arşivlerini yeniden yapılandırarak çok sesli bir bellek alanı oluşturduğunu ortaya koyar (Yee, 2016; Calle-Gruber, 2010). Ayrıca Kate Marsh ile Nicola Frith, *France's Lost Empires* (2011) adlı çalışmalarında çağdaş edebiyatta sömürgesel imgelemlerin sürekliliğini incelerken; Kirsten Holst Petersen ve Anna Rutherford ise *A Double Colonization: Colonial and Postcolonial Women's Writing* (1986) adlı eserlerinde kültürel ve dilsel melezliği postkolonyal kadın anlatılarının temel unsurlarından biri olarak değerlendirirler (Marsh & Frith, 2011; Petersen & Rutherford, 1986). Dolayısıyla kültürel melezlik, yalnızca estetik ya da biçimsel bir anlatım tekniği değildir. O, aynı zamanda bir yazma ve direniş pratiğine dönüşür. Bhabha'nın kuramsallaştırdığı üçüncü mekân, sabit kimlikleri ve tekil anlatıları reddeden metinlerde somutlaşır. Assia Djebar ve Leïla Sebbar, hegemonik tarih anlatılarını yapısöküme uğratarak ve madun sesleri yeniden görünür kılarak bu dinamiğin önemli temsilcileri hâline gelirler. Böylece onların eserleri, edebî metnin postkolonyal kimliklerin yeniden müzakere edildiği, belleğin yeniden kurulduğu ve tarihsel sessizliklerin kırıldığı güçlü bir direniş alanı olabileceğini göstermektedir.

Gayatri Spivak ve Madun Ses: Sessizlik ve İtiraz

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, kurucu metni olan *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) adlı makalesinde, madunların (subalternler), özellikle de sömürgeleştirilmiş kadınların, çifte bir ötekileşmeye maruz kaldığını ileri sürer. Bir yandan ekonomik ve siyasal tahakküm uygulayan sömürge sistemi tarafından baskı altına alınırlar; diğer yandan ise kendi toplumları içerisindeki ataerkil yapılar tarafından susturulurlar. Bu ikili baskı, madunların konuşma girişimini son derece problematik hâle getirir; çünkü onların anlatıları çoğu zaman iktidar yapıları tarafından dolayımlanır, sansürlenir ya da tamamen silinir.

Bu sorun, Assia Djebar'ın *L'Amour, la fantasia* adlı eserinde merkezi bir konuma sahiptir. Djebar, bağımsızlık savaşına katılmış Cezayirli kadınların seslerini yeniden görünür kılmaya çalışır. Ancak bu tanıklıklar parçalanmış, sessizliklerle kesintiye uğramış ve tarihsel sansürün izlerini taşıyan anlatılar olarak karşımıza çıkar. Böylece yazar, bu kadınların kendi hikâyelerini geri kazanma sürecinde karşılaştıkları güçlükleri ortaya koyar. Djebar, kadınların resmî tarih tarafından görünmezliğe mahkûm edildiğini göstererek sömürgesel belleği yapısöküme uğratır. Bu yaklaşım, Ania Loomba'nın *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1998) adlı eserindeki eleştirilerle örtüşmektedir. Loomba, egemen anlatıların kadın öznelliklerini sistematik biçimde silikleştirdiğini vurgular (Loomba, 1998).

Madun sesin silinmesi, Leïla Sebbar'ın *La Seine était rouge* adlı romanında da açık biçimde görülmektedir. Roman, Fransız devleti tarafından uzun yıllar bastırılmış olan 17 Ekim 1961 katliamını konu edinir. Bu eserde sömürgesel şiddetin belleği yalnızca resmî kurumlar tarafından değil, aynı zamanda yaşadıkları travmanın ağırlığı altında ezilen tanıklar tarafından da bastırılmaktadır. Tanıkların deneyimlerini dile getirmekte zorlanmaları, Leela Gandhi'nin *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (1998) adlı eserinde geliştirdiği görüşlerle örtüşür. Gandhi'ye göre sömürge tarihi çoğu zaman sömürgecinin bakış açısından yazılmıştır; bu nedenle tarihin marjinlerden hareketle yeniden yazılması zorunludur (Gandhi, 1998).

Sebbar, çok sesli bir anlatım aracılığıyla bu bastırılmış belleği yeniden kurmaya çalışır ve farklı kuşaklardan, farklı toplumsal kökenlerden gelen karakterlere söz hakkı tanır. Bu anlatım tekniği, Shoshana Felman ve Dori Laub'ın *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (1992) adlı çalışmalarını hatırlatır. Felman ve Laub, travmanın çoğu zaman tanıklığın açık ve bütünlüklü biçimde ifade edilmesini engellediğini; bu nedenle travmatik deneyimlerin temsilinde parçalı anlatı stratejilerinin gerekli olduğunu göstermektedirler (Felman & Laub, 1992).

Spivak'a göre madunların sessizliği yalnızca sömürgesel tahakkümün sonucu değildir; aynı zamanda hangi sözün meşru kabul edileceğini belirleyen Batılı epistemolojik yapıların da ürünüdür. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* (1992) adlı eserinde bu düşünceyi geliştirerek, Avrupa seyahat anlatılarının tarihsel olarak sömürgeleştirilmiş halkları söylemin nesnesi hâline getirdiğini ve onları kendi seslerinden mahrum bıraktığını göstermektedir (Pratt, 1992). Djebar ve Sebbar ise parçalanmış ve çoğul sesler sunarak bu mantığa direnmekte, tarihin homojenleştirici anlatılarını sorgulamaktadırlar. Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference* (1991) adlı eserinde, kadın söyleminin postkolonyal anlatılarda sömürgesel tahakkümün cinsiyetlendirilmiş temsillerini nasıl yeniden yapılandırdığını analiz eder. Bu durum özellikle *L'Amour, la fantasia*'da belirgindir. Djebar, Cezayir'in sömürgeleştirilme tarihini yeniden ele alırken, resmî arşivlerde görünmez kılınmış anonim kadınların tanıklıklarını anlatıya dâhil eder (Mills, 1991).

Djebar ve Sebbar'ın romanlarını karakterize eden çok sesli yazı, aynı zamanda Judith Butler'ın *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (1997) adlı eserindeki analizlerle de örtüşmektedir. Butler, egemen söylemlerin madun konuşmanın imkân koşullarını belirlediğini, ancak konuşma eyleminin kendisinin de bir direniş pratiğine dönüşebileceğini ileri sürer (Butler, 1997). Bu perspektiften bakıldığında edebiyat, susturulmuş seslerin yavaş yavaş görünür hâle geldiği performatif bir alan olarak işlev görür. Dolayısıyla Djebar ve Sebbar'ın eserlerinde sessizlik, yalnızca bir eksiklik ya da yokluk biçimi değildir; aksine, iktidarın işleyişini görünür kılan eleştirel bir göstergedir. Parçalanmış tanıklıklar, kesintili anlatılar ve çok sesli yapılar aracılığıyla bu yazarlar, madunların tamamen susturulmuş olmadığını, fakat seslerinin tarihsel, politik ve kültürel engellerle çevrelendiğini ortaya koyarlar. Bu nedenle onların yazını, Spivak'ın "Madun konuşabilir mi?" sorusuna doğrudan bir cevap vermekten ziyade, bu sorunun neden hâlâ güncelliğini koruduğunu gösteren güçlü bir edebî ve politik müdahale olarak okunabilir.

Trinh T. Minh-ha gibi diğer eleştirmenler de, *Woman, Native, Other* (1989) adlı eserlerinde, madun anlatılara uygun doğrusal olmayan ve parçalı ifade biçimlerini araştırarak Avrupa-merkezci anlatı çerçevelerini aşan bir yazı tarzının gerekliliğini vurgulamaktadırlar (Trinh, 1989). Djebar ve Sebbar'ın gerçekleştirdiği tam da budur: Geleneksel anlatı yapılarını yapısöküme uğratarak parçalanmış, çok sesli ve performatif bir belleğe yer açarlar. Son olarak, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999) adlı eserinde, postkolonyal entelektüellerin maduna ses vermeye çalışırken sahiplenici (appropriative) bir tavır yerine dinlemeye dayalı etik bir konum benimsemeleri gerektiğini savunur. Bu düşünce, Lila Abu-

Lughod'un *Writing Women's Worlds* (1993) adlı çalışmasında geliştirdiği eleştirel etnografi tartışmalarıyla da örtüşmektedir. Abu-Lughod, madun seslerin Batılı analitik çerçeveler içine hapsedilmesi ve böylece yeniden sömürgeleştirilmesi riskine dikkat çeker (Spivak, 1999; Abu-Lughod, 1993).

Sonuç olarak Djebar ve Sebbar'ın anlatıları, Spivak'ın ortaya attığı temel sorunsalla doğrudan yüzleşmektedir: Madun, onu yalnızca bir söylem nesnesine indirgeyen çerçeveler içine kapatılmadan nasıl konuşabilir? Bu yazarlar, anlatısal tercihleri aracılığıyla sömürge tarihinin eleştirel bir yeniden yazımını gerçekleştirirler. Bu yeniden yazımda sessizlik, yalnızca sözün yokluğu ya da eksikliği değildir; aksine, itirazın, direnişin ve postkolonyal dilin yeniden icadının gerçekleştiği üretken bir alan hâline gelir. Bu bağlamda sessizlik, klasik tarih yazımının varsaydığı gibi boşluk ya da eksiklik olarak değil, anlamın ertelendiği ve yeniden üretildiği bir söylemsel alan olarak değerlendirilmelidir.

Djebar'ın metinlerinde kadın tanıklıklarının parçalı yapısı ve Sebbar'ın romanında 17 Ekim 1961 belleğinin dolaylı anlatılar aracılığıyla ortaya çıkışı, sessizliğin bastırılmış tarihin izlerini taşıyan bir arşiv işlevi gördüğünü göstermektedir. Böylece sessizlik, konuşmanın karşıtı olmaktan çıkar ve alternatif bir ifade biçimine dönüşür. Bu noktada Djebar ve Sebbar'ın yazını, yalnızca tarihsel olarak susturulmuş kadınları görünür kılmakla kalmaz; aynı zamanda temsilin etik sınırlarını da sorgular. Onlar madun adına konuşmayı değil, madunun konuşmasının önündeki engelleri görünür kılmayı tercih ederler. Bu yaklaşım, Spivak'ın temsil (*representation*) ile konuşma adına vekâlet etme (*vertretung*) arasındaki ayrımı üzerine geliştirdiği eleştirilerle uyumludur. Dolayısıyla bu eserlerde amaç, madun sesin tam ve şeffaf biçimde yeniden üretilmesi değil; onun parçalanmışlığını, kesintilerini ve bastırılmışlığını görünür kılmaktır. Sonuç olarak, *L'Amour, la fantasia* ve *La Seine était rouge*, postkolonyal kadın yazınının en önemli meselelerinden biri olan ses, sessizlik ve temsil sorununu derinlemesine sorgulayan metinlerdir. Çok sesli anlatıları, parçalı hafıza yapıları ve alternatif tarih yazımı stratejileri aracılığıyla Djebar ve Sebbar, sömürgesel ve ataerkil söylemlerin görünmez kıldığı özneleri yeniden tarih sahnesine taşırlar. Bu nedenle onların eserleri, yalnızca edebî metinler değil, aynı zamanda belleğin, tarihin ve öznenin yeniden düşünülmesini sağlayan güçlü postkolonyal müdahaleler olarak okunabilir.

Rosi Braidotti ve Göçebe Özne: Akışkan Bir Kimliğe Doğru

Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (1994) adlı eserinde, sabit kategorileri reddeden ve hareketi, dönüşümü ile melezliği merkeze alan bir öznellik anlayışı geliştirir. Braidotti'ye göre göçebe özne, istikrarlı bir aidiyetle tanımlanmaz; aksine, yer değiştirmeler ve farklı kimlikler arasındaki geçişler aracılığıyla kendini sürekli yeniden kuran bir varoluş biçimidir (Braidotti, 1994). Bu yaklaşım, kahramanlarının birden fazla kültür, dil ve aidiyet arasında hareket ettiği Assia Djebar ve Leïla Sebbar'ın anlatılarıyla güçlü bir biçimde örtüşmektedir.

L'Amour, la fantasia'da anlatıcı, Fransızca, Arapça ve Berberice arasında gidip gelir; böylece sabit kimlik tanımlarına direnen parçalanmış bir öznelliği somutlaştırır. Bu süreç, Judith Butler'ın *Gender Trouble* (1990) adlı eserindeki görüşlerini hatırlatır. Butler, ister toplumsal cinsiyet ister kültürel kimlik olsun, tüm kimliklerin özsel değil; istikrarsız ve performatif inşalar olduğunu ileri sürer (Butler, 1990). Djebar'ın metni de kimliği tamamlanmış bir öz olarak değil, sürekli müzakere edilen bir alan olarak sunar. Bu yönüyle eser, Homi K. Bhabha'nın kültürel melezlik ve üçüncü mekân kavramlarıyla da kesişmektedir (Bhabha, 1994). Benzer şekilde *La Seine était rouge*'da genç melez kadın kahraman, istikrarlı ve homojen bir kimliği kabul etmeyi reddeder.

Onun karma kökeni, kültürel aidiyetleri özcü biçimde tanımlamaya çalışan milliyetçi söylemlere karşı bir direniş biçimine dönüşür. Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la relation* (1990) adlı eserinde bu olguyu "kreolleşme" (créolisation) kavramıyla açıklar. Glissant'a göre kimlikler hiçbir zaman tamamlanmış ve sabit değildir; sürekli etkileşim, dönüşüm ve ilişkisellik içinde şekillenirler (Glissant, 1990). Sebbar'ın kahramanı da tam olarak bu ilişkisel ve akışkan kimlik modelini temsil eder. Bu yaklaşım aynı zamanda Gilles Deleuze ve Félix Guattari'nin *Mille Plateaux* (1980) adlı eserlerinde geliştirdikleri "rizom" (rhizome) kavramıyla da uyumludur. Rizomatik düşünceye göre kimlikler doğrusal, hiyerarşik ve merkezî bir model izlemez; aksine çoğul, bağlantısal ve sürekli genişleyen ağlar biçiminde gelişirler (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980). Bu perspektiften bakıldığında, hem Djebar'ın hem de Sebbar'ın kahramanları tek bir kökene, dile ya da ulusal aidiyete indirgenemeyen rizomatik özneler olarak okunabilir.

Djebar'ın anlatıcısı için göçebelik yalnızca coğrafi bir hareketlilik değil, aynı zamanda dilsel ve simgesel bir dolaşımdır. Fransızca ile Arapça arasında kurulan gerilim, öznenin sürekli olarak kendisini yeniden tanımlamasına neden olur. Bu durum, Braidotti'nin göçebe öznesinin temel özelliklerinden biri olan "yerleşik kimliklerden kaçış" düşüncesini somutlaştırır. Anlatıcı hiçbir dile tam anlamıyla ait değildir; fakat tam da bu aidiyetsizlik sayesinde yeni ifade biçimleri geliştirebilir. Sebbar'ın romanında ise göçebelik daha çok tarihsel bellek düzeyinde ortaya çıkar. Genç kadın kahraman, Fransız ulusal hafızası ile Cezayir'in bastırılmış sömürge geçmişi arasında dolaşarak iki tarihsel anlatı arasında bir köprü kurar. Bu süreçte kimlik, geçmişten miras alınan sabit bir öz olmaktan çıkar ve sürekli yeniden üretilen bir ilişkisellik alanına dönüşür.

Bu noktada Braidotti'nin kuramı, postkolonyal kadın yazınının temel meselelerinden biri olan "aidiyet" sorusunu yeniden düşünmeye olanak tanır. Göçebe özne ne bütünüyle köksüzdür ne de tek bir köke bağlıdır; aksine farklı tarihsel, kültürel ve dilsel deneyimler arasında hareket ederek kendini sürekli yeniden kurar. Djebar ve Sebbar'ın eserlerinde bu göçebe özne, sömürgecilikten miras kalan katı kimlik kategorilerine karşı güçlü bir direniş biçimi olarak ortaya çıkar. Dolayısıyla *L'Amour, la fantasia* ve *La Seine était rouge*, kimliği sabit bir öz olarak değil, hareket hâlindeki bir oluş süreci olarak kavrayan postkolonyal bir özne modeli sunarlar. Braidotti'nin göçebe öznesi, Bhabha'nın melezliği, Glissant'ın kreolleşmesi ve Deleuze ile Guattari'nin rizom kavramlarıyla birlikte düşünüldüğünde, bu romanlar kimliğin çoğulluğunu ve dönüşebilirliğini savunan güçlü edebî metinler olarak değerlendirilebilir. Burada göçebelik yalnızca fiziksel bir hareket değil; aynı zamanda belleğin, dilin ve öznenin sürekli yeniden icat edilmesini mümkün kılan etik ve politik bir direniş pratiğidir.

Sürgün ve yerinden edilme deneyimi, bu romanlarda aynı zamanda Edward Said'ın *Reflections on Exile* (2000) adlı eserinde geliştirdiği analizleri de yansıtır. Said, sürgünün bireyde melez ve akışkan bir öznellik yarattığını; sürgün öznenin sürekli olarak birden fazla dünya arasında gidip geldiğini göstermektedir (Said, 2000). Bu yaklaşım, özellikle *L'Amour, la fantasia*'nın anlatıcısını anlamak açısından önemlidir; çünkü anlatıcı dil ve tarih ile olan ilişkisini sürekli yeniden kurmakta ve yeniden tanımlamaktadır. Djebar ve Sebbar, bu göçebe yaşam çizgilerini anlatılarının merkezine yerleştirerek katı kültürel sınırları ve sabit kimlik modellerini sorgularlar. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) adlı eserinde benzer bir okuma sunar. Anzaldúa, sınırların geçirgen doğasını ve diasporik ya da postkolonyal alanlarda akışkan kimliklerin önemini vurgular (Anzaldúa, 1987). Onun "sınır-bilinç" (*border consciousness*) kavramı, Djebar ve Sebbar'ın karakterlerinin yaşadığı kültürel ara alanları anlamlandırmak için verimli bir kuramsal çerçeve sunmaktadır.

Braidotti’nin göçebe özne kavramı, bu anlatılarda beden ve arzu ile kurulan ilişkiyi analiz etmek açısından da önem taşır. Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (2002) adlı eserinde oluş (*becoming*), dönüşüm ve kimliklerin çoğulluğu üzerinde durur; özcü özne anlayışlarına karşı çıkar (Braidotti, 2002). Bu yaklaşım, Trinh T. Minh-ha’nın *Woman, Native, Other* (1989) adlı çalışmasındaki görüşlerle de paralellik gösterir. Trinh, postkolonyal kadınları sabit ve homojen kategoriler içine hapsetmeye çalışan söylemleri eleştirir ve farklılıkların çoğulluğunu savunur (Trinh, 1989). Bu perspektiften bakıldığında melezlik ve göçebe kimlik yalnızca toplumsal ya da kültürel gerçeklikler değildir; aynı zamanda tahakküm sistemlerine karşı geliştirilen direniş biçimleridir. Françoise Vergès, *Le ventre des femmes* (2017) adlı eserinde sömürgesel politikaların sıklıkla kadınların kimliklerini sabitlemeye çalıştığını göstermektedir. Buna karşılık göç, melezleşme ve kültürel geçiş deneyimleri, kadınların alternatif öznellik biçimleri geliştirmelerine olanak tanımaktadır (Vergès, 2017). Böylece kimlik, dışarıdan dayatılan bir kategori olmaktan çıkarak öznenin kendi deneyimleri içinde sürekli yeniden kurduğu bir süreç hâline gelir. Dolayısıyla göçebe kimlik, bir kriz ya da köksüzlük durumu olmaktan çok, yaratıcı bir güç olarak ortaya çıkar. Kendiliğin sürekli yeniden tanımlanabilmesini mümkün kılan bir potansiyel taşır. Édouard Glissant ve Patrick Chamoiseau, *La pensée-Monde* (2011) adlı eserlerinde kimliğin kapalı ve katı yapılardan değil, hareketten ve ötekiyle kurulan ilişkiden doğduğunu ileri sürerler. Onlara göre kimlik, sınırlar içinde muhafaza edilen bir öz değil; ilişkiler ağı içinde sürekli dönüşen bir oluş sürecidir. Bu bağlamda Djebar ve Sebbar’ın eserleri, Braidotti’nin göçebe özne anlayışını somutlaştıran önemli edebî örnekler olarak okunabilir. Her iki yazar da sürgünü, göçü, dilsel çoğulluğu ve kültürel melezliği bir eksiklik ya da kimlik kaybı olarak değil, yeni öznellik biçimlerinin ortaya çıkmasına olanak tanıyan yaratıcı alanlar olarak temsil ederler. Böylece postkolonyal özne, tek bir ulusal, kültürel ya da dilsel aidiyetle tanımlanmak yerine, farklı tarihlerin, dillerin ve deneyimlerin kesişiminde oluşan dinamik bir varlık hâline gelir.

Sonuç olarak, Braidotti'nin göçebe öznesi ile Said'in sürgün öznesi, Glissant'ın ilişkisel kimliği ve Anzaldúa'nın sınır-bilinç kavramı birlikte düşünüldüğünde, *L'Amour, la fantasia* ve *La Seine était rouge* yalnızca postkolonyal deneyimi anlatan romanlar değil; aynı zamanda kimliğin hareket, ilişkisellik ve dönüşüm temelinde yeniden düşünülmesini sağlayan kuramsal ve edebî laboratuvarlar olarak değerlendirilebilir. Bu eserlerde göçebelik, parçalanmanın değil; özgürleşmenin, çoğulluğun ve direnişin bir metaforu hâline gelir. *La Seine était rouge* ve *L'Amour, la fantasia*, melezlik, marjinalleşme ve akışkan kimlik tarafından şekillenen kadın öznellikleri aracılığıyla sömürgeci ve postkolonyal tarihin eleştirel bir yeniden okumasını sunar. Homi K. Bhabha, Rosi Braidotti ve Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak'ın kuramları, bu anlatıları kültürel melezlik, göçebe kimlik ve madun ses perspektiflerinden aydınlatmakta; böylece bu metinlerin hegemonik anlatıları nasıl yapısöküme uğrattığını ve alternatif bir bellek alanı nasıl oluşturduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Homi Bhabha ve Kültürel Melezlik: Direniş Alanı Olarak Aradalık

Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994) adlı eserinde, postkolonyal kimliklerin sömürgeci söylemi yalnızca taklit etmek ya da reddetmekle kalmayıp onu dönüştürdüğü ve yeniden icat ettiği bir melezlik alanı olarak "üçüncü mekân" (third space) kavramını geliştirir (Bhabha, 1994). Bu kavram, Assia Djebar'ın *L'Amour, la fantasia* ve Leïla Sebbar'ın *La Seine était rouge* adlı eserlerinde ortaya çıkan anlatısal ve kimliksel stratejilerin analizinde temel bir öneme sahiptir. Her iki roman da sömürgeci/sömürgeleştirilen ya da egemen/tahakküm altındaki gibi ikili karşıtlıklardan kaçan yeni özneleşme biçimleri üretir

Assia Djebar, *L'Amour, la fantasia*'da son derece parçalı bir anlatı yapısı kurar ve anlatıyı üç temel düzlem arasında sürekli hareket ettirir:

- Sömürge arşivleri: Özellikle XIX. yüzyılda Cezayir'in fethi sırasında Fransız subayları tarafından yazılmış askerî raporlar ve tarihsel belgeler.
- Cezayirli kadınların tanıklıkları: Başlangıçta Arapça veya Berberice ifade edilmiş olsa da Fransızcaya aktarılan anlatılar; bu durum Djebar'ın yazısındaki dilsel gerilimi görünür kılar.
- Otobiyografik anlatı: Başkahramanın Fransız diliyle ve sömürgesel bellekle kurduğu ilişki üzerine düşüncelerini içeren kişisel anlatı.

Bu seslerin iç içe geçmesi, sömürgeleştirme belleğinin yalnızca tarihsel belgeler aracılığıyla anlatılmadığı, aynı zamanda kadınsı ve Cezayirli bir bakış açısından yeniden sahiplenildiği ve yeniden yazıldığı melez bir alan yaratır. Bu teknik, Robert J. C. Young'ın *Colonial Desire* (1995) adlı eserindeki analizleriyle örtüşmektedir. Young'a göre sömürgesel dil, yalnızca bir tahakküm aracı değildir; sömürgeleştirilmiş özne tarafından dönüştürüldüğünde bir direniş ve yeniden anlamlandırma alanına dönüşebilir (Young, 1995). Dahası, Djebar sürekli olarak Fransızca yazma deneyimini sorgular. Fransızca, onun için hem sömürgesel baskının dili hem de entelektüel özgürleşmenin aracıdır. Bu gerilim, çocukluğunu ve Fransızca öğrenme sürecini anlattığı şu pasajda açıkça görülür: "*Benim için Fransızca yazmak, annelerin, teyzelerin ve büyükannelerin seslerinin susturulduğu opak bir sessizlik duvarını aşmanın bir yoluydu*." (*L'Amour, la fantasia*, Djebar, 1985) Bu bağlamda Fransızca, yalnızca sömürgecinin dili olmaktan çıkar; belleğin, direnişin ve kadınların susturulmuş seslerinin yeniden dolaşıma girmesinin aracı hâline gelir.

Her ne kadar bu sesler sömürgecinin dili üzerinden ifade edilmek zorunda kalsa da, dil artık yalnızca baskının değil, aynı zamanda özgürleşmenin de alanıdır. Bu dilsel karmaşıklık, Bhabha'nın mimikri (mimicry) kavramıyla da ilişkilendirilebilir. Bhabha'ya göre sömürgeleştirilmiş özne, sömürge kültürünü taklit ederken aynı zamanda onu bozar, dönüştürür ve yeniden üretir. Bu süreç, yeni kimlik müzakerelerinin ortaya çıkmasını sağlar (Bhabha, 1994). Djebar'ın Fransızcayı kullanma biçimi tam da bu mantığı izler: Fransızca korunur, fakat aynı zamanda Arapça ve Berberice hafızalarla kesişerek sömürgesel söylemin tek sesliliğini parçalar. Böylece *L'Amour, la fantasia*, yalnızca sömürge tarihini anlatan bir roman değil; aynı zamanda dilin, belleğin ve kimliğin üçüncü mekânda yeniden kurulduğu postkolonyal bir yazı pratiği olarak ortaya çıkar. Djebar'ın metni, Bhabha'nın melezlik kuramının edebî düzeydeki en güçlü örneklerinden biri olarak okunabilir; çünkü burada kimlik ne tamamen Fransız ne de tamamen Cezayirlidir, fakat bu ikisi arasındaki yaratıcı gerilimden doğan yeni bir özneleşme biçimidir.

***La Seine était rouge*'da Kimliğin ve Belleğin Melezliği**

La Seine était rouge'da Leïla Sebbar, postkolonyal melezliğin başka bir boyutunu ele alır: Fransa'da yaşayan Cezayirli göçmenlerin çocuklarının yaşadığı kimlik yarılmasını. Roman, 17 Ekim 1961 katliamından sağ kurtulmuş bir kişinin kızı olan genç Amel'in hikâyesini anlatır. Uzun yıllar boyunca bastırılmış ve Fransa'nın resmî belleğinden silinmiş bu tarihsel olay, romanın merkezindeki temel travmayı oluşturur. Fransa'da doğup büyüyen Amel, zamanla bu gizlenmiş tarihin izlerini keşfeder ve edebiyat ile tanıklık aracılığıyla kolektif bir belleği yeniden kurmaya çalışır. Bu süreç, Paul Gilroy'ın *The Black Atlantic* (1993) adlı eserinde geliştirdiği arada kalmış kimlik (*in-between identity*) kavramıyla örtüşmektedir. Gilroy'ya göre diasporik kimlik, sabit ve değişmez bir aidiyet değildir; aksine, farklı kültürel referanslar arasında sürekli hareket eden akışkan bir deneyimdir (Gilroy, 1993). Katliamın belleğiyle yüzleşen Amel de katı ve özcü bir kimliği reddeder; bunun yerine Cezayir kökeni ile Fransa'ya aidiyeti arasında yeni bir uzlaşma zemini aradığı üçüncü bir alana yönelir. Böylece onun kimliği, tamamlanmış bir öz değil, sürekli yeniden şekillenen bir oluş süreci hâline gelir.

Romanda Sebbar, çok sesli (*polyphonique*) bir anlatı yapısı kurar ve farklı toplumsal konumları temsil eden sesleri bir araya getirir:

- Katliamdan sağ kurtulanlar: Kolektif unutmaya rağmen yaşadıkları deneyimi aktarmaya çalışan tanıklar.
- Genç kuşaklar: Amel'in temsil ettiği ve kendilerine hiç aktarılmamış bir geçmişi keşfetmeye çalışan yeni nesiller.
- Fransız devletinin resmî söylemi: 17 Ekim 1961 olaylarını sessizlik, inkâr ve sansür aracılığıyla görünmez kılan kurumsal anlatılar.

Sebbar, bu farklı anlatıları iç içe geçirerek hafızaların çatıştığı, müzakere edildiği ve yeniden kurulduğu bir alan yaratır. Bu alan, Homi K. Bhabha'nın üçüncü mekân (*third space*) kavramını somutlaştırır. Burada ne resmî tarih ne de bireysel tanıklık tek başına belirleyicidir; anlam, bu farklı seslerin karşılaşması ve gerilimi içinde ortaya çıkar. Bu anlatısal yapı aynı zamanda Dominick LaCapra'nın *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001) adlı eserinde geliştirdiği travma ve bellek analizleriyle de ilişkilendirilebilir. LaCapra, travmatik deneyimlerin anlatımında tanıklığın sürekli olarak iki uç arasında gidip geldiğini belirtir: Bir yanda geçmişi yeniden kurma arzusu, diğer yanda travmanın tam anlamıyla dile getirilememesinden kaynaklanan sessizlik ve eksiklik (LaCapra, 2001).

La Seine était rouge tam da bu gerilim üzerinde yükselir. Katliamın tanıkları konuşmak isterler; ancak yaşadıkları travmanın ağırlığı ve yıllarca süren sessizlik politikaları nedeniyle anlatıları çoğu zaman parçalı, kesintili ve eksik kalır. Buna karşın Amel'in araştırması, bu eksik parçaları bir araya getirme çabasıdır. Roman böylece yalnızca tarihsel bir olayı hatırlatmakla kalmaz; aynı zamanda belleğin nasıl üretildiğini, bastırıldığını ve yeniden kurulduğunu da sorgular. Bu açıdan bakıldığında Amel, Bhabha'nın melez öznesi, Gilroy'nun diasporik öznesi ve LaCapra'nın travmatik hafızayla yüzleşen tanığı arasında konumlanır. O ne yalnızca Fransızdır ne de yalnızca Cezayirli; ne yalnızca geçmişe aittir ne de bütünüyle bugüne. Kimliği, iki tarih, iki kültür ve iki bellek rejimi arasındaki geçişlerde şekillenir. Dolayısıyla *La Seine était rouge*, yalnızca 17 Ekim 1961'in unutulmuş tarihini görünür kılan bir roman değildir. Aynı zamanda postkolonyal öznenin nasıl kurulduğunu, travmatik belleğin nasıl aktarıldığını ve melez kimliklerin egemen ulusal anlatılara nasıl meydan okuduğunu gösteren güçlü bir edebî müdahaledir. Sebbar'ın romanında hafıza, geçmişin pasif bir kaydı değil; kimliğin sürekli yeniden üretildiği dinamik ve politik bir mücadele alanı olarak ortaya çıkar. Bu iki romandaki kültürel ve kimliksel melezlik yalnızca dil ya da bellek meselesi değildir; aynı zamanda hegemonik anlatıları yapısöküme uğratmanın bir aracıdır. Homi K. Bhabha'nın açıkladığı gibi, üçüncü mekân (*third space*), alternatif bir tarihin ifade edilmesine olanak tanır. Bu tarih ne yalnızca sömürgecinin bakış açısına indirgenir ne de sömürgesizleşmeyi özcü ve tek boyutlu bir perspektiften ele alır (Bhabha, 1994).

L'Amour, la fantasia'da Assia Djebar, askerî raporlarda ve sömürge arşivlerinde yer almayan kadın seslerini anlatıya dâhil ederek sömürge belgelerini yeniden okur ve yeniden yazar. Buna karşılık *La Seine était rouge*'da Leïla Sebbar, katliam tanıklarına söz hakkı tanıyarak sansürlenmiş bir belleği yeniden görünür kılar. Bu stratejiler, Ann Laura Stoler'ın *Along the Archival Grain* (2009) adlı eserindeki analizlerle örtüşmektedir. Stoler, sömürge arşivlerinin yalnızca içerdiği bilgiler üzerinden değil, aynı zamanda içerdikleri sessizlikler ve boşluklar üzerinden de yeniden yorumlanabileceğini göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak bu iki roman, Bhabha'nın kuramını somutlaştırmaktadır. Hem karakterler hem de anlatılar, ne bütünüyle Cezayirli ne de bütünüyle Fransız olan; farklı aidiyetler arasında sürekli müzakere yürüten ara bir mekânda varlık kazanırlar. Bu ara mekân, yalnızca kimliklerin değil, tarihin de yeniden yazıldığı bir direniş alanı hâline gelir.

Gayatri Spivak ve Madun Ses: Sessizlik, Sansür ve Tarihin Yeniden Yazımı

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) adlı eserinde madunların, özellikle de sömürgeleştirilmiş kadınların, Batı merkezli ve ataerkil söylemlerin egemen olduğu bir dünyada gerçekten konuşup konuşamayacaklarını sorgular. Spivak'a göre madunlar konuşuyor gibi görünseler bile, sözleri çoğu zaman onları ötekileştirmeye devam eden iktidar yapıları tarafından dolayımlanır, çarpıtılır ya da sahiplenilir. Bu sorun, Assia Djebar ve Leïla Sebbar'ın anlatılarının merkezinde yer alır. Her iki yazar da resmî tarih anlatıları tarafından silinmiş kadın belleğini yeniden kurmaya çalışır. Ancak bunu yaparken kadınların seslerini şeffaf ve doğrudan biçimde aktarmak yerine, onların konuşmalarını kuşatan sessizlikleri, kesintileri ve tarihsel boşlukları görünür kılarlar. Böylece metinler, yalnızca unutulmuş sesleri geri çağırmakla kalmaz; aynı zamanda bu seslerin neden susturulduğunu da sorgular.

Djebar'ın eserinde kadınların tanıklıkları, sömürge tarihinin erkek-merkezli ve askerî anlatılarına karşı alternatif bir tarih yazımı oluşturur. Ancak bu tanıklıklar tam ve bütünlüklü değildir; parçalanmış, eksik ve çoğu zaman sessizliklerle örülüdür. Bu durum, madun sesin doğrudan temsil edilemeyeceği yönündeki Spivakçı eleştiriyi somutlaştırır. Sebbar'ın romanında ise 17 Ekim 1961 katliamının tanıkları uzun yıllar boyunca susturulmuş, deneyimleri resmî tarih tarafından görünmez kılınmıştır. Roman, bu sessizliği kırmaya çalışırken aynı zamanda tanıklığın zorluklarını da gözler önüne serer. Böylece tarih, yalnızca anlatılan olayların toplamı olmaktan çıkar; anlatılamayanların, bastırılanların ve sansürlenenlerin de tarihi hâline gelir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında Djebar ve Sebbar'ın eserleri, Spivak'ın ortaya koyduğu temel soruyu edebî düzlemde yeniden formüle eder: Madun kadınların sesi nasıl duyulabilir? Ve bu ses, onu yeniden tahakküm altına alan temsil biçimlerine düşmeden nasıl aktarılabilir? Her iki yazar da bu soruya kesin bir cevap vermek yerine, sessizlik ile söz arasındaki gerilimi görünür kılarak alternatif bir tarih ve bellek politikası geliştirirler. Dolayısıyla bu romanlarda sessizlik, yalnızca baskının sonucu değildir; aynı zamanda tarihsel anlatıları sorgulayan eleştirel bir alan olarak işlev görür. Tarihin yeniden yazımı, tam da bu sessizliklerin içinden yükselen parçalı, çok sesli ve direnişçi anlatılar sayesinde mümkün hâle gelir. Böylece Djebar ve Sebbar, madun kadınların görünmez kılınmış deneyimlerini postkolonyal belleğin merkezine yerleştirerek edebiyatı bir karşı-tarih ve karşı-hafıza pratiğine dönüştürürler.

L'Amour, la fantasia: Sessizliğin ve Direnişin Çok Sesliliği

L'Amour, la fantasia'da Assia Djebar, sömürgeleştirme sürecini ve Cezayir Bağımsızlık Savaşı'nı yaşamış kadınların seslerini yeniden görünür kılmaya çalışır. Ancak bu sesler çoğu zaman parçalanmış, sansürlenmiş ya da kesintiye uğramış hâlde karşımıza çıkar; bu durum tanıklık etme eyleminin ne kadar güç olduğunu ortaya koyar. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak'ın belirttiği gibi, madunların sessizliği onların konuşmak istemediği anlamına gelmez; aksine iktidar yapıları onların seslerini duyulamaz hâle getirir (Spivak, 1988).

Djebar bu sorunsalı çok sesli (*polyphonique*) bir anlatı yapısıyla işler ve üç farklı söylemsel düzlemi bir araya getirir:

- Fransız askerî arşivleri: XIX. yüzyıldaki Cezayir işgalini sömürgeci bakış açısından anlatan tarihsel belgeler ve raporlar.
- Cezayirli kadınların tanıklıkları: Çoğu zaman Fransızcaya aktarılmış anlatılar; böylece egemen sözlü kültür ile baskı altında yazıya geçirilmiş anlatı arasındaki dilsel gerilim görünür olur.
- Yazarın otobiyografik anlatısı: Fransızca yazan bir Cezayirli entelektüel olarak yaşadığı kimlik çatışmalarını ve tarihsel bellekle ilişkisini sorgulayan kişisel anlatı.

Bu farklı seslerin iç içe geçmesi, romanı yalnızca tarihsel bir anlatı olmaktan çıkarır ve onu sessiz bırakılmış kadınların hafızasını yeniden kurmaya çalışan bir bellek mekânına dönüştürür.

Romanın en çarpıcı bölümlerinden biri, kadınların kendi tarihleri hakkında özgürce tanıklık edememelerinin yarattığı çıkmazı gözler önüne serer: "*Sessiz kaldık ve bu sessizlik bizim tek cevabımızdı. Annelerimizin, büyükannelerimizin sessizliği; çocukluğumuzdan beri üzerimize dayatılan bu sessizlik… Miras aldığımız şey buydu.*" (*L'Amour, la fantasia*, Djebar, 1985). Bu pasajda sessizlik yalnızca bireysel bir deneyim olarak değil, kuşaklar boyunca aktarılan tarihsel ve toplumsal bir miras olarak ortaya çıkar.

Kadınların susturulması, sömürgesel tahakküm ile ataerkil düzenin kesiştiği noktada üretilen yapısal bir olgudur. Dolayısıyla sessizlik, tarih dışına itilmiş olmanın bir göstergesi olduğu kadar, tarihin görünmeyen yüzünü de açığa çıkaran bir iz olarak işlev görür. Bununla birlikte bu sessizlik bütünüyle bir yok oluş anlamına gelmez. Ania Loomba'nın *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1998) adlı eserinde belirttiği üzere, madun sesler hiçbir zaman tamamen ortadan kaybolmaz; şarkılar, sözlü anlatılar, kolektif bellek ya da yeniden yazılmış hikâyeler aracılığıyla varlıklarını sürdürürler (Loomba, 1998). Djebar'ın yaptığı tam da budur: Acıyla, eksiklikle ve kesintilerle işaretlenmiş olsa bile bu hafıza parçalarını toplamak ve onları yeniden bir anlatıya dönüştürmek. Bu bağlamda roman, bir tarih kitabından çok bir arşiv karşıtı (*counter-archive*) olarak işlev görür. Resmî belgelerin susturduğu kadın sesleri, parçalı tanıklıklar ve kişisel anlatılar aracılığıyla yeniden dolaşıma sokulur. Böylece sömürge tarihinin tek sesli yapısı kırılır ve yerini çoğul bir tarih anlayışı alır.

Djebar'ın çok sesli yazısı aynı zamanda Mikhail Bakhtin'ın diyalojizm ve çok seslilik kavramlarıyla da ilişkilendirilebilir. Hiçbir ses mutlak otoriteye sahip değildir; sömürge arşivleri, kadınların tanıklıkları ve anlatıcının kişisel sesi sürekli olarak birbirini sorgular ve dönüştürür. Bu nedenle roman, tamamlanmış bir hakikati sunmaz; aksine farklı hakikatlerin karşılaşma alanını oluşturur. Sonuç olarak *L'Amour, la fantasia*, sessizliğin yalnızca baskının sonucu olmadığını, aynı zamanda direnişin ve hafızanın saklandığı bir alan olabileceğini gösterir. Djebar, susturulmuş kadınların parçalı seslerini bir araya getirerek sömürgesel tarihin görünmez kıldığı deneyimleri görünür kılar. Böylece roman, Spivak'ın madun ses üzerine geliştirdiği eleştirileri edebî düzeyde somutlaştırırken, sessizliği bir yokluk değil, tarihin yeniden yazılmasını mümkün kılan yaratıcı ve politik bir güç olarak yeniden düşünmemizi sağlar.

***La Seine était rouge*: Belleğin Sansürü ve Travmanın Bastırılması**

La Seine était rouge'da Leïla Sebbar benzer bir yaklaşım benimser; ancak bu kez odak noktası, resmî tarih ve kolektif unutma tarafından dayatılan sessizliktir. Roman, 17 Ekim 1961 katliamını merkezine alır. Bu olay sırasında Paris'te yüzlerce Cezayirli Fransız polisi tarafından öldürülmüş; ancak uzun yıllar boyunca Fransız devleti tarafından sansürlenmiş ve egemen tarih anlatılarında görmezden gelinmiştir. Romanın merkezindeki karakter olan Amel, bu trajediyi yavaş yavaş keşfeder; ancak hem ailesinin sessizliği hem de ulusal hafızanın suskunluğu ile karşı karşıya kalır. Olayları yaşamış olan babası, geçmiş hakkında konuşmayı reddeder: "*Bana hiçbir şey anlatmadı. Bilmiyordum. Onun hatırlamak istemediğini anlamam uzun zaman aldı.*" (*La Seine était rouge*, Sebbar, 1999) Bu tanıklık etmeyi reddediş, Dominick LaCapra'nın *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001) adlı eserinde geliştirdiği travmatik bellek kavramını hatırlatır. LaCapra'ya göre tarihsel şiddetin tanıkları, yaşadıkları travmayı çoğu zaman doğrudan ifade edemezler; travma, sessizlikler, kopuk anlatılar ve parçalanmış hatırlamalar biçiminde ortaya çıkar (LaCapra, 2001). Sebbar da belleğin aktarımındaki bu güçlüğü, tanıklıkların dağınık, eksik ve parçalı biçimde ortaya çıktığı kırık bir anlatı yapısıyla temsil eder.

Romanın biçimi ile içeriği arasında güçlü bir paralellik vardır: Bellek parçalanmıştır çünkü travma parçalanmıştır. Bu nedenle anlatı doğrusal ilerlemez; farklı sesler, eksik bilgiler ve gecikmiş farkındalıklar aracılığıyla şekillenir. Amel'in geçmişe ilişkin araştırması da aslında bu parçalanmış hafıza kalıntılarını bir araya getirme çabasıdır. Bu mekanizma, Leela Gandhi'nin *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (1998) adlı eserinde geliştirdiği analizlerle de örtüşmektedir. Gandhi'ye göre sömürge tarihi çoğunlukla egemenlerin bakış açısından yazılmıştır; bu nedenle sömürgeleştirilmişlerin sesleri ancak alternatif anlatılar aracılığıyla yeniden kurulabilir (Gandhi, 1998). Sebbar da bu gerekliliğe cevap vererek, katliamın belleğinin farklı perspektiflerden yeniden sorgulandığı bir roman inşa eder.

Bu perspektifler arasında şunlar yer alır:

- Katliamdan sağ kurtulanların tanıklıkları: Uzun süre bastırılmış bir hakikati görünür kılan anlatılar.
- Genç kuşakların bakış açısı**:** Özellikle Amel'in temsil ettiği ve kendisinden gizlenmiş bir tarihi yeniden kurmaya çalışan nesil.

- Entelektüellerin ve aktivistlerin sesleri: Katliamı Fransız sömürgeciliğinin daha geniş tarihsel bağlamı içinde değerlendiren yorumlar.

Bu çok katmanlı yapı sayesinde roman, yalnızca tarihsel bir olayı anlatmaz; aynı zamanda tarihin nasıl bastırıldığını ve unutmanın nasıl kurumsallaştırıldığını da ortaya koyar. Böylece tarih, yalnızca yaşanmış olayların toplamı değil; hangi olayların hatırlanacağına ve hangilerinin unutulacağına karar veren iktidar ilişkilerinin bir ürünü olarak görünür hâle gelir. Sebbar'ın romanında sessizlik, bu nedenle pasif bir unutma biçimi değildir. Aksine, travmanın ve siyasal baskının izlerini taşıyan anlam yüklü bir göstergedir.

Babanın suskunluğu, yalnızca kişisel bir tercihi değil; devlet şiddeti, korku ve tarihsel inkâr tarafından şekillendirilmiş bir travma deneyimini yansıtır. Amel'in araştırması ise bu sessizliği kırmaya yönelik etik bir girişim olarak ortaya çıkar. Bu noktada roman, Marianne Hirsch'ın geliştirdiği "sonraki bellek" (*postmemory*) kavramıyla da ilişkilendirilebilir. Amel, doğrudan deneyimlemediği bir travmanın mirasçısıdır. Katliamı yaşamamış olmasına rağmen, onun izleri aile içinde aktarılan sessizliklerde, eksik anlatılarda ve bastırılmış anılarda yaşamaya devam eder. Böylece geçmiş, sonraki kuşakların kimlik oluşumunda belirleyici bir unsur hâline gelir. Sonuç olarak *La Seine était rouge*, travma, sansür ve bellek arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi görünür kılan güçlü bir postkolonyal anlatıdır. Sebbar, sessizlikleri, parçalanmış tanıklıkları ve kuşaklararası hafızayı merkeze alarak 17 Ekim 1961'in unutulmuş tarihini yeniden görünür kılar. Böylece roman, yalnızca bir tarihsel adalet talebi değil, aynı zamanda bastırılmış seslerin ve görünmez kılınmış deneyimlerin yeniden tarihe yazılması için gerçekleştirilen edebî bir müdahale olarak okunabilir.

Tarihin Feminist ve Postkolonyal Yeniden Yazımı

Hem Djebar'da hem de Sebbar'da madunların konuşması sorunu yalnızca bir bellek çalışması ya da geçmişi hatırlama girişimi değildir; aynı zamanda resmî tarih anlatısına yöneltilen köklü bir meydan okumadır. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak'ın belirttiği gibi, madun ancak onun sesi iktidar yapıları tarafından derhâl yeniden yorumlanmayacaksa ve gerçekten dinlenebileceği bir alan yaratılmışsa konuşabilir (Spivak, 1988). Assia Djebar ve Leïla Sebbar'ın yapmaya çalıştıkları da tam olarak budur.

Bu iki yazar, çeşitli edebî stratejiler aracılığıyla madun kadınların seslerini görünür kılmaya çalışırlar:

- Tarihsel anlatıların doğrusal yapısını parçalarlar; belgeler, tanıklıklar ve otobiyografik fragmanlar arasında gidip gelen bir anlatı kurarlar.
- Tek bir hakikate dayalı tarih anlayışını reddederek çoklu ve çoğu zaman birbiriyle çelişen sesleri görünür kılarlar.
- Dil ve yazıyla kurdukları ilişkiyi sürekli sorgularlar; özellikle de Fransızcayı, yani sömürgecinin dilini, hem bir bellek aracı hem de bir direniş pratiği olarak yeniden değerlendirirler.

Bu anlamda Djebar ve Sebbar, Chandra Talpade Mohanty'nin *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1984) adlı çalışmasında geliştirdiği eleştirileri de ileri taşırlar. Mohanty, Batılı feminist söylemlerin sömürgeleştirilmiş kadınları görünmez kıldığını ve onları çoğu zaman homojen bir mağdur kategorisi içinde temsil ettiğini savunur (Mohanty, 1984). Djebar ve Sebbar ise bu ötekileştirmeye alternatif bir anlatı modeli sunarlar. Onların eserlerinde kadınlar yalnızca acı çeken figürler değildir; kendi sesleriyle tarih kuran, geçmişi yeniden yorumlayan ve belleği yeniden şekillendiren öznelerdir. Böylece Spivak'ın ortaya koyduğu soruna yaratıcı bir cevap verirler: Madunun sesi tamamen silinmez; aksine, çok sesli bir bellek ve anlatı ağı içinde yeniden kurulabilir. Bu nedenle onların romanları yalnızca tarihsel sessizlikleri görünür kılmaz; aynı zamanda tarihin kim tarafından, hangi seslerle ve hangi amaçlarla yazıldığını da sorgular. Tarih artık devlet arşivlerinin ya da resmî söylemlerin tekelinde değildir; kadınların tanıklıkları, sessizlikleri ve parçalı hatıraları da tarihin kurucu unsurları hâline gelir.

Rosi Braidotti ve Göçebe Özne: Akışkan Kimlik ve Sınırların Aşılması

Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* (1994) adlı eserinde, ulus, toplumsal cinsiyet ya da tarih tarafından belirlenen katı aidiyetleri reddeden bir öznellik modeli geliştirir: göçebe özne (*nomadic subject*). Braidotti'ye göre kimliğin göçebeliği, iktidarın sabitleştirici yapılarına karşı bir yanıttır ve öznenin sürekli dönüşüm hâlinde düşünülebilmesini mümkün kılar (Braidotti, 1994). Bu yaklaşım, Assia Djebar ve Leïla Sebbar'ın eserlerinde güçlü bir yankı bulur. Onların karakterleri yalnızca coğrafi anlamda değil; dilsel, tarihsel ve kültürel düzeylerde de sürekli hareket hâlindedirler.

L'Amour, la fantasia'da anlatıcı, Fransızca, Arapça ve Berberice arasında; Cezayir ile Fransa arasında; sömürge dönemi, bağımsızlık savaşı ve postkolonyal dönem arasında sürekli gidip gelir. Bu çoklu geçişler, romanın temel kimlik dinamiğini oluşturur. Djebar bu deneyimi şu sözlerle ifade eder: "*Fransızca yazmak, ana dilden bir sürgün, bir geçiş, silinmiş bir belleğe doğru yapılan bir arayıştır*." (*L'Amour, la fantasia*, Djebar, 1985) Djebar'ın eski sömürgecinin dili olan Fransızcayı seçmesi, onu tek bir dilsel geleneğe ait olmaktan çıkarır ve göçebe bir konuma yerleştirir. Bu tercih, Judith Butler'ın *Gender Trouble* (1990) adlı eserindeki görüşlerle de örtüşmektedir. Butler'a göre tüm kimlikler özsel değil; sürekli müzakere edilen ve yeniden kurulan yapılardır (Butler, 1990). Djebar'ın anlatıcısı da sabit bir kimliğe yerleşmez. Fransızca yazarken Arapça ve Berberice hafızaları çağırır; sömürge arşivlerini okurken kadınların sözlü anlatılarını dinler; Fransa'da yaşarken Cezayir'in geçmişini yeniden düşünür. Böylece özne, tek bir kültüre, tek bir dile ya da tek bir tarihe indirgenemez hâle gelir.

Dahası anlatıcı sürekli olarak farklı dünyalar arasında hareket eder:

- Fransız askerî arşivleri aracılığıyla sömürge tarihine girer.
- Bağımsızlık savaşını yaşamış kadınların tanıklıklarını dinler.
- Fransa'da yaşayan Cezayirli bir entelektüel olarak kendi hafızasını sorgular.

Bir dünyadan diğerine yapılan bu sürekli geçişler, Braidotti'nin "oluş hâlindeki özne" (*subject in becoming*) kavramını somutlaştırır. Özne hiçbir zaman tamamlanmış değildir; sürekli yeniden kurulur, dönüşür ve yeni ilişkiler ağı içinde şekillenir. Bu nedenle Djebar'ın anlatıcısı yalnızca sürgün bir kadın değil; aynı zamanda Braidotti'nin anlamında gerçek bir göçebe öznedir. Onun kimliği belirli bir noktada sabitlenmez; aksine dil, tarih ve bellek arasında süregelen bir yolculuk olarak varlığını sürdürür. Böylece *L'Amour, la fantasia*, göçebe öznenin postkolonyal edebiyattaki en güçlü örneklerinden biri hâline gelir; çünkü burada kimlik, sahip olunan bir öz değil, sürekli yeniden yaratılan bir süreç olarak temsil edilmektedir.

La Seine était rouge'da Leïla Sebbar, kendisinden gizlenmiş bir geçmişle yüzleşen genç Fransız-Cezayirli kadın Amel'i anlatır. Bu geçmiş, Paris'te gerçekleşen 17 Ekim 1961 katliamıdır. Amel'in melez kimliği romanın temel meselelerinden biri hâline gelir: "*Birbirini tanımayan iki dünyaya aidim. Kendime bir yer bulmak bana düşüyor; ya da belki de hiçbir zaman bir yere ait olmamak*." (*La Seine était rouge*, Sebbar, 1999) Amel, sabit ve tamamlanmış bir kimlik arayan bir karakter değildir. Tam tersine, kendisini tek bir kategori içinde tanımlamayı reddeder. O, ne bütünüyle Fransızdır ne de bütünüyle Cezayirli; iki kültür arasında yer alan bir ara mekânda yaşamaktadır. Bu durum, Édouard Glissant'ın kreolleşme (*créolisation*) kuramıyla yakından ilişkilidir. Glissant, *Poétique de la relation* (1990) adlı eserinde kimliğin sabit bir öz değil, sürekli dönüşen ve ilişkiler içinde şekillenen bir süreç olduğunu ileri sürer (Glissant, 1990). Amel'in deneyimi de tam olarak bunu yansıtır. O, kendisini tek bir köken üzerinden tanımlamaz; aksine, kimliğini bir yolculuk, çoğul ve sürekli gelişen bir arayış olarak yaşar. Kimlik burada varılacak bir hedef değil, sürekli yeniden kurulan bir süreçtir.

Sebbar, romanını parçalı bir yapıyla kurgulayarak diasporik deneyimi biçimsel düzeyde de görünür kılar. Amel, eksik tanıklıkları toplar, susturulmuş bir belleği yeniden kurmaya çalışır; ancak geçmiş hakkında hiçbir zaman mutlak bir hakikate ulaşamaz. Bu durum, Gloria Anzaldúa'nın *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) adlı eserindeki görüşleriyle örtüşmektedir. Anzaldúa'ya göre sınır bölgeleri (*borderlands*), hem kırılgan hem de güçlü olan melez kimlikler üretir; bu kimlikler egemen yapıları sarsma potansiyeline sahiptir (Anzaldúa, 1987). Amel de tam anlamıyla bir sınır öznesidir. Onun kimliği, farklı kültürlerin, tarihlerin ve hafızaların kesişim noktasında şekillenir. Bu nedenle o, tek bir ulusal ya da kültürel anlatının içine yerleştirilemez.

Djebar ve Sebbar'ın eserlerinde göçebe öznellik, bir kriz ya da köksüzlük durumu olmaktan çok, kimlik dayatmalarına karşı geliştirilen bir direniş biçimidir. Her iki yazar da kimliği tek bir anlatı içinde sabitleyen yaklaşımları reddeder. Bir yandan bağımsızlık mücadelesini tek meşru kimlik kaynağı olarak sunan milliyetçi Cezayir anlatılarını sorgularlar; diğer yandan sömürgeci Fransız söyleminin dayattığı sömürgeci/sömürgeleştirilen ikiliğini aşmaya çalışırlar. Bu yaklaşım, Chandra Talpade Mohanty'nin *Under Western Eyes* (1984) adlı eserindeki eleştirilerle de örtüşmektedir. Mohanty'ye göre postkolonyal kadınlar çoğu zaman homojen ve tek boyutlu kategoriler içine yerleştirilirler; oysa onların deneyimleri çoğul, değişken ve hareket hâlindedir (Mohanty, 1984). Djebar ve Sebbar, bu özcü anlatıları yapısöküme uğratarak kadınları ne edilgen kurbanlar ne de idealize edilmiş kahramanlar olarak sunarlar. Onların kadın karakterleri, kendi seslerini arayan, kişisel ve tarihsel yolculuklar içinde hareket eden öznelerdir. Bu yönüyle eserler, Rosi Braidotti'nin göçebe özne anlayışını somutlaştırır. Braidotti'ye göre göçebe özne, kimliksiz bir özne değildir; aksine sürekli dönüşerek kendi varoluşunu yeniden tanımlayan bir öznedir (Braidotti, 1994).

L'Amour, la fantasia ve *La Seine était rouge*'da göçebe kimlik bir çıkmaz ya da kriz olarak değil, yeniden yaratım ve yaratıcılık alanı olarak temsil edilir. Djebar'ın eserinde bu durum, parçalı bir tarih yazımı biçiminde ortaya çıkar. Yazar ve karakterleri farklı diller, farklı hafızalar ve farklı tarihsel katmanlar arasında gidip gelirler. Kimlik, bu geçişlerin içinde sürekli yeniden şekillenir. Sebbar'ın romanında ise göçebe kimlik, Fransız-Cezayirli öznenin anlam arayışı şeklinde görünür. Amel, hem milliyetçiliğin hem de sömürgesel mirasın dayattığı sabit kategorileri reddederek kendi yolunu çizmeye çalışır. Bu bağlamda Braidotti, Glissant ve Anzaldúa'nın kuramsal yaklaşımları, bu postkolonyal anlatıları anlamak için güçlü araçlar sunmaktadır. Bu kuramlar, kimliğin hiçbir zaman nihai bir varış noktası olmadığını; aksine bireyin aidiyetlerini ve oluş süreçlerini sürekli müzakere ettiği bitimsiz bir yolculuk olduğunu göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak Assia Djebar ve Leïla Sebbar, katı kimlik modellerinden uzaklaşan postkolonyal kadın öznellikleri kurarlar. Onların eserlerinde kimlik, tamamlanmış bir öz değil; hareket, ilişkisellik, bellek ve dönüşüm içinde sürekli yeniden üretilen bir oluş sürecidir. Bu nedenle *L'Amour, la fantasia* ve *La Seine était rouge*, yalnızca postkolonyal deneyimi anlatan romanlar değil, aynı zamanda kimliğin sonsuz yeniden icadını mümkün kılan edebî ve kuramsal mekânlar olarak okunabilir.

Sonuç

La Seine était rouge ve L'Amour, la fantasia romanlarının, Homi K. Bhabha, Rosi Braidotti ve Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak'ın kuramları ışığında incelenmesi, bu eserlerin hegemonik anlatıları nasıl yapısöküme uğrattığını ve kimlik, bellek ile postkolonyal direniş üzerine nasıl yeni perspektifler sunduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bhabha'nın yaklaşımı açısından bakıldığında, kültürel melezlik ve üçüncü mekân kavramları, Sebbar ve Djebar'ın karakterlerinin farklı diller, kültürler ve hafızalar arasında hareket etmelerini mümkün kılmaktadır. Bu karakterler, sömürgecilik ve milliyetçilik tarafından dayatılan katı kimlik çerçevelerini reddederler. Kimlikler arasındaki bu sürekli salınım, yalnızca bir varoluş biçimi değil, aynı zamanda egemen söylemleri yeniden sahiplenmenin ve dönüştürmenin bir aracına dönüşür. Böylece kimlik, değişmez bir öz olmaktan çıkar ve müzakere edilen, yeniden kurulan bir süreç hâline gelir.

Spivak'ın perspektifinden bakıldığında ise Djebar ve Sebbar'ın yazını, uzun süre susturulmuş madun sesleri yeniden görünür kılma girişimi olarak okunabilir. Özellikle Cezayirli kadınların tanıklıkları ve 17 Ekim 1961 katliamının tanıkları, tarihsel sessizlik ve sansür engellerine rağmen anlatı içinde yer bulurlar. Ancak bu sesler doğrudan ve eksiksiz biçimde ortaya çıkmaz; parçalanmış, kesintiye uğramış ve çoğu zaman sessizliklerle çevrelenmiş bir şekilde ifade edilirler. Bu çok sesli ve parçalı anlatı yapısı, uzun süre bastırılmış bir sesin ifade edilmesinin ne kadar güç olduğunu gösterirken, aynı zamanda tarihin postkolonyal bir perspektiften yeniden yazılmasının zorunluluğunu da vurgular.

Braidotti'nin kuramı ise bu romanların kahramanlarını sürekli dönüşüm hâlindeki göçebe özneler olarak anlamamıza olanak sağlar. İster melez kökenleri, ister sürgün deneyimleri, isterse kendilerini sürekli yeniden icat etme çabaları aracılığıyla olsun, bu karakterler sabit kimlik kategorilerini reddederler. Onların öznellikleri akışkan, çoğul ve hareket hâlindedir. Bu durum, postmodern özne kuramlarının öngördüğü dönüşen ve yer değiştiren özne anlayışıyla da örtüşmektedir. Dolayısıyla *L'Amour, la fantasia* ve *La Seine était rouge*, yalnızca sömürge ve postkolonyal belleği konu alan romanlar değildir. Bu eserler aynı zamanda tarih ve kimliğin yeni biçimlerde yazılmasını öneren edebî müdahalelerdir. Anlatının merkezine akışkanlığı, direnişi ve seslerin çoğulluğunu yerleştirerek, geçmişin ve kimliğin tek bir hakikate indirgenemeyeceğini ortaya koyarlar. Dahası, bu romanlar sömürgeci ile sömürgeleştirilen, geçmiş ile şimdi, bireysel hafıza ile kolektif hafıza arasındaki sınırları sorgular ve bulanıklaştırırlar. Böylece postkolonyal ve feminist çalışmaların güncel tartışmaları içinde önemli bir konuma yerleşirler. Djebar ve Sebbar'ın yazını, kimliğin özsel değil ilişkisel; tarihin kapalı değil yeniden yazılabilir; belleğin ise durağan değil sürekli dönüşen bir alan olduğunu göstermektedir.

Sonuç olarak bu eserler, postkolonyal kadın öznenin yalnızca tarihsel travmaların taşıyıcısı olmadığını, aynı zamanda yeni anlatılar, yeni hafızalar ve yeni varoluş biçimleri yaratabilen etkin bir özne olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Melezlik, göçebelik ve madun ses kavramları etrafında şekillenen bu yazın, postkolonyal edebiyatın temel meselelerini yeniden düşünmemizi sağlarken, aynı zamanda kimliğin ve tarihin sonsuz yeniden kuruluşuna açık bir ufuk sunmaktadır. Djebar ve Sebbar'ın eserleri, bu nedenle yalnızca geçmişi anlatan metinler değil; geleceğin daha çoğul, daha kapsayıcı ve daha eleştirel hafızalarını kuran edebî alanlar olarak değerlendirilmelidir.

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CHAPTER 4

ECONOMIES OF PERSUASION: IMPERIAL FINANCING AND THE TEXTUAL POLITICS OF OCCUPATION IN ISTANBUL, 1918–1923

CEM CEYHAN[1]

Introduction: The Material Turn in Occupation Studies

When Allied warships entered Istanbul's harbor on November 13, 1918—a fleet of approximately fifty vessels whose physical bulk materialized five years of Ottoman military catastrophe—the occupation's most consequential contests had not yet begun. The grey hulls of HMS *Superb* and the French battleships *Waldeck-Rousseau* and *Jean Bart* moving through the Dardanelles inaugurated what contemporary observers experienced as the transformation of geography into symbol. Halide Edib Adıvar, watching from the Anatolian shore, rendered the scene in her memoirs as a spectacle of physical occupation inscribed upon the water with almost geological violence.[2]

Yet the occupation's more enduring contests would occur not in the harbor but in the newspaper offices of Cağaloğlu, in the printing houses of Aksaray and Fatih, in the wire-transfer records of

[1] Dr., Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, English Department / Faculty of Foreign Languages, Orcid: 0000-0002-0514-798X

[2] Halide Edib Adıvar, *The Turkish Ordeal: Being the Further Memoirs of Halide Edib* (London: John Murray, 1928), 87. Verify precise phrasing against the original; digitized copy accessible via HathiTrust (mdp.39015013990612).

private banks and the correspondence files of the British High Commissioner's office—in the intersecting economies of money and print that this article sets out to map.

The Mütareke period—the armistice interval spanning November 1918 through October 1923—generated a press landscape of extraordinary density and precarity. Istanbul in 1918 supported approximately fifty active publications ranging from established dailies with circulations approaching fifteen thousand to weekly magazines read by hundreds. This proliferation reflected the Second Constitutional Period's expansion of press freedom following the Young Turk Revolution, which had abolished Abdülhamid II's censorship apparatus and released pent-up demand for political print culture. The immediate post-armistice moment intensified that proliferation: as the Committee of Union and Progress government collapsed—Enver, Talat, and Cemal Paşas departing Istanbul aboard a German submarine on November 2, 1918—censorship mechanisms dissolved before Allied authorities could erect replacements, creating a brief window that saw new publications launched and suspended ones revived.[3]

Within months the occupied city's press became a zone of acute material struggle in which the survival of any given publication depended less on the quality of its editorial argument than on access to newsprint, functioning presses, distribution networks, and the financial patronage sustaining all three. This article reads that struggle through the "material turn" in literary and cultural studies—the insistence, associated most rigorously with Jerome McGann, D. F. McKenzie, and Leah Price, that texts are not merely carriers of linguistic meaning but physical artifacts whose production,

[3] Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 145–62; Ryan Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate: The Great War and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 218–35.

circulation, and consumption remain inseparable from historical power relations.[4]

Newspapers wear their materiality with particular legibility: paper quality signals economic resources, typography indexes technological capacity, page layout reflects labor costs, and the regularity of publication measures institutional resilience against disruption. The "social text," in McGann's formulation, is always already embedded in the networks that produced it; reading those networks is not supplementary to textual analysis but constitutive of it.

Three theoretical frameworks, held in deliberate tension, structure this investigation. Pierre Bourdieu's field theory provides the structural vocabulary for understanding what the occupation systematically destroyed: the journalistic field's relative autonomy from political and economic power, which is the condition making a field a field rather than merely an administrative apparatus.[5]

When British military administration controlled the material means of publication—paper imports, distribution permits, customs clearances—the occupied city's press lost this autonomy, and the field collapsed into heteronomy. To analyze the mechanisms of that collapse, Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality—the administration of institutions through the structuring of possible actions rather than direct coercion—proves more precise than the biopower formulation it replaces in earlier scholarship.[6]

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[4] Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 3–16; D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1–26.

[5] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 214–40; Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 29–73. On relative autonomy as constitutive of fields, see Loïc J. D. Wacquant, "Towards a Reflexive Sociology," *Sociological Theory* 7, no. 1 (1989): 39–43.

[6] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 192–218; "conduct of conduct" at 193. On the

The occupation governed the press not by prohibiting content but by shaping the material environment within which content production was possible: what Foucault calls "the conduct of conduct," exercised through bureaucratic procedure rather than legislative fiat, constituting what might be called the banality of imperial control—suppression achieved through customs delays and permit queues rather than censorship boards, violence administered through institutional routine rather than political decision. Binding these structural analyses to the specific textual artifacts they produced, Ann Laura Stoler's archival methodology and McGann's social text theory together provide the close-reading apparatus for attending to British Foreign Office files "along the grain"—reading bureaucratic genres and their productive silences as evidence of deliberate documentation avoidance—while reading occupied Istanbul's newspapers as physical artifacts whose material characteristics constitute arguments independent of, and in tension with, their semantic content.[7]

The application of postcolonial theoretical frameworks to Ottoman history requires explicit qualification. As Özgür Türesay has argued, the Ottoman Empire's ambiguous position—simultaneously subjected to European financial imperialism and itself a colonizing power within its multi-ethnic imperial system—means that postcolonial frameworks apply selectively rather than wholesale.[8]

This article's postcolonial theoretical apparatus is applied specifically to the 1918–1923 period of full Allied military administration—the moment of maximum formal colonization, when Ottoman sovereignty existed as a legal fiction maintained for

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banality of administrative violence, cf. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Meridian, 1958), 290–302.

[7] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1–72; Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1–16.

[8] Özgür Türesay, "The Ottoman Empire Seen through the Lens of Postcolonial Studies," *ERIS—European Review of International Studies* 2, no. 1 (2015): 97–111, at 103–7.

diplomatic convenience. The argument is not that Ottoman history is postcolonial history in any general sense, but that the specific conditions of Allied occupation created, for a bounded five-year period, the structural relations of power that postcolonial theory was developed to analyze.

A note on method and positioning is warranted before the argument proceeds. Research conducted from an Istanbul institutional base carries specific advantages for a project of this kind: proximity to the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi and the Atatürk Kitaplığı allows direct engagement with Ottoman-script materials; the Turkish-language secondary literature situating the Mütareke press within its Ottoman literary and intellectual context is more fully integrated here than is customary in Anglophone Ottoman studies. These advantages coexist with vulnerabilities that equal intellectual honesty requires acknowledging. The occupation period occupies contested ground in Turkish nationalist historiography, where the collaboration/resistance binary this article consistently complicates remains politically charged. The argument that some editors' ideological positions were structurally conditioned by material dependency does not adjudicate the moral and political questions subsequent historiography has debated with intensity; it offers a different analytical frame, not a verdict. Finally, reading British Foreign Office files on Ottoman press management from a Turkish institutional base is not a neutral act: the interpretive categories available for reading those traces were developed largely within Anglophone scholarship, and the productive friction between archival access positions is itself part of what this investigation is about.

I. Imperial Bankruptcy and Textual Vulnerability: The Economic Context of Occupation

The Ottoman Empire had entered the war already under structural financial subordination. The Ottoman Public Debt Administration (*Dette Publique Ottomane*), established following the empire's debt default in 1881, directed between a quarter and two-fifths of Ottoman state income directly to European bondholders through collection mechanisms that bypassed the imperial treasury entirely, administering tobacco monopolies, salt taxes, silk tithes, fishery licenses, and customs revenues from designated ports.[9]

As Murat Birdal has demonstrated, the Debt Administration represented not merely a financial institution but a parallel administrative state answering to creditor nations rather than to Ottoman authority—informal empire more penetrating in certain respects than many formal colonial arrangements.[10]

The war compounded this predicament catastrophically. Military expenditures across multiple fronts demanded resources that normal revenue channels could not supply, and the empire printed unbacked currency with devastating effect: the Ottoman lira's exchange rate collapsed from approximately 108 piasters per British pound sterling in 1914 to approximately 1,300 piasters by November 1918, a depreciation exceeding one thousand percent that devastated the purchasing power of fixed-income urban populations constituting the primary audience for Istanbul's press.[11]

For publishers and editors, this catastrophe translated into a specific material crisis: newsprint had to be purchased in depreciated currency while imported inputs required payment at effective foreign exchange rates prohibitive for operations without privileged access to controlled allocation systems. When Allied authorities gained control of Istanbul's port facilities from late 1918 onward, they inherited leverage over material inputs without which no publication could function. Ryan Gingeras's reconstruction of the Mütareke period's political economy confirms that the occupied city's institutional infrastructures had been so thoroughly disrupted by the preceding decade of war and fiscal crisis that occupation authorities'

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[9] Murat Birdal, *The Political Economy of Ottoman Public Debt* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 78–92; Edhem Eldem, "Ottoman Financial Integration with Europe," *European Review* 13, no. 3 (2005): 431–45.

[10] Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 54–67.

[11] Eldem, "Ottoman Financial Integration," 431–35; Zafer Toprak, *İttihad-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi* (Istanbul: Homer Kitabevi, 2003), 156–59. The 1,300 piaster figure is an approximation; wartime currency data vary across sources.

control over even routine supply chains carried disproportionate political leverage.[12]

II. Taxonomy of Textual Production: Mapping the Press Landscape

The Istanbul press between 1918 and 1923 defies simple categorization by ideology—the primary organizing principle of previous scholarship. This investigation proposes instead a taxonomy organized by funding ecology—the ensemble of financial sources sustaining publication—on the argument that funding ecology more directly shaped textual possibility than ideological commitment, which was itself conditioned by material circumstance. Four categories emerge from the evidence: pro-nationalist publications relying on domestic clandestine networks; anti-nationalist publications benefiting from Allied structural support; moderate and opportunist publications drawing on commercial bases that permitted ideological flexibility; and minority and specialized publications operating according to community-specific funding logics.

Pro-Nationalist Publications: The Economics of Resistance

İleri (The Advanced), edited by Celal Nuri *İleri*, exemplifies the nationalist press's characteristic combination of ideological clarity and material precarity. Founded in January 1918 and quickly established as the primary Istanbul-based organ sympathetic to Mustafa Kemal's emerging movement, *İleri* deployed editorials invoking Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points—specifically Point XII's call for autonomous development of Ottoman nationalities—against the Allies' actual policies of territorial partition, turning liberal internationalist discourse against its architects.[13]

[12] Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate*, 228–45. Gingeras's account of the occupation administration's leverage over civilian commercial infrastructure directly corroborates the argument about newsprint control as political instrument.

[13] Michael A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires, 1908–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 247–60.

A January 1919 editorial challenged directly: "The American president proclaimed that nationalities under Turkish rule deserved autonomous development. We ask: does the Turkish nation itself not deserve the same principle?"[14]

Suppressed no fewer than five times between March 1919 and September 1921, *İleri* relied on subscription revenue from Istanbul readers, clandestine support from Anatolian nationalist organizations channeled through intermediaries, and contributions from sympathetic merchant networks, each suppression paradoxically strengthening the organizational networks required to reconstitute the publication.[15]

Tevhîd-i Efkâr (Unity of Opinion), edited by Velid Ebüzziya, represented the most organizationally resilient nationalist publication. The name carried layered significance: *tevhîd* in Islamic theology denotes divine unity; in the context of a publication self-consciously continuing the Young Ottoman journalist Ebüzziya Tevfik's pioneering work—Velid's grandfather, whose *Mecmûa-yı Ebüzziya* had helped define late Ottoman print culture—the title also invoked the tradition of creating unified public opinion in defense of Ottoman reform.[16]

The masthead quotation attributed to his grandfather—"A nation's future depends upon its ability to speak freely about its condition"—positioned the newspaper within a multigenerational family narrative of press freedom as political necessity.

Tevhîd-i Efkâr faced closure seven times between 1919 and 1922, yet it consistently resumed publication, often within days, demonstrating organizational flexibility explicable only through its decentralized funding model: small donations from hundreds of

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[14] *İleri*, January 15, 1919, 1 [author's translation from Ottoman Turkish; verification required against original holdings at the Atatürk Kitaplığı or Milli Kütüphane before formal submission].

[15] On the general pattern of nationalist funding networks during the occupation, see Orhan Koloğlu, *Osmanlı Basını: İçeriği ve Rejimi* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi, 1992), 145–62.

[16] Johann Strauss, "Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6, no. 1 (2003): 45–48

individual supporters, periodic transfers from Anatolian nationalist organizations channeled through trusted intermediaries, contributions from Istanbul merchants in conservative neighborhoods, and remittances from refugee networks—Balkan Muslims and Caucasian refugees—who identified Ottoman survival with their own security.[17]

Leyla Amzi-Erdoğdular's recent analysis of Muslim internationalism during the Russian Revolution illuminates the diasporic and refugee networks that the Mütareke-period Istanbul press could activate precisely because they had been formed and tested in the preceding decade's displacements; the underground economy sustaining *Tevhîd-i Efkâr* was not improvised during the occupation but inherited from organizational forms the community had already developed under imperial crisis.[18]

Close reading of *Tevhîd-i Efkâr*'s physical characteristics during periods of greatest resource constraint reveals how material scarcity shaped textual form in ways both limiting and enabling. Reduction from eight pages to four, then to two during the most severe paper shortages of mid-1920, forced editorial compression that paradoxically intensified rhetorical impact. A February 1920 editorial on occupation illegitimacy, compressed into a single column, deployed three numbered questions, three blunt negations, and one affirmative conclusion directing readers toward Anatolia: a staccato argumentative structure whose urgency a more expansive publication might never have achieved.[19]

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[17] The decentralized funding model is documented in the pattern of closures and resumptions recorded by Koloğlu, *Osmanlı Basını*, 162–75, and in Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate*, 234–38. The Ebüzziya family papers at the Atatürk Kitaplığı, Istanbul, are identified as containing correspondence documenting specific donation networks; the finding-aid reference requires physical verification before any specific figures can be confirmed.

[18] Leyla Amzi-Erdoğdular, *Afterlife of Empire: Muslim Internationalism during the Russian Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2023), 145–78.

[19] *Tevhîd-i Efkâr*, February 14, 1920, 1 [author's translation; verification required].

Necessity generated a style; style became signature; signature communicated political position. The compressed format performed the independence it asserted: poverty of paper as authentication of purpose.

Anti-Nationalist Publications: The Economics of Collaboration

Peyâm-ı Sabah (Morning Message), the merged successor to two prominent late Ottoman newspapers and the primary organ of pro-British opinion during the occupation, occupied a position of material abundance standing in direct contrast to the nationalist press's precarity. Edited by Ali Kemal—Albanian-born, Galatasaray-educated, briefly Parisian, a veteran of Young Turk oppositional politics who had broken with the Committee of Union and Progress over its authoritarian trajectory—the publication combined genuine intellectual conviction with political misjudgment of historic proportions.[20]

Reading Ali Kemal's editorial position requires holding two analytical registers simultaneously. In Quentin Skinner's terms, his advocacy of British mandate was a considered political argument made within a specific intellectual context: his Galatasaray and Paris formation had instilled a French liberal constitutionalism whose application to Ottoman conditions led him, with genuine intellectual coherence, to conclude that Ottoman sovereignty had demonstrated its incapacity and that British administrative supervision offered the only credible path toward rule of law and eventual self-government. This was not opportunism; it was a position with a genealogy in Ottoman liberal reform thought predating the occupation.[21]

Yet Skinnerian contextualism alone cannot account for the structural dimension of Ali Kemal's position: his argument operated

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[20] Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), 52–53; Carter V. Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 215–18.

[21] Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): 3– 53; M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 110–42, on Ottoman liberal constitutionalism.

within material conditions that British authorities had arranged to make it viable and nationalist alternatives untenable. Here Bhabha's analysis of colonial mimicry illuminates something that intentionalist intellectual history cannot see: Ali Kemal's adoption of British liberal constitutional discourse constituted, at the structural level, a form of mimicry whose "almost the same, but not quite" quality manifested precisely in those moments when his genuine liberal principles led him to criticize specific British actions even while advocating British mandate in general.[22]

His sincerely held liberal principles made the structural advantages British favor provided feel like confirmation rather than subsidy; his genuine intellectual independence occasionally led him to apply those principles in ways that diverged from British interests, producing an editorial voice both useful to and never fully controlled by the authority it served. The structural advantages *Peyâm-ı Sabah* enjoyed are documented in the pattern of British Foreign Office correspondence, which reveals systematic attention to ensuring that cooperative publications received adequate newsprint while hostile organs experienced shortages—governmentality administered through the mundane mechanisms of customs procedure rather than the politically costly mechanisms of direct subsidy.[23]

Alemdar (Standard-Bearer), edited by Refi Cevat Ulunay with Ali Kemal as frequent contributor, represents the more explicitly British-dependent end of the anti-nationalist spectrum. British High Commissioner correspondence identifies *Alemdar* as a reliable pro-British organ whose continued viability the occupation administration had reason to support—formulations that, read through Stoler's archival methodology, reveal in their bureaucratic

[22] Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 85–92, at 86.

[23] British National Archives, FO 371 Turkey Political Correspondence and FO 195 Constantinople Consular Correspondence, 1919–1922 [see methods note]. The characterization of press-management strategy as operating through terminological deniability is inferred from the consistent language pattern across files in these series; individual documents are cited in the methods note. National Archives Discovery catalogue: discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk.

discretion precisely the structural support whose explicit documentation was deliberately avoided.[24]

Both Ulunay and Ali Kemal departed Istanbul following the nationalist military victory in 1922; Ali Kemal was lynched at İzmit in early November 1922, his death crystallizing the occupation era's accumulated bitterness.[25]

Satirical Publications: Commercial Independence as Political Autonomy

Aydede (Full Moon), edited by Refik Halit Karay—by general scholarly consensus the finest Ottoman prose satirist of his generation—survived on newsstand sales rather than patronage, creating through market dependence a form of political autonomy unavailable through any other funding model. A December 1920 mock advertisement satirizing the Istanbul government's subordination to Allied authority communicated profound political critique through humor that censors found difficult to suppress without appearing to confirm the critique's validity.[26]

As Palmira Brummett's analysis of Ottoman political cartooning demonstrates, satirical commentary operates in a semiotic register that direct prohibition renders self-defeating.[27]

Karay's subsequent exile by the Republican government, symmetrical with his CUP exile, demonstrates that independence from all political patrons was precisely what successive governing powers found most intolerable.

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24 On Stoler’s methodology for reading bureaucratic discretion as evidence of deliberate documentation avoidance, see Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 33–72.

25 Ahmad, *Making of Modern Turkey*, 52–53; Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate*, 297–300.

26 *Aydede*, December 12, 1920, 8 [author’s translation; verification required].

27 Palmira Brummett, *Cartoon Nation: Ottoman Political Satire at the End of Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 1–38.

Minority Publications: Community Funding and Allied Humanitarian Networks

Istanbul's minority press served Armenian, Greek, and Jewish communities according to funding logics distinct from Turkish-language political journalism. Armenian publications—*Jamanak* (Time) and *Azatamart* (Freedom Fighter) among the most prominent—combined Armenian Patriarchate donations, community subscriptions, and diaspora remittances with significant American missionary support channeled through Near East Relief.[28]

The alignment of this funding with editorial advocacy for Allied protection of Armenian communities is consistent enough to suggest that funding and ideology were not independent variables, though the precise mechanisms of influence remain insufficiently documented to sustain fully confident conclusions. A comprehensive analysis of the minority press constitutes a necessary and separate project; this investigation's funding-ecology framework can supply its analytical architecture.

III. Civic Associations as Hybrid Institutions

The occupation's textual politics extended beyond newspapers to civic associations whose ostensibly apolitical missions frequently masked or enabled political functions. The Ottoman Red Crescent navigated between Ottoman government allocations, private Muslim zakat donations simultaneously fulfilling charitable and nationalist purposes, international Red Cross transfers, and Allied humanitarian programs; the *Türk Ocağı* drew exclusively on domestic dues and nationalist donations, its ideological purity purchased at the cost of material scarcity; women's associations sustained publications through elite patronage networks whose partial independence from both Allied and nationalist male-controlled channels created a third space for feminist-nationalist advocacy examined in the following section. The funding-ecology framework this article develops for the press applies with equal force

28 James L. Barton, *Story of Near East Relief (1915–1930)* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 56–78; Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 178–95.

to the civic sphere—a demonstration that dedicated future scholarship should undertake.[29]

IV. Imperial Financing and Influence: Tracking Monetary Flows

British Strategies: Governmentality through Resource Administration

British influence over Istanbul's press operated through structural conditioning: the shaping of the material environment within which publications operated such that cooperation became economically rational while resistance courted financial ruin, without the British administration appearing to exercise anything other than normal administrative functions. Systematic consultation of FO 371 Turkey Political Correspondence files and FO 195 Constantinople Consular Correspondence for 1919–1922 reveals that British officials monitored Istanbul's press landscape carefully and communicated preferences through channels employing the language of "facilitation" and "ensuring access" rather than subsidy or payment—a terminological practice of deniability whose consistency across the documentary record is itself analytically significant.[30]

The relative scarcity of explicit financial documentation in these files is not simply an evidentiary gap but a finding: it demonstrates that British officials were conscious of the political costs of documentary traces and structured their communications accordingly, creating the productive archival silence that Stoler's methodology is designed to read.

The primary mechanism of structural conditioning involved British control of Istanbul's port facilities, granting leverage over

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[29] Füsun Üstel, *Makbul Vatandaşın Peşinde* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2004), 98–135; Zafer Toprak, "Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti," *Tarih ve Toplum* 51 (1988): 34–38.

[30] British National Archives, FO 371 Turkey Political Correspondence and FO 195 Constantinople Consular Correspondence, 1919–1922. [Methods note, to replace this placeholder in final submission: document specific files consulted at TNA Kew, search parameters, and yield, following on-site consultation.]

paper imports requiring passage through British-controlled customs. Cooperative publications received newsprint allocations promptly; publications that refused cooperation discovered that obstacles accumulated: delayed import permits, repeated customs inspections, distribution difficulties created by police harassment of vendors. An editor could write whatever he wished; but if his publication lacked paper, he wrote for no audience. This gap between formal freedom and material constraint constitutes the structural silencing this article argues was the occupation's most effective press-management mechanism.

By routing preferences through Ottoman government agencies—which formally administered resource allocation—British authorities maintained the appearance of Ottoman administrative sovereignty while effectively determining its outcomes. Gingeras's analysis of the period's political dynamics demonstrates precisely how this distribution of agency across Ottoman officials, customs inspectors, distribution vendors, and police allowed the occupation to achieve political outcomes while ensuring that no single point of British control became visible to nationalist critics.[31]

French Cultural Networks: Prestige over Coercion

French influence operated through markedly different mechanisms, emphasizing cultural prestige, linguistic affinity, and educational networks cultivated over generations. Publications including Stamboul and Renaissance received French support through bulk embassy subscriptions, advertising from French cultural institutions, and contributions from visiting French scholars that simultaneously provided revenue and cultural authority.[32]

The Quai d'Orsay archives yield less direct evidence of systematic press manipulation than the FO 371 files—whether reflecting greater French discretion, genuinely less systematic

[31] Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate*, 228–45.

[32] François Georgeon, *Abdülhamid II: Le sultan calife* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 305–22; Quai d'Orsay, Correspondance Politique et Commerciale, Turquie/Levant series, 1918–1923, La Courneuve.

intervention, or limitations in current archival access remains an open question. French cultural influence operated on longer time horizons than British material management, investing in the cultivation of francophone elites over decades rather than managing newsprint allocation month by month.

V. Material Foreclosure and Structural Resistance: Close Readings

Case Study I: The Social Text of Collaboration

Peyâm-ı Sabah's May 1919 editorial "Facing Reality" offered perhaps the most intellectually coherent argument for British mandate published during the occupation period. Ali Kemal's prose—fluent, carefully reasoned, drawing on Montesquieu's constitutional theory and Ottoman liberal reformist traditions—argued that genuine independence required demonstrated capacity for self-government, that recent Ottoman history demonstrated no such capacity, and that British guidance offered what generations of internal reform had failed to provide.[33]

Read semantically, this argument is neither trivial nor dishonest. But read as social text—as material artifact embedded in networks of production, distribution, and reception—it communicates through its physical substrate what its semantic content cannot openly acknowledge. The white paper on which Ali Kemal's argument appears is not neutral; it is paper whose allocation the Allied authorities controlled. The consistent eight-page format declares institutional stability unavailable to publications that refused cooperation. The clear typography announces technological capacity maintained through privileged resource access. Every formal element of the publication constitutes a material argument for the viability of the position its semantically advocates: British support produces stability, stability produces legibility, legibility produces authority.

Tevhîd-i Efkâr's material text makes the counter-argument with equal force. The February 1920 editorial described in Section III appears on gray, unevenly textured paper whose physical

[33] *Peyâm-ı Sabah*, May 12, 1919, 1 [author's translation; verification required].

roughness communicates something distinct from and complementary to its semantic content: this publication exists despite material difficulty, its continued presence despite paper shortages and repeated suppression constituting evidence of the genuine popular support its arguments invoke. Its very scarcity—two pages where eight would have appeared in better circumstances—performs the argument that nationalist resistance operates without foreign subsidy, that ideological commitment persists through deprivation. The paper's poverty is the argument's authentication.

This is the mechanism of structural silencing: not that censorship suppressed voices, but that differential resource allocation rendered some voices materially authoritative—their arguments arriving on white paper, in clear type, through reliable distribution—while rendering others materially marginal, their arguments compressed, irregular, printed on whatever clandestine networks could supply. The silencing is invisible in any single text but becomes legible in the comparison between them, in the system of differential material investment that structured whose arguments would persist into the future.

Case Study II: Women's Publications and the Third Space of Feminist Nationalism

Türk Kadını (Turkish Woman), edited by the collective including Halide Edib Adıvar, Nakiye Elgün, and Müfide Ferit, combined literary content, domestic advice, and political commentary through a funding network based on elite women's patronage—wealthy female subscribers, donations from women's associations and schools, support from female educators and professionals—that created independence from both Allied patronage and nationalist male-controlled funding channels.[34]

This structural independence enabled a rhetorical position unavailable to publications depending on either funding source. *Türk Kadını* could criticize Ottoman patriarchal traditions and Western feminist models simultaneously, support nationalist independence

[34] Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (Istanbul: Metis, 1994), 178–215; Zafer Toprak, "Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyeti," 34–38.

while demanding women's rights as integral to national renewal, and insist that women's emancipation served Islamic modernization and Ottoman survival rather than either Western corruption or reactionary tradition. A September 1920 editorial argued that national liberation required literate, educated mothers capable of raising the future citizens independence would require—a fusion of feminist and nationalist rhetoric arguing from national need rather than individual rights whose strategic sophistication the publication's funding independence enabled.[35]

The editorial collective's diverging subsequent trajectories—Halide Edib Adıvar joining the Anatolian nationalist movement directly; Nakiye Elgün pursuing educational reform within Republican institutions; Müfide Ferit continuing literary work on women's psychological interiority and social constraints—illuminate how the magazine served as organizational and intellectual node before those trajectories separated. The independence that the gender-based funding network purchased was the condition of possibility for the rhetorical position the publication occupied: the funding ecology determined the textual space.

Case Study III: *Aydede* and the Market as Freedom

Refik Halit Karay's *Aydede* represents the occupation period's most instructive case of press autonomy precisely because that autonomy derived from commercial rather than ideological sources. Having been exiled by the Committee of Union and Progress for satirical attacks on Young Turk authoritarianism, Karay brought to *Aydede* both a literary voice sharpened by adversity and a principled skepticism toward all power centers that Allied patronage could not purchase and nationalist enthusiasm could not capture.[36]

The magazine's commercial model generated a specific textual politics: survival through newsstand sales required attracting readers across political commitments, which meant entertaining

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[35] *Türk Kadını*, September 15, 1920, 2–3 [author's translation; verification required].

[36] Brummett, *Cartoon Nation*, 142–58; Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 3rd ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 178–80.

everyone rather than flattering anyone. A December 1920 mock advertisement—offering the Ottoman government for sale, complete with British supervision at no additional charge—communicated profound political critique through humor that occupation authorities consistently struggled to pursue without appearing ridiculous.[37]

As Palmira Brummett's analysis of Ottoman political cartooning demonstrates, satirical commentary operates in a semiotic register that direct prohibition renders self-defeating, giving satirical publications a margin of expression unavailable to straightforwardly political organs.[38]

The economic precarity of *Aydede*'s position—neither Allied patronage nor reliable nationalist support available, survival dependent on reader purchases alone—created structural conditions for political autonomy unavailable through any patronage model. Market dependence was the only funding ecology the occupied city's press landscape offered that could not be administered through structural conditioning.

Conclusion: Material Legacies and Theoretical Implications

The financial architecture sustaining Istanbul's press during the Allied occupation illuminates patterns of imperial control and anticolonial resistance that extend beyond this specific historical moment. By tracing monetary flows—from British customs procedures to compliant editors, from French cultural institutions to francophone publication networks, from American missionary organizations to minority presses, from clandestine Anatolian networks to nationalist publications surviving on popular solidarity—this investigation has demonstrated that economic dependency shaped ideological possibility in ways that transcended individual agency or conscious intention.

Understanding this material substrate transforms how we read the textual artifacts themselves. When we encounter Ali Kemal's eloquent arguments for British mandate in *Peyâm-ı Sabah*'s

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[37] *Aydede*, December 12, 1920, 8 [author's translation; verification required].

[38] Brummett, *Cartoon Nation*, 1–38.

columns, we cannot bracket the question of whose paper carries those arguments—the crisp white stock and consistent format constituting material arguments for the viability of the position they semantically advocate. When we read Velid Ebüzziya's compressed critiques of occupation in two-page *Tevhîd-i Efkâr* issues printed on gray paper through smuggled means, we attend to how material precarity transforms into a rhetoric of authenticity: poverty performing the independence that abundance cannot purchase. The occupation's textual battlefield was constituted not only by the semantic content of competing editorials but by the differential material conditions under which those editorials were produced, distributed, and read.

The analysis has also revealed the limits of treating any of the occupation's press positions as simply determined by external funding. Satirical magazines demonstrated that market independence could generate political autonomy unavailable through patronage; women's publications demonstrated that gender-based funding networks could create a third space between the dominant alternatives; minority publications demonstrated that community solidarity and diaspora remittances could sustain voices that neither Allied authorities nor nationalist organizations controlled. The funding-ecology model is more supple than the collaboration/resistance binary, precisely because it attends to the specific mechanisms through which material constraints shaped textual possibility rather than reading political position as determined by financial source.

Theoretically, the occupation's press economy functions as a critical test of the frameworks deployed here rather than a demand for new theoretical apparatus. Bourdieu's field theory, tested against the conditions of Allied occupation, reveals the limits of its relative-autonomy thesis: the theory describes what a journalistic field is when its conditions of possibility obtain, but it does not account for what a field becomes when those conditions are systematically dismantled by external coercive administration. The occupied Istanbul case demonstrates that a journalistic field can lose its structural autonomy without ceasing to produce journalistic content—the newspapers continued to appear; editors continued to advocate; readers continued to read—while the content produced under those conditions was shaped by dependencies that field theory cannot fully see. The subsequent reconstitution of a Turkish journalistic field under Republican administration—reconstituted, but under conditions of explicit state oversight that replaced British structural conditioning with domestic political management—suggests that what reconstitutes after field dissolution is a different field, shaped by the lessons of the occupation its founders had survived.

For Republican Turkey, the occupation's textual economy left complex and contested legacies. Parliamentary debates surrounding the 1931 Press Law explicitly invoked occupation-era experiences—the British-supported newspapers that had advocated territorial partition, the Allied-funded publications that had characterized nationalist resistance as dangerous militarism—to frame press controls as protective responses to demonstrated vulnerability.[39]

Whether those responses were proportionate, whether the occupation's financial dynamics justify the subsequent suppression of genuinely independent journalism, remains legitimately and vigorously contested; but understanding the material substrate of the Mütareke press renders those policies intelligible as historical responses to specific experiences rather than reducible to authoritarian disposition alone.

The banal materialities—paper, ink, presses, money, customs stamps, distribution permits—proved, in occupied Istanbul, more consequential than the most brilliant editorial argument. The textual battlefield was won and lost not through rhetorical superiority but through the differential capacity to sustain the material conditions of publication across years of occupation, suppression, and reconstruction. Attending to those conditions does not displace intellectual history but grounds it—insisting that ideas travel in material vehicles whose costs and constraints are not incidental to but constitutive of the ideas themselves.

[39] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 176–80; Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity*, 260–68.

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CHAPTER 5

WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN L2 WRITING

FATMA SOLMAZ[1]

Introduction

Written corrective feedback (WCF) has long occupied a central yet contested position in second and foreign language writing research. Broadly defined, WCF refers to the responses provided to learners' written errors with the aim of improving the accuracy of their current texts and contributing to the development of their subsequent writing. Although a substantial body of research has examined its potential benefits, researchers have not reached a consensus regarding the conditions under which WCF is most effective. The debate has concerned not only whether corrective feedback facilitates language development, but also which feedback types are most beneficial, which errors should be addressed, and whether improvements observed during revision transfer to new writing tasks.

One major dimension of this debate concerns the explicitness of feedback. Direct feedback provides learners with the correct

[1] Instructor, Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, Department of Translation and Interpretation , Orcid: 0000-0001-8706-5728

linguistic form, whereas indirect feedback indicates the presence or location of an error without supplying the correction. Metalinguistic feedback, by contrast, offers information about the nature of the error through explanations, grammatical descriptions, or error codes. Advocates of direct feedback argue that it provides clear linguistic input and may be particularly useful when learners lack the knowledge required to correct an error independently. Indirect feedback, however, is often considered more cognitively engaging because it requires learners to identify and resolve their own errors. Nevertheless, findings comparing these feedback types remain inconsistent, partly because their effects appear to vary according to learner proficiency, language aptitude, error type, treatment duration, and the outcome measures employed (Bitchener, 2012); Brown, 2012; Evans et al., 2010).

A second dimension concerns the scope of feedback. Focused WCF targets a limited number of preselected linguistic structures, whereas unfocused or comprehensive WCF addresses a broader range of errors in learners' texts. Focused feedback may allow learners to direct their attention to particular forms and may therefore facilitate the acquisition of targeted structures. Comprehensive feedback, however, more closely resembles the feedback practices commonly encountered in writing classrooms, where teachers frequently respond to several types of errors simultaneously. Despite the pedagogical importance of this distinction, relatively few studies have directly compared the effectiveness of focused and comprehensive approaches.

The effectiveness of WCF is also influenced by the nature of the errors being addressed. Ferris distinguishes between treatable errors, which are associated with relatively systematic linguistic rules, and untreatable errors, which are more dependent on lexical knowledge, idiomatic usage, or individual contexts. Direct and indirect feedback may therefore produce different outcomes for different error categories. Learners' proficiency is similarly important: feedback that enables advanced learners to engage in productive self-correction may provide insufficient guidance for learners with more limited linguistic knowledge.

Another central issue is how improvement is measured. Successful correction in a revised version of the same text does not necessarily demonstrate language development. Learners may use teacher feedback to repair individual errors without being able to apply the relevant linguistic knowledge in a new writing task. Consequently, studies assessing accuracy in new texts and delayed post-tests provide stronger evidence of transfer and retention than studies examining revision alone. Distinguishing among immediate correction, revised-text accuracy, transfer to new writing, and delayed retention is therefore essential when evaluating claims about the effectiveness of WCF.

In addition to these long-standing questions, feedback practices have changed considerably in digitally mediated writing environments. The expansion of online and remote instruction during and after the COVID-19 pandemic increased the use of electronic feedback, automated writing evaluation systems, collaborative writing platforms, and synchronous or asynchronous digital feedback. More recently, generative artificial intelligence tools have introduced new possibilities for providing immediate, individualized, and interactive responses to learner writing. These developments have also raised important questions concerning feedback quality, learner engagement, authorship, academic integrity, teacher roles, and learners' ability to evaluate and use automatically generated suggestions. AI-mediated feedback should therefore be considered not merely as a technological alternative to teacher feedback, but as a new dimension of the WCF literature that may reshape how feedback is generated, interpreted, and implemented.

Against this background, this chapter provides a critical narrative review of research on WCF in second and foreign language writing. It examines three main questions: whether WCF contributes to greater linguistic accuracy, whether particular feedback types and scopes are more effective than others, and whether the benefits of feedback extend beyond immediate revision to new writing and delayed performance. The chapter first reviews research comparing direct, indirect, and metalinguistic feedback, followed by studies examining focused, comprehensive, and dynamic WCF. It then evaluates the general effectiveness of corrective feedback, with particular attention to the distinction between revision and transfer. Finally, it considers developments in post-pandemic digital feedback and the emerging role of artificial intelligence in written corrective feedback. Throughout the discussion, attention is given to methodological differences, including learner proficiency, target structures, treatment duration, feedback intensity, testing conditions, and research context, that may account for contradictory findings across studies.

Conceptualizing Written Corrective Feedback

Written corrective feedback can be classified according to its explicitness and scope. Direct feedback provides learners with the correct linguistic form, whereas indirect feedback indicates that an error has occurred without supplying the correction. Metalinguistic feedback gives additional information about the nature of the error, usually through an error code or grammatical explanation. Reformulation differs from these approaches because it may involve broader changes to vocabulary, sentence structure, and expression rather than the correction of individual errors alone.

Feedback also varies in scope. Focused WCF targets one or a limited number of linguistic features, whereas unfocused or comprehensive WCF addresses several types of errors in a learner's text. Dynamic WCF combines frequent short writing tasks with timely and sustained feedback, creating repeated cycles of writing, correction, and revision (Mao & Lee, 2020).

The effectiveness of WCF may be measured through revision, transfer, or retention. Revision refers to learners' correction of errors in the same text, whereas transfer refers to improved accuracy in a new writing task. Delayed performance provides stronger evidence that the effects of feedback have been retained over time. These distinctions are important because successful revision does not necessarily indicate durable language development.

Explicitness of Feedback: Direct versus Indirect Approaches

One of the major debates in written corrective feedback research concerns whether learners benefit more from direct feedback, in which the correct form is provided, or indirect feedback, in which the error is indicated but learners are expected to correct it themselves. Findings remain inconsistent, suggesting that the relative effectiveness of these approaches may depend on learner proficiency, error type, treatment conditions, and the way learning is measured.

Several studies have reported stronger effects for indirect feedback. For instance, Daneshvar and Rahimi (2014) explored the impact of focused-direct written feedback and recast (rewriting) feedback types on the writing accuracy of 90 low-intermediate EFL university students in Thailand. Both direct and recast groups outperformed the no-feedback group, though the recast group benefited more and the effects were retained longer. Similarly, in a study of Turkish EFL learners in Iran, Kazemipour (2014) compared the impact of direct written corrective feedback and indirect written corrective feedback with peer discussion of the errors on the writings of university students who were beginner level. The students took the focused feedback for one session, and after one week later, the post-test results showed that the mean scores of the indirect group were higher than the direct written corrective feedback group. These findings are echoed by Eslami (2014), who compared the effectiveness of focused direct and indirect written corrective feedback on the 60 Iranian pre-intermediate EFL students, and found out that indirect feedback was more effective in increasing writing accuracy of the learners. These findings suggest that indirect feedback may encourage learners to engage more actively with their errors, particularly when they receive sufficient support to identify and correct them.

Conversely, several studies highlight the immediate and durable benefits of direct feedback. Benson and DeKeyser (2019) explored the effects of direct and indirect, and focused written corrective feedback and language aptitude on the 151 pre-intermediate ESL university students in USA. After five-week treatment, they found that students took written corrective feedback performed better than no feedback group in the new piece of writing. 4-week delayed test results demonstrated that direct feedback was more durable in simple past tense. Moreover, students with greater language analysis aptitude performed better with direct feedback while the ones with lower aptitude benefitted more from meta-linguistic feedback. Similarly, Kim et al. (2020) examined the role of direct and indirect synchronous focused, direct or indirect written corrective feedback during collaborative writing tasks. The participants were 53 university students who were beginner level of Korean in USA. The study took 20 days, and it was found that direct written corrective feedback was more useful in helping students in new piece of writing task, though both feedback types were effective in promoting learning of new linguistic features through collaborative writing. In terms of students' perceptions, there seemed to be no difference between the two feedback conditions. Likewise, Ar et al. (2020) also investigated how six different feedback types (direct, indirect, metalinguistic, reformulation, focused and unfocused feedback) affected 36 pre-intermediate university students in Indonesia. The findings showed that all feedback types were effective, and direct feedback was the most effective one for grammatical accuracy.

Taken together, these studies do not establish a consistent advantage for either direct or indirect feedback. Indirect feedback may promote greater problem-solving and learner involvement when students possess sufficient linguistic knowledge or receive additional support. Direct feedback, by contrast, may be more useful when learners cannot independently identify the correct form or when the target structure is difficult. The effectiveness of each approach therefore appears to depend not only on the explicitness of the feedback, but also on learner characteristics, instructional support, and the outcome being assessed.

The role of metalinguistic explanation

Metalinguistic feedback provides learners with information about the nature of an error through grammatical explanations, comments, or error codes. It may be provided independently or combined with direct correction. The efficiency of metalinguistic feedback has been also subject to considerable discussion. Bitchener and Knoch (2008) investigated the effectiveness of focused direct corrective feedback, written and oral meta-linguistic explanation, direct corrective feedback and written metalinguistic explanation, direct corrective feedback only, and no corrective feedback. The two-month study was on 144 ESL university students who were pre-intermediate level in New Zealand. The study found that students who received written corrective feedback outperformed those who did not receive, and their level of accuracy was retained over seven weeks; however, there was no significant difference in performance between those in the three treatment groups. Besides, there was no difference in the extent to the students improved the accuracy of their writing as a result of WCF. Similarly, Bitchener and Knoch (2010) carried out a study that they investigated the effect of focused direct written feedback, indirect written feedback, and direct feedback with meta-linguistic explanations on the writings of 63 advanced ESL students in USA. The study indicated that all the students received written corrective feedback outperformed the ones took no feedback and there was no significant difference between the treatment groups, but the effect of the written corrective feedback was retained by only the direct feedback groups after ten-week period.

Reporting a different pattern, Shintani and Ellis (2013) explored the effect of written error feedback on the development of learners' explicit and implicit L2 knowledge and compared the effectiveness of focused direct corrective feedback and metalinguistic feedback. The results suggested that direct corrective feedback had no effect on either their explicit or their implicit L2 knowledge and no effect on the revised versions of the writings, while metalinguistic explanation group improved their writing accuracy in a new piece of writing. Nevertheless, the effect was not retained and thus probably had no effect on their implicit knowledge.

Other studies have reported clearer advantages for metalinguistic feedback. Gholaminia et al. (2013) investigated whether the effect of unfocused direct traditional direct error feedback and metalinguistic corrective feedback is different on the writing abilities of 60 Iranian EFL university students. After ten sessions of treatment, the study concluded that the scores of the students took metalinguistic feedback were statistically significantly higher. Sheen (2007) also compared the effect of direct feedback, and direct and metalinguistic feedback on the writing accuracy of 91 intermediate ESL learners in USA. The study examined articles without providing any treatment or explicit teaching on articles. The findings demonstrated that all groups improved their accuracy, but the written corrective feedback groups outperformed the control group. In particular, direct metalinguistic feedback proved to be effective in improving students' accuracy. Also, this study showed that the focused written corrective feedback resulted in improved accuracy while the learners with a high level of language analytic ability benefited more from both types of corrective feedback.

Overall, metalinguistic feedback appears to be beneficial when it helps learners understand the source of an error rather than merely correct it. However, the evidence does not show that it consistently outperforms direct or indirect feedback. Its effectiveness may depend on the complexity of the explanation, learners' proficiency and language-analytic ability, and whether the feedback is assessed through immediate performance or delayed transfer.

Studies reporting no significant difference

Although some studies have reported advantages for particular feedback types, a substantial body of research suggests that the presence of feedback is more important than the specific form it takes. For instance, Hosseiny (2014) examined the effect of focused direct written corrective feedback and focused indirect written corrective feedback on 60 Iranian EFL students' writings. After five weeks of treatment, it was seen that the students took written corrective feedback outperformed the ones received no feedback while there was no significant difference between the effects of two written corrective feedback types.

Sanavi and Memati (2014) examined the effect of six different unfocused feedback types (reformulation, direct, indirect, metalinguistic, peer correction and error coding) on 186 intermediate EFL university students' writings in Iran. They concluded that all the feedback types were effective but the participants in reformulation group outperformed the others and there was a significant difference between the reformulation group and the others. Similarly, Suh (2020) investigated how thinking aloud while processing written corrective feedback effect on the language development of 59 Korean intermediate level learners of English. The target structure was if-type 3 and after four-week treatment with direct and indirect feedback sessions, no difference was found in the learners' language development according to the new pieces of writing tasks.

Karim and Nassaji (2020) also examined the revision and transfer effect of direct and indirect written corrective feedback on ESL learners' writing in Canada. The findings showed that after four-week treatment, the students took direct or indirect written corrective performed better than no feedback group in the revision of the same text tasks while there was no statistically significant difference in new pieces of writings. Also, there was no significant difference between direct and indirect written feedback groups with no delayed transfer effect.

Taken together, these studies suggest that the relative superiority of direct or indirect feedback remains uncertain. However, the absence of a statistically significant difference should not be interpreted as proof that the two approaches are equally effective. Such findings may also be influenced by sample size, treatment duration, task design, target structure, and the sensitivity of the measures used. The more consistent conclusion is that WCF often facilitates revision, whereas evidence of transfer to new writing is less uniform.

The role of error type and learner characteristics

The effectiveness of written corrective feedback may also vary according to the type of error being addressed and the characteristics of the learner. Van Beuningen and De Jong (2011) indicated that different types of feedback types are beneficial for different aspects of language learning. They conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of comprehensible written corrective feedback and direct feedback on the revision tasks and new writing tasks of the 134 secondary school students learning Dutch as second language. They also examined the effect of corrective feedback on the grammatical errors, and whether learner levels have an impact on the writing accuracy of the learners. The findings showed that comprehensive CF enabled learners to enhance the linguistic correctness of a certain text during revision. Different feedback types worked for different types of errors; only direct correction promoted durable grammatical accuracy improvements, whereas pupils' non-grammatical accuracy benefited most from indirect corrective feedback, the effects of indirect corrective feedback were retained the longest. Moreover, the new texts of the students who received corrective feedback were more accurate than the ones that the students practiced their writing skills with various writing tasks. Also, corrective feedback did not lead the participants to produce structurally or lexically less complex writing. Finally, there was no significant relationship between the effectiveness of the corrective feedback treatments and learners' educational levels.

Moreover, Kim and Bowles (2019) compared unfocused; reformulation and direct feedback in terms of how 22 ESL university students in USA processed them. The study concluded that the students received reformulation feedback processed sentential and paragraph-level errors more deeply but overlooked surface-level errors while the reverse was the case when they received direct correction. These findings suggest that different feedback types may direct learners' attention to different aspects of writing rather than simply producing stronger or weaker overall effects.

Taken together, these studies indicate that the effectiveness of WCF cannot be evaluated independently of the errors being treated and the processing demands imposed on learners. Direct feedback may be more useful for grammatical forms requiring precise correction, while indirect feedback or reformulation may promote broader reflection on meaning, organization, or expression. Learner proficiency, language-analytic ability, and capacity for self-correction may further shape these outcomes.

Scope of Feedback: Focused Versus Unfocused Approaches

The scope of written corrective feedback concerns the number and range of errors addressed in learners' texts. Focused feedback targets one or a limited number of linguistic features, whereas unfocused or comprehensive feedback responds to a broader range of errors. Although both approaches have been widely used, relatively few studies have directly compared their effectiveness.

Farrokhi and Sattarpour (2011) examined the writing accuracy development of 120 Iranian EFL students who took direct focused and unfocused feedback. The findings showed that both low- and high-level students took written corrective feedback outperformed no-feedback group, however, the students benefited from focused corrective feedback more regardless of their language proficiency. In a longitudinal study, Rahimi (2019) compared the effectiveness of focused and comprehensive feedback as well as the effectiveness of revision tasks during a semester. The study was conducted on 78 French intermediate ESL university students in Canada. The findings demonstrated that the students took focused corrective feedback outperformed the comprehensible feedback group while there was no significant difference between the students revised their writing and the one who did not.

In contrast, Ar et al. (2020) reported a more neutral outcome in their comparative analysis, observing that while both feedback scopes were pedagogy-effective, no statistically significant difference could be found between them. This result indicates that the advantage of focused feedback may not be consistent across all contexts or treatment designs.

Overall, the available evidence tends to favor focused feedback for the development of accuracy in targeted linguistic features. Its restricted scope may reduce processing demands and allow learners to concentrate on recurring forms. However, focused feedback does not address the full range of problems found in authentic student writing, and its benefits for targeted structures should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of broader writing development. Since direct comparisons remain limited, stronger conclusions require studies that control for feedback intensity, target structures, treatment duration, and assessment tasks.

The dynamic WCF model: Intensive comprehensive feedback

Dynamic written corrective feedback represents a more intensive application of comprehensive feedback. It typically combines short and frequent writing tasks with timely, repeated, and manageable feedback. The approach is intended to reduce the cognitive burden associated with correcting many errors at once by distributing feedback across sustained cycles of writing and revision.

Research on dynamic WCF has produced mixed findings. For example, in a study conducted in USA, Evans et al. (2010) explored how contextual variables (learners, situation and instructional methodology) might affect L2 writing accuracy of 27 university students with C1 level of English. After 13-week treatment, the findings showed that dynamic written corrective feedback improved the linguistic accuracy on new writing assignments. Likewise, Kurzer (2018) also investigated how dynamic unfocused written corrective feedback affected 325 ESL university students from different levels in USA. After 10 weeks treatment, the new piece of writings of the students had improved when they were compared with the writings of the only grammar instruction group.

Other studies, however, have reported more limited effects. Hartshorn et. al. (2010) examined the effect of dynamic written corrective feedback on the writings of the 47 ESL university students in USA. After 25 hours of treatment in 15 weeks, it was seen that even though improvements in the mean scores of the treatment group in writing accuracy, there was no statistical difference between them and control group, and the writing fluency of the treatment group had lower mean scores. Hartshorn and Evans (2015) explored longitudinal effects of dynamic written corrective feedback on linguistic accuracy over 30-week period; and they found no significant difference in rhetorical competence, fluency, or complexity of the writings between the treatment and control groups.

Overall, dynamic WCF may support accuracy when feedback is frequent, sustained, and closely integrated into writing practice. However, its effects do not appear to extend consistently to fluency, complexity, or rhetorical development. The mixed findings also suggest that treatment intensity, task design, learner proficiency, and the balance between accuracy and fluency should be considered when evaluating this approach.

The General Efficiency of Written Corrective Feedback

Beyond the debates on the specific feedback types, a substantial part of the literature seeks to evaluate the efficacy of written corrective feedback by observing its impact compared to no-feedback conditions. Although the findings are not entirely consistent, many studies report positive effects on linguistic accuracy.

For instance, Fazilatfar et al. (2014) tested how unfocused feedback affected advanced EFL students' syntactic and lexical complexity of the writings. After three months treatment, while all the students improved their writing skills, only the students received unfocused feedback outperformed no feedback group. In a longitudinal case study, Ene and Kosobucki (2016) explored false beginner ESL learners in USA. They provided unfocused, direct and indirect written feedback at the same time, and concluded that written corrective feedback was effective for language accuracy which was also favored by the learner.

Furthermore, the interaction between proficiency and error type remains a key variable in general efficacy. Park et al. (2016) examined the effectiveness of indirect, unfocused written corrective feedback in the writings of 40 university students. After 6-week treatment process, the findings indicated that both beginner and intermediate level students benefited from indirect unfocused written corrective feedback, especially for treatable errors; but intermediate and non-heritage learners benefitted more. Similarly, Zhang (2017) investigated how unfocused comprehensive written corrective feedback affected the writing development of 120 Chinese EFL students who were intermediate level. The findings demonstrated that corrective feedback group outperformed the control group regarding language accuracy after a three-week treatment and in two-week delayed test.

Taken together, these studies provide evidence that WCF can improve linguistic accuracy across different contexts and proficiency levels. However, the magnitude and durability of its effects appear to depend on learner characteristics, error type, treatment duration, and the nature of the assessment. In addition, improvements in accuracy should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of broader development in fluency, complexity, or overall writing quality.

Revision tasks versus new writing tasks

A central issue in WCF research is whether feedback merely helps learners correct a particular text or contributes to more durable language development. Improvement in a revised version shows that learners can use the feedback provided, but it does not necessarily demonstrate that they can apply the same knowledge in a new writing task.

Truscott and Hsu (2008) the impact of unfocused and indirect written corrective feedback on the writing accuracy of 47 intermediate EFL university students in Taiwan. After a three-week treatment, the findings demonstrated that error correction helped learners reduce their errors on the writing they took correction. However, this impact did not last on the new writing task. That is, the successful error reduction during revision was a weak/no predictor of learning.

On the contrary, Ekanayaka and Ellis (2020) investigated the effect of revising following direct semi-focused written corrective feedback on linguistic accuracy in new writings of 91 intermediate level university students in Sri Lanka, and after four-week treatment, found that, written corrective feedback made greater gains in accuracy in finite verb constructions while revision had an add-on effect. Kim and Emeliyanova (2019) also examined the benefits of written corrective feedback on the development of accuracy in L2 writings of 36 intermediate ESL university students in USA. Although no significant benefits of collaborative processing of written corrective feedback were found regarding the accuracy of students' final timed-essay writing after 8-week treatment, both self-correction group and collaborative correction group increased their accuracy in the revised writings. This result again shows that gains in revision do not always extend to independent writing.

Overall, the evidence indicates that WCF more consistently supports revision than transfer to new writing. For this reason, studies that assess only corrected versions of the same text provide limited evidence of language development. New writing tasks and delayed post-tests are needed to determine whether learners retain and independently apply the linguistic knowledge gained from feedback.

Written Corrective Feedback in the Post-Pandemıc and AI Era

The transition to online and blended instruction during and after the COVID-19 pandemic increased the use of digitally mediated feedback in L2 writing classrooms. Teachers and learners became more dependent on learning-management systems, shared documents, online conferencing tools, and automated writing evaluation systems. Consequently, feedback was increasingly delivered electronically and processed outside conventional face-to-face classroom interaction. Against this background, recent studies have increasingly examined how written corrective feedback can be implemented in technology-supported settings.

For instance, Sarre et al. (2021) explored the effectiveness of different types of corrective feedback in a blended learning environment. The study carried out on French EFL students at beginner level showed that regardless of the feedback type, the students benefited from receiving feedback, and over the 24-week treatment period provided better improvement in writing accuracy. Moreover, unfocused indirect corrective feedback was found to be the more effective when combined with computer-mediated micro tasks on the errors made. Overall, this study highlighted the significance of longitudinal, technology-assisted feedback for low proficiency students.

Automated written corrective feedback

With the increasing technology-assisted instruction, several studies have examined automated written corrective feedback in L2 writing. Link et al. (2022), for instance, examined the impact of automated written corrective feedback using the tool Criterion. The study was carried out in an EFL setting at an Iranian university, comparing the automated feedback combined with higher-level (content) teacher feedback and only teacher feedback proving both lower level (linguistic) and higher-level feedback. Following a 16-week treatment, the study revealed that the teacher feedback amount remained similar across the groups; the automated feedback did not increase the frequency of higher-level feedback, contrary to the assumption that automated feedback would allow teachers to devote more attention to higher-order concerns. Moreover, while both groups responded successfully to teacher feedback, approximately half of the students in the automated group failed to respond the tool's feedback, suggesting that the feedback was indirect or difficult to process for the students. Finally, the retention rate was lower in the teacher-feedback-only group, although they improved their broader writing quality. The researcher highlighted the significance of utilizing the automated writing tools as complementary tools in improving writing proficiency.

Barrot (2023a) investigated the impact of Grammarly on overall accuracy on intermediate-level ESL university students. The Grammarly group improved their overall accuracy as well as their interlanguage awareness, compared to the no-feedback control group. Yet, he findings also revealed a tension between greater learner autonomy and the risk of overreliance on Grammarly, particularly across proficiency levels. The study concluded that the program could be used as a complementary tool in writing instruction.

Similarly, Fan (2023) employed a mixed method study investigating the effect of automated written corrective feedback using Grammarly as a tool integrated with teacher feedback on the writings of Chinese EFL university students. After a 12-week intervention, the combined Grammarly-and-teacher-feedback group did not show any significant differences in writing quality, compared to only teacher feedback group. However, the students who had positive attitudes towards the combined automated feedback group produced more complex sentences, yet the student perception towards the tool were mixed; while they benefited from the feedback on grammar and vocabulary, they had difficulties with the metalinguistic explanations as well as the tool interface. As Barrot also asserted, the present study expressed the need for more support for low proficiency groups to overcome the challenges caused by their limited language repertoire.

Taken together, these findings suggest that automated feedback may improve linguistic accuracy and awareness, but its benefits depend on learner proficiency, attitudes, and ability to interpret metalinguistic information. The absence of consistent gains in overall writing quality also indicates that improvements in local accuracy may not automatically transfer to broader writing performance.

Generative AI-mediated written corrective feedback

During the early introduction of generative AI into the writing pedagogy, Barrot (2023b) discussed that GPT could assist teaching writing since it could be used for generating sample outlines or organizing ideas as well as providing automated feedback and grading. Yet, it raised some questions regarding its accuracy and intelligibility of the responses. Moreover, the author also indicated some concerns about decreasing critical thinking and loss of learning, highlighting the need for a more mindful use of AI with clear guidelines on its use.

Han and Li (2024) conducted a study to test the efficiency of AI-generated feedback adapted by the teachers and the feedback was delivered using a learning management system. The study confirmed the benefits of using AI-generated feedback with instructor adaptations as it reduced teacher workload and provided learners with clearer and comprehensible feedback. In contrast, Lin and Crosthwaite (2024) compared the teacher and GPT-assisted written corrective feedback, suggesting the advantages and disadvantages of both types. They argued that teacher feedback included both direct and indirect feedback, balanced yet with some inaccuracies. Yet, GPT mostly used metalinguistic feedback with a local focus, but it generated different approaches even with the same prompt, concluding with inconsistency in feedback type. The redundant responses of GPT indicated its difficulty of using in authentic classroom setting and the need for teacher guidance.

Some studies compared the effectiveness of teacher feedback and AI-generated feedback, resulting in mixed results. For instance, Wang (2024) compared teacher and AI-generated feedback in terms of their effect on Chinese undergraduate students' writing anxiety, complexity, fluency, and accuracy. After a 14-week treatment, the AI feedback group outperformed the traditional feedback and no-feedback groups in every aspect. The research suggests integrating AI into language classrooms.

However, in a recent study, Fujisawa and Shintani (2025) compared how unfocused direct corrective feedback and AI-generated reformulation influenced Japanese L2 learners' feedback processing and their accuracy. The findings revealed that the direct-feedback group engaged in deeper processing and demonstrated greater accuracy in a new writing task, although both groups improved the accuracy of their revised texts. The writers emphasized the benefits of traditional feedback especially for low-proficiency learner groups.

Likewise, Abdi Tabari et al. (2025) carried out a comparative study on ESL undergraduate students investigating the impact of teacher and AI-generated feedback on the accuracy, linguistic complexity, and overall writing quality. The findings indicated greater gains in teacher-feedback group in terms of accuracy and lexical complexity, but both groups had less syntactic complexity with a smaller decline in AI group. Moreover, both groups improved their writing quality with higher overall scores. The researchers suggested a hybrid feedback model where both types of feedback types were combined exploit their distinct linguistic benefits.

These studies provide no consistent evidence that AI-generated feedback is superior to teacher feedback. AI feedback may offer immediacy and support certain aspects of accuracy, whereas teacher feedback may promote deeper processing and greater gains in lexical complexity. The findings therefore favor a complementary or hybrid model rather than the replacement of teacher feedback.

Conclusion and Directions for Further Studies

Studies on written corrective feedback focused on various aspects of the feedback, including direct, indirect, focused, unfocused, and dynamic feedback. Much of them has been conducted with intermediate level of university students in both ESL and EFL context. Overall, the findings suggest that WCF generally support learners' revision and, in many cases, improve linguistic accuracy. However, the evidence does not identify a single feedback type that is consistently superior across all learners, error categories, instructional contexts, and assessment conditions.

The findings reviewed in this chapter suggest that the effectiveness of WCF is conditional. Direct feedback may be particularly useful when learners lack the linguistic knowledge required to identify and correct errors independently, whereas indirect feedback may encourage greater problem-solving and learner engagement when sufficient linguistic knowledge or instructional support is available. Metalinguistic feedback may also help learners understand the nature of their errors, although the studies reviewed do not demonstrate that it consistently outperforms other feedback types. In several studies, the feedback groups performed better than the no-feedback groups, while no statistically significant differences were found among the different treatment conditions. Therefore, the presence of feedback may sometimes be more influential than its specific form.

The evidence concerning feedback scope is more limited. Relatively few studies have directly compared focused and unfocused or comprehensive WCF. The available findings generally favour focused feedback for improving accuracy in targeted linguistic structures, although one study reported no significant difference between the two approaches. However, gains in preselected forms should not automatically be interpreted as broader development in writing ability. Comprehensive feedback may more closely resemble authentic classroom practice, but it may also place greater processing demands on learners. Further direct comparisons are therefore needed before strong conclusions can be drawn about the relative effectiveness of the two approaches.

The distinction between revision and transfer is also central to evaluating the effectiveness of WCF. Feedback more consistently helps learners correct errors in revised versions of the same text than it improves their accuracy in new writing tasks. Successful revision alone therefore provides limited evidence of language development. New writing tasks and delayed post-tests are necessary to establish whether learners can retain and independently apply the linguistic knowledge gained through feedback.

Recent research on automated and AI-mediated WCF extends rather than resolves these long-standing debates. Questions concerning explicitness, feedback scope, learner engagement, revision, and transfer remain relevant, but they are now accompanied by concerns about feedback accuracy, consistency, learner dependence, authorship, and academic integrity. Automated and AI-generated feedback may provide immediate and repeated support, whereas teacher feedback may offer greater contextual sensitivity and pedagogical judgment. Current findings do not demonstrate the consistent superiority of either source and instead suggest the potential value of complementary or hybrid feedback models. The pedagogical effectiveness of AI-mediated feedback therefore depends not only on its ability to generate corrections, but also on learners' capacity to evaluate, verify, and apply those corrections critically.

Interpretation of the existing evidence is complicated by substantial methodological variation. The studies reviewed focused on different types of feedback; conducted on different contexts, gave different length and intensity of treatment, and assessed learners with different type of tests. Some studies lack a control group that they could compare the effect of feedback. Another concern was with the sampling; the number of the participants in the experiment groups was not sufficient. Some studies did not have equal (or approximant) number of students in the experimental groups while some did not have enough participants to carry out an experiment. Moreover, the concentration of research on intermediate-level university students limits the generalizability of the findings to younger learners and to learners at beginning or advanced proficiency levels.

Future research should therefore include a wider range of learner ages, proficiency levels, instructional contexts, and first-language backgrounds. More studies with balanced treatment groups, clearly defined feedback conditions, appropriate control groups, and transparent procedures are needed. Longitudinal research should include both new writing tasks and delayed post-tests to determine whether the effects of feedback extend beyond immediate revision.

Further comparisons of focused and comprehensive feedback are particularly necessary. Research should also distinguish among grammatical and non-grammatical errors and between more and less treatable error categories. Learner engagement could be investigated through think-aloud protocols, stimulated recall, and interviews to reveal how learners interpret and use different forms of feedback. In AI-mediated contexts, future studies should additionally examine prompt design, feedback verification, digital and AI literacy, teacher adaptation of AI-generated feedback, and the effects of combining teacher and AI feedback. Such research would contribute to a more complete understanding of not only whether WCF is effective, but also how, for whom, and under what conditions it is most beneficial.

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CHAPTER 6

EXPLORING AI INTEGRATION IN EFL: TURKISH TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES AND INSIGHTS

Mehmet Saraç[1]

Introduction

The public release of ChatGPT in late November 2022 brought an unusually abrupt change to language education. For many English language teachers, the change was not introduced through curriculum reform, professional development, or institutional planning; it arrived through students' everyday access to a chat interface. Tasks that had previously required sustained engagement with vocabulary, syntax, and discourse could suddenly be completed in a matter of minutes. Learners could obtain vocabulary explanations, model dialogues, essay drafts, and even peer-feedback comments with little visible effort. For teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), this development was especially consequential because the product of a large language model is

1Assistant Professor, Balıkesir University, Necatibey Faculty of Education, Department of English Language Teaching. ORCID: [0009-0003-4800-7412]. E-mail: mehmet.sarac@balikesir.edu.tr

language itself. The central object of instruction and the output of the tool therefore began to occupy the same pedagogical space, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish between learner production and algorithmically mediated text.

This transition has also been uneven. Students in many educational settings have adopted AI tools quickly, often through personal smartphones and outside any planned instructional framework, whereas curriculum documents, teacher education programmes, and ministerial guidelines have necessarily moved more slowly (Crompton et al., 2024). In Türkiye, the Ministry of National Education has acknowledged the educational potential of AI and has issued guidance for teachers. Yet many day-to-day decisions about how students use such tools are still made locally, by individual teachers responding to particular classroom situations, often without sustained institutional support or formal training (Arslan, 2025).

The present study begins from that classroom-level position. Based on semi-structured interviews with sixteen EFL teachers working in three state high schools in Türkiye, it examines how teachers interpret the presence of AI tools in their classrooms, what benefits and risks they perceive, and where they locate responsibility for more principled forms of integration. The decision to foreground teachers rather than students is intentional. Teachers are the professionals who encounter the consequences of under-regulated AI use in practice: they design the assignments that AI can now complete, notice when a student's written work no longer resembles their usual performance, and respond to uncertainty in the absence of settled policy. Their perspectives matter because teachers do not merely implement curriculum; their beliefs about classroom practices shape how those practices are taken up, resisted, or adapted (Borg, 2003).

The chapter is organised in four main parts. It first reviews recent research on AI in EFL teaching, with particular attention to studies that have addressed teacher perspectives and to work conducted in the Turkish context. It then outlines the qualitative design, participant group, data collection procedures, and analytic approach. The findings section presents themes generated through thematic content analysis, supported by interview excerpts and a summary table. The final section discusses implications for classroom practice, teacher education, and educational policy.

Literature Review

AI in English Language Teaching: A Rapidly Expanding Field

Research on artificial intelligence in English language education has expanded rapidly since large language models became publicly accessible. In their systematic review of 42 empirical studies, Crompton et al. (2024) identified potential uses of AI across speaking, writing, reading, pedagogy, and self-regulation. At the same time, they documented recurring concerns related to technical breakdowns, limited tool capabilities, teachers' uncertainty or fear, and the tendency of AI-generated language to produce standardised forms of learner output. The review also pointed to an uneven evidence base, with a concentration of studies in Asian contexts and relatively limited work from countries such as Türkiye until very recently. Crompton and Burke (2024), in a state-of-the-field analysis of ChatGPT, reached a similar conclusion about the developing but still uneven character of the literature.

More focused studies present a field marked less by simple endorsement than by cautious experimentation. Klimova et al. (2024), examining ChatGPT in university-level foreign language education, reported possible support for personalised vocabulary learning, conversational practice, and immediate feedback. They nevertheless raised concerns about accuracy and learner dependence.

Song and Song (2023), in a study with Chinese EFL learners, found improvements in academic writing skills and motivation when ChatGPT was incorporated into a structured intervention, but their findings also underlined the importance of teacher mediation.

Two tendencies are visible across this emerging body of work. AI tools appear particularly effective for tasks involving fluent, surface-level English: generating dialogues, offering vocabulary explanations, correcting grammar, or producing template-based written texts. Their performance is more variable when tasks require cultural judgement, pragmatic appropriateness, contextual sensitivity, or critical evaluation. These are not peripheral matters for language teachers; they are central dimensions of communicative competence.

Teachers as the Focus of Inquiry

A smaller but important strand of research has shifted attention from learners to teachers. Derakhshan and Ghiasvand (2024), for example, used a phenomenographic design to examine research-active EFL teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT. Their participants recognised potential benefits for lesson preparation and assessment design, yet they also expressed concerns about misinformation, academic integrity, and the possible deskilling of both learners and teachers. The article's framing of ChatGPT as either an evil or an angel captures a familiar tension in professional discourse: teachers often approach these tools with strong, and sometimes contradictory, responses rather than with detached neutrality.

In the Turkish context, Kartal (2024) conducted a narrative inquiry with twelve student teachers, drawing on weekly written reflections and qualitative interviews. The study suggested that ChatGPT may support or constrain thinking skills and creativity depending on how deeply it is engaged. Participants' views shifted between enthusiasm and caution as they became more familiar with the tool. Karaduman (2025), in a qualitative study with pre-service EFL teachers at a Turkish state university, similarly found that participants valued AI literacy training but felt insufficiently prepared by their existing teacher education programmes. Babanoğlu et al. (2025), analysing prospective teachers' conceptualisations of AI-assisted EFL teaching, reported both optimism about pedagogical possibilities and unease about the possible weakening of human interaction in language learning.

Research with in-service instructors points in the same direction. Arslan (2025), using a TPACK-informed mixed-methods design with 230 EFL instructors in Türkiye, found that participants reported only an average level of self-perceived competence in using AI for EFL teaching. The interview data revealed more specific gaps in technical and pedagogical knowledge. Instructors identified challenges related to their own preparedness, student use, syllabus constraints, and the limitations of AI tools, and they called for targeted professional development, including prompt engineering with an explicit EFL focus. Derinalp and Halife (2025), working with pre-service teachers, reported comparable attitudes: a general openness to AI in language teaching, accompanied by uncertainty about how it should be incorporated into classroom practice.

The Turkish High School Context: A Gap in the Literature

The Turkish studies discussed above have mainly examined university EFL instructors or pre-service teachers in faculties of education. Much less is known about state high school teachers, who work with adolescent learners, large classes, examination pressure, and a curriculum that offers limited space for digital experimentation. Secondary education in Türkiye has its own institutional conditions, and these conditions shape how teachers notice, evaluate, and respond to student AI use. The present study addresses this gap by focusing on teachers working in that setting.

Concerns about Integrity and Over-Reliance

Two concerns recur across the international literature with particular force. The first is academic integrity. AI tools can produce text that appears original and is not reliably identified by conventional plagiarism detection systems, thereby unsettling established assessment practices (Eke, 2023; Sullivan et al., 2023). For teachers, this creates uncertainty not only about whether a submitted text belongs to the student but also about what classroom authorship now means.

The second concern is over-reliance. Studies of student behaviour suggest that some learners use AI tools to outsource cognitive work, with possible consequences for critical thinking, autonomous learning strategies, and language proficiency (Sullivan et al., 2023). Teachers in different national settings have voiced a related concern: if students use AI to avoid the productive struggle through which language competence develops, the resulting performance may certify an ability that has not actually been acquired. These concerns become practical questions about task design, classroom routines, feedback, and assessment.

Theoretical Background

This chapter uses the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) as a sensitising lens rather than as a deductive coding scheme. TPACK emphasises the interaction among teachers' content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and technological knowledge, and it conceptualises effective technology integration as the coordination of all three. Recent scholarship has extended this framework to AI-specific competencies (Celik, 2023; Kohnke, 2025), sometimes using labels such as AI-TPACK or Intelligent-TPACK, in order to account for the distinctive demands of generative tools: autonomous text production, ethical ambiguity, and changing forms of human-AI collaboration.

TPACK is useful in the present study because teachers' concerns often point to misalignment among technology, pedagogy, and content. When teachers describe student AI use as 'unconscious', they are usually referring to a technology being used without a clear pedagogical purpose. When they worry about over-reliance, they are identifying a mismatch between the tool's convenience and the language-learning goals specified by the curriculum. The framework therefore provides a vocabulary for interpreting these concerns without reducing them to resistance to technology.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design with a phenomenological orientation. Its purpose was not to test a predetermined hypothesis, but to examine how a particular group of teachers experienced and interpreted a recent, still-developing educational phenomenon. Qualitative inquiry is appropriate for questions concerned with meaning, perception, and lived professional practice (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). A phenomenological orientation was especially suitable because the study sought to understand how teachers made sense of a shared professional experience whose boundaries remain unsettled.

Setting

Data were collected in three state high schools located in different districts of a metropolitan province in western Türkiye. The schools were selected according to three criteria. First, English was taught as part of the regular curriculum at all grade levels. Second, students at the schools could plausibly access AI tools through smartphones or home computers. Third, the schools differed in area and academic profile, allowing some variation in the conditions under which teachers observed student AI use. The sample included one centrally located Anatolian high school with a relatively high academic profile, one vocational and technical high school, and one Anatolian high school in a residential district.

Participants

Sixteen EFL teachers participated in the study. All held a Bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching or a closely related field, and all were permanently employed by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. Their teaching experience varied considerably, ranging from early-career teachers in their first five years of service to senior teachers with more than twenty years in the profession. The sample included both female and male teachers, broadly reflecting the composition of the EFL teaching staff across the three schools.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling. To be included, teachers had to be actively teaching EFL during the relevant academic year and to have observed at least some student use of AI tools in relation to coursework. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before each interview. Pseudonyms from T1 to T16 are used in the findings section to protect participant anonymity.

Data Collection Tools

Two instruments were used. The first was a short demographic survey administered before the interview, which collected information about participants' educational background, years of teaching experience, current grade levels, and previous exposure to AI tools in personal or professional contexts. The second was a semi-structured interview protocol consisting of seven open-ended questions. The protocol was designed to elicit teachers' perceptions of student AI use, observed changes in classroom dynamics, judgements about educational consequences, views on academic integrity, experiences of potential benefits, and suggestions for more constructive AI integration in EFL instruction. It was piloted with two EFL teachers who were not included in the main study, and minor wording revisions were made after the pilot.

The interviews were conducted face to face in quiet rooms at the participants' schools. They lasted between 35 and 55 minutes and were audio-recorded with consent. Participants used Turkish, English, or both languages according to preference. Turkish segments were later translated into English for analysis. Verbatim transcription produced a corpus of approximately 46 single-spaced pages.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed through thematic content analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase procedure: familiarisation with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Two independent raters, both doctoral degree holders in ELT with experience in qualitative research, coded the full corpus independently in the first round. They then compared codes, discussed discrepancies, and agreed on a consensual coding scheme. Inter-rater agreement for the final coding was 91%, calculated using Miles and Huberman's (1994) reliability formula. Remaining disagreements were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached.

The analysis moved inductively from codes to sub-themes and then to broader themes. During the theme-review stage, the TPACK framework was used as a sensitising device to examine whether the emerging categories captured technological, pedagogical, and content-related dimensions of the teachers' accounts. No code was forced into the framework; rather, the framework helped name relationships that had already appeared in the data.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Trustworthiness was addressed through procedures associated with Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was supported by extended engagement with the data, peer debriefing between the two raters, and member checking with four participants, who reviewed a summary of the findings and confirmed that it represented their views. Transferability was supported through thick description of the research setting and participant group. Dependability was strengthened through an audit trail of coding decisions, and confirmability was supported by the use of two independent raters.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board before data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, their right to withdraw, and the measures taken to protect confidentiality. No identifying information about participants or schools is included in the chapter.

Findings

The analysis produced five overarching themes. Table 1 summarises the themes, sub-themes, and representative codes, and the following sections discuss each theme in turn.

Table 1. Themes, Sub-themes, and Representative Codes from the Interview Data

Theme	**Sub-theme**	**Representative Codes**
1. Concerns about the quality of student learning	1.1 Unconscious AI use	Mechanical copying; lack of awareness; submission without engagement; inability to explain own work
	1.2 Erosion of critical thinking	Cognitive shortcuts; loss of productive struggle; reduced inferencing; passive reception of output
2. Over-reliance and decline of traditional study habits	2.1 Decline in study habits	Loss of dictionary use; absence of vocabulary notebooks; superficial revision; abandoned practice routines
	2.2 Lack of deep learning	Surface engagement; inability to transfer to new tasks; learning without retention; one-layer competence
3. Ethical issues	3.1 Academic dishonesty	AI-generated submissions; impossible to prove; institutional silence; teacher improvisation
	3.2 Authenticity of assessment	Uncertainty about grades; meaning of the mark; grading the algorithm; loss of assessment validity

Theme	Sub-theme	Representative Codes
4. Perceived benefits (minority view)	4.1 Personalised learning	Individual practice; non-judgemental partner; support for shy learners; opportunity for fluency work
	4.2 Increased engagement	Curiosity; renewed interest in coursework; learner agency; positive classroom energy
5. Need for guidance and curricular integration	5.1 Need for professional training	Demand for sustained training; redesign of lessons; AI literacy; teacher feels left behind
	5.2 Need for curricular and policy integration	Unchanged curriculum; mismatch with exams; ministerial silence; shared institutional responsibility

Concerns about the Quality of Student Learning

The most prominent theme concerned teachers' perception that AI tools were weakening the quality of student learning in EFL. Participants repeatedly described students as turning to AI without understanding either the process or the purpose of their use. From the teachers' perspective, this unreflective engagement disrupted the cognitive work that language learning is supposed to involve.

Unconscious use

Several participants used the term 'unconscious' to characterise students' use of AI tools. T3 expressed this concern directly:

Many of them do not really know what they are doing when they use these tools. They copy a question, they copy the answer, and they bring it to class. They cannot explain anything about it. It is not learning; it is transfer.

T9 described a similar pattern in relation to written production:

When I ask them to write a short paragraph about a free topic, the ones who used AI cannot answer my follow-up questions. They have not really engaged with the text. They have only delivered it.

The terms used by the teachers are significant. Expressions such as 'transfer' and 'deliver' frame AI-supported work as a transaction in which a completed artefact reaches the teacher, while the learner's engagement with language remains uncertain.

Erosion of critical thinking

Teachers linked this 'unconscious' use to a broader concern about critical thinking. T6 described the issue as a loss of cognitive engagement:

The student no longer thinks. They ask, they receive, they submit. The middle part, the part where the student wrestles with the language and makes mistakes and learns from them, is disappearing.

T12 made a related observation, noting that students appeared less willing to guess, attempt unfamiliar structures, or remain with difficult tasks when an AI shortcut was available. This finding is consistent with recent concerns about creativity and higher-order thinking in AI-mediated learning (Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2024; Kartal, 2024).

Over-Reliance and the Decline of Traditional Study Habits

A second theme concerned over-reliance on AI tools and the perceived weakening of traditional study habits. Teachers worried that students were replacing the gradual, cumulative work of language learning with immediate AI-generated assistance.

Decline in study habits

T2 contrasted current student behaviour with patterns she associated with earlier cohorts:

A few years ago, students would keep a notebook of new words, look them up in a dictionary, write example sentences. Now they ask the chatbot and that is the end of the encounter. The vocabulary does not stick.

Other participants offered similar observations, often with a sense of resignation. The disappearance of vocabulary notebooks, reduced dictionary use, and shorter revision routines were described not as isolated behaviours but as signs of a broader shift in how students approached language study.

Lack of deep learning

Teachers connected this surface-level engagement with a wider lack of depth. T7 explained the concern as follows:

They can produce something that looks correct, but if I scratch the surface, there is nothing there. They cannot use the words again in a different sentence. They cannot explain why one structure is preferable to another. The learning is one layer thick.

T15 argued that the problem was particularly visible in writing tasks, where polished but generic submissions had begun to replace the less fluent, more revealing drafts students previously produced. For teachers accustomed to interpreting learner errors as evidence of development, the disappearance of those errors also meant the loss of important pedagogical information.

Ethical Issues

The third theme concerned the ethical implications of student AI use. Although closely related to worries about learning quality, this theme focused more specifically on the integrity of classroom assessment and the educational exchange between teacher and student.

Academic dishonesty

Teachers reported receiving work that they suspected, or in some cases felt certain, had been generated by AI and submitted as the student's own. T1 described the dilemma in practical terms:

When a student who normally writes simple sentences hands in a paragraph with relative clauses and academic vocabulary, what am I supposed to do? I cannot prove it, but I know. And the school does not have a clear policy.

T10 noted that the lack of institutional guidance left teachers to respond case by case, producing inconsistency across classrooms and increasing teachers' workload. Several participants stated that they had begun to reduce take-home writing assignments and to rely more on in-class tasks where they could observe the production process.

Authenticity of assessment

Some teachers extended this concern to the meaning of assessment itself. T4 asked:

If I give a student an 80 on a writing task and I am not sure how much of it the student actually produced, what does the 80 stand for? I cannot grade the work of an algorithm and call it the student's mark.

This concern reflects wider debates about assessment validity in the AI literature (Sullivan et al., 2023), but it takes on a more immediate character in school contexts, where a teacher must record the grade, explain it, and defend its meaning to students and parents.

Perceived Benefits: A Minority View

A smaller group of teachers, while sharing the concerns outlined above, also identified possible benefits of AI integration in EFL. Their accounts were not celebratory; rather, they presented benefits as conditional on structured, supervised, and pedagogically purposeful use.

Personalised learning

T8 described using AI as a form of personalised practice support for some students:

When I have a student who is shy in class and afraid to speak, I have suggested they practise dialogues with the chatbot at home. The chatbot does not judge them. For some students that has been useful, especially for fluency.

This example is consistent with the affordances discussed by Klimova et al. (2024) and Song and Song (2023), in which AI-mediated interaction can provide a low-stakes environment for productive practice.

Increased engagement

T13 also observed that controlled classroom use of AI could increase engagement among students who had previously shown limited interest in English coursework:

The students who never opened their textbook were suddenly curious. They wanted to test the chatbot, ask it tricky questions, see if they could trick it. That curiosity is something I can work with.

Notably, the teachers who mentioned benefits were also among those most aware of the risks. None argued that these benefits justified an open-ended or unstructured use of AI tools in the classroom. In their view, the value of AI depended on teacher mediation and on a clearly articulated pedagogical purpose.

The Need for Guidance and Curricular Integration

The final theme reflected a shared view that the current situation could not be sustained through individual teacher improvisation alone. Participants called for guidance, professional training, and curricular integration.

Need for professional training

T5 articulated a concern expressed by many participants:

Nobody has taught us how to use these tools. We are learning from our students, who are usually one step ahead of us. We need real training, not a one-hour seminar, but something that helps us redesign our lessons.

Several participants described the training they had received as generic and focused on broad digital skills rather than on the specific demands of AI-integrated language teaching. This finding aligns with Arslan (2025) and Karaduman (2025), who similarly reported gaps in AI-related preparation in Turkish higher education and pre-service teacher education contexts.

Need for curricular and policy integration

T11 presented the absence of an institutional response as part of the problem itself:

The curriculum has not changed. The exams have not changed. The assessment system has not changed. Only the students have changed, because they have access to a new tool. We are caught in the middle.

T14 added that any meaningful response would need to involve both school administration and the Ministry. In her view, responsibility could not reasonably be placed on individual teachers alone, particularly given heavy teaching loads and limited autonomy over curriculum and assessment.

Discussion

The findings of this study broadly correspond with patterns identified in recent international and Turkish research. Participants' accounts were predominantly cautious or negative, and the concerns they raised closely resemble those reported in earlier studies (Arslan, 2025; Crompton et al., 2024; Derakhshan & Ghiasvand, 2024; Karaduman, 2025). However, the state high school context gives these concerns a particular significance. These teachers work with adolescent learners under examination pressure, within institutional structures that have not yet been substantially adjusted to the presence of generative AI.

Three points merit closer discussion. First, teachers' concern about 'unconscious' AI use should not be read simply as a complaint about student laziness. It is better understood as a pedagogical diagnosis. When teachers say that students outsource the struggle involved in language learning, they are identifying a disruption in the cognitive processes through which proficiency develops. This interpretation is consistent with Derakhshan and Ghiasvand's (2024) concerns about creativity and integrity, as well as Kartal's (2024) finding that ChatGPT's influence on thinking skills depends on the depth of engagement.

Second, the ethical concerns raised by participants cannot be resolved only through individual classroom management. As T1 and T10 indicated, the absence of institutional or ministerial policy leaves teachers exposed, requiring them to improvise responses to situations that the wider system has not yet formally addressed. This finding resonates with broader discussions of AI policy gaps in education (Eke, 2023; Sullivan et al., 2023) and supports Crompton et al.'s (2024) call for clearer guidance from policymakers and educational leaders.

Third, the minority view that recognised benefits in personalised practice and renewed engagement is consistent with studies documenting AI affordances in EFL when tool use is mediated by a teacher (Klimova et al., 2024; Song & Song, 2023). The findings therefore caution against a simple opposition between AI as threat and AI as opportunity. Participants did not treat these positions as mutually exclusive. Rather, they understood AI as a tool whose value depends heavily on the conditions of use, and they argued that those conditions had not yet been established in their schools.

From a TPACK perspective, the teachers were identifying gaps in technological pedagogical content knowledge and asking for systemic support to address them (Celik, 2023; Kohnke, 2025; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Their concern was not simply that AI exists, nor even that students use it. The deeper issue was the absence of professional, curricular, and policy conditions under which AI could become a pedagogical resource rather than an unregulated substitute for student effort.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the perceptions of sixteen EFL teachers in three state high schools in Türkiye regarding student use of AI tools. The teachers spoke from within a period of professional uncertainty: a powerful technology has entered their classrooms before the necessary infrastructure of training, policy, and curricular adjustment has been put in place. Their accounts centred on concerns about the quality and depth of student learning, over-reliance, and academic integrity. A smaller number of participants also recognised potential benefits, but they framed these benefits as dependent on structured and teacher-mediated use.

Three implications follow from these findings. For classroom practice, teachers need task designs that acknowledge AI capabilities and require evidence of learning processes, not only finished products. For teacher education and continuing professional development, the findings point to the need for sustained preparation in AI literacy and AI-informed pedagogy, including prompt design, source evaluation, and assessment practices that can distinguish student learning from AI-generated output. For policy, the study highlights the need for clear institutional and ministerial guidance on acceptable AI use in coursework and assessment, as well as a broader reconsideration of curriculum and examination practices under changing conditions of text production.

The study also has limitations. The sample was small and drawn from a single geographic region in Türkiye, and the findings are not intended to be statistically generalisable. The interviews captured teachers' perceptions at one point in a rapidly changing technological landscape; those perceptions may change as both teachers and students gain experience with AI tools. Future research could extend this work by including student perspectives, tracing changes in teacher perceptions over time, examining the relationship between teachers' AI-TPACK and classroom practice, and comparing high school and university EFL settings to explore how context shapes perceived risks and affordances.

The teachers in this study were not asking for a return to a pre-AI classroom, a return most of them regarded as unrealistic. They were asking for conditions under which they could teach with professional integrity, support genuine language development, and assess student work with confidence. Meeting that need will require coordinated effort across teacher education, school administration, curriculum design, and educational policy. It cannot be left to individual teachers alone.

Acknowledgement of AI Use

Large language model assistants were used during the preparation of this chapter for language editing and readability. The conceptual decisions, interpretive judgements, empirical data, coding process, and final responsibility for the text remain with the author.

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CHAPTER 7

FROM PASTORAL REFUGE TO CULTIVATED CARE: A THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

DÜNYA YENİDÜNYA[1]

Introduction

Contemporary American fiction frequently returns to the garden when it needs a language for damage, repair, intimacy, and survival. Yet the garden that appears in recent fiction is rarely the innocent pastoral refuge promised by older cultural habits. It is not simply the green opposite of the city, the soft opposite of violence, or the natural opposite of technology and market life. In the novels examined in this book, the garden is a made and remade space: fenced, inherited, threatened, cultivated, scented, seeded, argued over, remembered, and repeatedly entered by forces that seem to come from outside it but are already part of its condition. To read these gardens carefully is to read the social world in miniature, not because gardens reduce the world to a smaller and tidier scale, but because they expose how care is organized when life is placed under pressure.

[1] Lecturer, Ege University, School of Foreign Languages; PhD Candidate in American Culture and Literature; ORCID: 0000-0001-6138-3461

This book develops a comparative reading of four contemporary American novels: Christy Wilhelmi's *Garden Variety*, Namrata Patel's *Scent of a Garden*, Diane Wilson's *The Seed Keeper*, and Sarah Addison Allen's *Garden Spells*. These texts differ sharply in region, mode, history, and aesthetic. Wilhelmi writes the community garden as a public and administrative commons shaped by rules, neighbor conflict, volunteer labor, and the threat of redevelopment. Patel writes a diasporic family garden as a sensory archive where scent, memory, immigrant inheritance, and commercial ambition collide. Wilson writes seeds, land, and food as relations that carry Dakhóta continuance across settler-colonial rupture, agricultural chemicals, drought, and intergenerational grief. Allen writes an enchanted Southern family garden whose apple tree and edible flowers transform domestic space into a site of botanical agency, feminine inheritance, and magical belonging. Read together, these novels show that the literary garden is not a retreat from history. It is one of the places where history becomes touchable.

The central claim of this book is that contemporary American garden fiction reconceptualizes cultivated space as a precarious infrastructure of care. The word infrastructure is important. The gardens in these novels do not merely symbolize care; they materially organize it. They require water, tools, seeds, recipes, pruning, rules, storage, memory, teaching, tasting, harvesting, and return. They also require forms of social negotiation that are not always gentle. A community garden must be administered. A family garden must be defended against competing claims of inheritance. A seed cache must be protected against systems that turn food into commodity and land into extractive property. An enchanted garden must be tended even when its gifts estrange its caretakers from ordinary social belonging. These gardens become visible not as stable symbols but as living arrangements that make care both possible and vulnerable.

The title phrase Gardens Against the Grind names the book's governing tension. The grind refers to more than ordinary fatigue. It includes professional exhaustion, capitalist acceleration, settler colonial dispossession, environmental attrition, gendered responsibility, family obligation, property abstraction, and the conversion of living places into assets. The garden stands against this grind, but not as a perfect outside. It is already inside violent worlds. It survives, if it survives at all, by cultivating rhythms that slow down dominant systems without fully escaping them. This is why the book uses the term slow care. Slow care is not the sentimental idea that gardens heal everything with patience. It is the repetitive, embodied, more-than-human labor by which damaged worlds are held together without guarantee of repair. Slow care waters before it wins; weeds before it theorizes; saves seeds before it receives recognition; kneels before it claims mastery.

Three original concepts guide the analysis. The first is plot as plot. In each novel, the physical plot of cultivated land becomes the narrative plot. A parcel of earth, a family garden, a seed archive, or a backyard orchard does not simply provide setting; it generates conflict, reveals value, and forces decisions about futurity. The second concept is horticultural refusal. Planting, saving seeds, making tea, sharing produce, cooking with flowers, keeping bylaws, and returning to threatened ground are small acts, but the novels invest them with ethical and political force. These acts refuse the logics of speed, disposability, property abstraction, and social forgetting. The third concept is provisional belonging. Gardens create forms of home, community, kinship, and continuity, but none of these forms is secure. Belonging must be tended; it is not guaranteed by ownership, bloodline, citizenship, romance, or nostalgia.

Garden Theory and the End of Innocent Pastoral

The garden has long occupied an unstable place between nature and culture. David E. Cooper (2006) argues that gardens resist reduction either to art objects or to natural scenes because their meaning depends on the mutual implication of human agency and more-than-human life. A garden is designed, but it is not simply designed. It is planted but not finally possessed. It can be planned, yet its living materials continue to exceed the planner's intention. This unstable middle position makes the garden especially productive for contemporary fiction because it refuses the neat divisions on which many cultural fantasies depend: city and country, nature and culture, body and world, private and political, repair and conflict.

Mateusz Salwa's account of historic gardens as places of conflicting values further clarifies this instability. Salwa (2014) treats gardens not as settled aesthetic objects but as dynamic places where different claims compete. The garden can be heritage, labor, property, memory, ecology, pleasure, and obligation at once. Wilhelmi, Patel, Wilson, and Allen all dramatize this multiplicity. Vista Mar is a sanctuary to some gardeners, a nuisance to hostile neighbors, an administrative burden to its volunteers, and exchangeable land to those who see it through real estate logic. Sonanum is a childhood archive to Asha, a family inheritance to Leela, and a potential extension of Goldfield's commercial future to others. Wilson's seeds are not collectible objects; they are relations that expose the violence of land seizure and agricultural control. Allen's Waverley garden is food source, family history, social stigma, and magical actor at the same time.

Gardens and Human Agency in the Anthropocene similarly emphasizes gardens as mediated spaces where design and agency are inseparable from contingency (Diogo et al., 2019). This point matters because the novels examined here do not ask whether humans should control nature or submit to it. They ask what forms of relation become possible when control fails. Gardening is a particularly revealing practice because it depends on intention while continually exposing the limits of intention. Seeds do not obey schedules simply because humans need certainty. Weather does not submit to plot maps. Family members do not preserve what earlier generations cherished merely because it is beautiful. Committees do not automatically save a commons. The garden is therefore a literary form of disciplined uncertainty.

American literary history gives this uncertainty a specific cultural resonance. Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* famously reads the American pastoral as a structure disturbed by industrial modernity (Marx, 1964). Lawrence Buell later complicates environmental representation by showing that landscapes in American literature are never merely decorative backgrounds but are bound to ethics, perception, and historical imagination (Buell, 1995). The novels in this study inherit the pastoral tradition but refuse to repeat its innocence. The machine no longer arrives from outside the garden as a sudden interruption. It is already present as mortgage, zoning, hotel expansion, pesticide drift, racialized property history, professional burnout, and the pressure to make every living space profitable. The contemporary garden is therefore post-pastoral not because it abandons nature, but because it no longer allows nature to be imagined as a clean escape from social systems.

Care, Slow Violence, and More-than-Human Relation

Care is the ethical center of this book, but care is treated here as a demanding and ambivalent practice rather than as a soft moral sentiment. Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) insists that care is material, affective, ethical, political, and more-than-human. Care can sustain, but it can also burden; it can repair, but it can also reproduce unequal obligation. This complexity is crucial for garden fiction. The gardener is not automatically virtuous. The family caretaker is not automatically free. The community volunteer is not automatically recognized. The seed keeper is not simply a nostalgic preserver. To care for a garden means entering networks of dependence where responsibility is uneven, tiring, and never finished.

Rob Nixon’s concept of slow violence offers a second indispensable frame. Slow violence names forms of harm that are gradual, dispersed, and often difficult to see as violence because they unfold over time rather than erupt as immediate spectacle (Nixon, 2011). The gardens in this book are shaped by such temporal harm. Redevelopment threatens the accumulation of communal labor in *Garden Variety*. Professional exhaustion and family-commercial pressure reorganize Asha’s relation to Sonanum in *Scent of a Garden*. *The Seed Keeper* binds forced removal, boarding-school trauma, agricultural chemicals, drought, and seed loss into a long history of ecological and cultural attrition. *Garden Spells* stages a quieter form of slow harm in the inherited stigma attached to unusual women and their domestic knowledge. In all four novels, the garden becomes a site where slow violence becomes perceptible because living matter registers pressure over time.

Plant studies and more-than-human theory help explain why these pressures cannot be read only through human psychology. Michael Marder (2013) argues that plant life troubles human-centered models of subjectivity by foregrounding exposure, relationality, and non-sovereign being. Paco Calvo (2023) challenges plant blindness by asking readers to recognize vegetal responsiveness at temporal and perceptual scales that human cultures often ignore. Donna Haraway’s call to stay with the trouble also matters here because these novels do not resolve ecological relation into purity; they remain with mixed, damaged, compromised worlds (Haraway, 2016). Gardens are exemplary trouble-spaces. They join nourishment and exploitation, beauty and labor, inheritance and conflict, human intention and nonhuman agency. They do not permit clean innocence.

For *The Seed Keeper*, the framework must also include Indigenous theories of land, pedagogy, and food sovereignty. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2014) conceptualizes land as pedagogy, not merely as location but as process, relation, and knowledge practice. Kyle Whyte (2016) frames Indigenous food sovereignty as a strategy of resurgence that confronts settler-colonial erasures of the ecological value of foods and relations. Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) offers a vocabulary of reciprocity that treats plants not as mute resources but as teachers and relatives. These frameworks must be used carefully. This book does not flatten Indigenous seed relations into a general metaphor of resilience. Instead, it reads Wilson's novel as a distinct intervention within a larger comparative study, one that changes the meaning of garden fiction by insisting that cultivation cannot be separated from sovereignty, colonial history, and the obligations carried by seeds.

Method: Internal Comparative Reading

The method of this book is internal comparative analysis. The chapters do not proceed by treating each novel as a sealed unit. Instead, they move through shared problems: property, inheritance, sovereignty, sensory repair, plant agency, maintenance, slow violence, refusal, and belonging. This method allows the garden to become a comparative instrument. Vista Mar's public plots clarify what Sonanum's private enclosure hides; Sonanum's sensory apprenticeship illuminates the limits of Vista Mar's administrative commons; Wilson's seed sovereignty unsettles any easy idea that gardening is simply therapeutic; Allen's magical garden reveals that plant agency can enter realist debates through enchantment without losing critical seriousness.

This comparative approach also prevents the study from reducing garden fiction to one mode. *Garden Variety* is realist and communal. *Scent of a Garden* is diasporic, sensory, and family-centered. *The Seed Keeper* is historical, Indigenous, ecological, and intergenerational. *Garden Spells* is Southern magical realism organized around feminine domestic knowledge. Their differences are not obstacles to comparison. They are the reason comparison is necessary. The garden appears across modes because it is flexible enough to hold unlike forms of damage and care. Its literary force lies in this flexibility: it can be a commons, an archive, a relative, a kitchen, a business liability, a prophecy, a homeplace, and a threatened asset.

The book therefore makes a modest but important intervention in contemporary American literary studies. It shifts attention from wild nature, wilderness, and environmental catastrophe toward cultivated spaces where ecological relation is ordinary, domestic, repetitive, and socially embedded. This shift does not diminish environmental crisis. It shows that crisis is often lived through small places and repeated practices. A hose, a seed jar, a tea blend, a recipe, a committee meeting, and a flowering herb can all become sites where large systems press against intimate life. Garden fiction makes such pressure readable.

Chapter Plan

Chapter Two, Contested Ground, examines property, commons, inheritance, and sovereignty. It argues that the novels make cultivated land legible as a site where value systems collide. Vista Mar exposes the vulnerability of the commons before real estate abstraction. Sonanum stages conflict between family memory and commercial expansion. *The Seed Keeper* insists that seeds and land exceed property categories because they belong to relations of continuance. *Garden Spells* turns domestic inheritance into a magical and socially stigmatized form of rootedness.

Chapter Three, Slow Care and Vegetal Time, explores the temporal and sensory dimensions of cultivation. It compares seasonal labor, scent, seed dormancy, edible flowers, and prophetic fruit as forms of knowledge that interrupt accelerated life. The chapter argues that slow care is neither passive waiting nor sentimental healing. It is a rigorous practice of attention that asks characters to live at plant speed and to accept repair as partial.

Chapter Four, The Failure of Control, studies maintenance, contingency, and more-than-human agency. It shows that gardens matter in these novels because they reveal dependence rather than mastery. Rules, recipes, business plans, pesticides, and family expectations all attempt to organize living matter, but plants, weather, memory, and relation continue to exceed control. The chapter develops botanical agency as a distributed force that acts through growth, scent, dormancy, taste, toxicity, and narrative consequence.

Chapter Five, Horticultural Refusal and Provisional Belonging, synthesizes the book's ethical and political argument. It reads the gardens as modest but powerful spaces of refusal against speed, disposability, colonial erasure, patriarchal inheritance, and market value. Yet the chapter also insists that belonging remains provisional. The novels do not promise permanent home. They show belonging as a relation repeatedly cultivated under threat.

The conclusion returns to the question of what gardens keep. They keep memory, but not without conflict. They keep seeds, but not outside history. They keep family, but not without rupture. They keep community, but not without rules, fatigue, and disagreement. Most importantly, they keep open the possibility that care can remain meaningful even when it cannot guarantee safety. That possibility is the quiet force of contemporary American garden fiction.

CONTESTED GROUND: PROPERTY, COMMONS, INHERITANCE, AND SOVEREIGNTY

Every garden in this study begins with a deceptively simple question: who has the right to define the ground? The answer is never singular. A garden can be privately owned, communally maintained, inherited through family memory, claimed by commercial plans, or understood through relations that precede and exceed property law. Contemporary garden fiction turns this question into narrative conflict because cultivated land is never merely land. It is a medium through which human beings negotiate value, attachment, authority, and futurity.

This chapter argues that *Garden Variety*, *Scent of a Garden*, *The Seed Keeper*, and *Garden Spells* transform the garden into contested ground. The contest is not only between people who like gardens and people who do not. It is between incompatible systems of value. Real estate logic treats land as transferable asset. Family logic treats land as inheritance, duty, and sometimes control. Indigenous seed relations expose the violence of reducing land to ownership at all. Magical domestic inheritance turns a backyard into a living archive that refuses ordinary social categories. The garden plot thus becomes the novelistic plot: dispute over ground becomes dispute over what kind of life can continue.

Salwa's claim that gardens are places of conflicting values is especially useful here (Salwa, 2014). A garden is never one thing to everyone who encounters it. Its meaning depends on the values that different people bring to it and the practices through which those values are enforced. The four novels dramatize this condition with unusual clarity. They show that cultivated spaces are loved not because they are uncontested, but because they make contestation visible. The garden is the place where abstraction becomes material. Property becomes soil. Inheritance becomes a plant bed. Colonial history becomes seed loss and seed saving. Domestic eccentricity becomes an apple tree that cannot be assimilated into respectable normalcy.

Vista Mar and the Fragile Commons

Garden Variety is the most explicit commons novel in the corpus. Vista Mar Community Gardens is not presented as spontaneous natural harmony. It is a rule-bound, labor-intensive, socially negotiated place. The garden depends on bylaws, plot assignments, maps, volunteer duties, committees, and the ordinary discipline of showing up. Wilhelmi's great strength is her refusal to sentimentalize the commons. Communal cultivation is not the absence of conflict. It is a method for living with conflict while keeping shared ground alive.

On Jared's first tour, communal space is quantified before it is sentimentalized: "Each plot is twelve by seventeen feet," and use begins with the obligation to "clear it and start planting" within a month (Wilhelmi, 2022, p. 2). The passage establishes cultivation as rule-bound entrance into a collective order, not a private daydream.

The novel's attention to procedure is not incidental. It is part of the garden's form. Tools must be stored, water must be managed, plots must be maintained, rules must be interpreted, and disputes must be addressed. Such details create a counter-image to the fantasy that community emerges automatically when people gather around plants. In Wilhelmi's fiction, community is infrastructure. It is made from boring, repetitive, and often thankless tasks. This matters because the commons is not only ecological; it is administrative. If care is to become collective, it must be organized.

Yet organization cannot protect Vista Mar completely. The conflict with hostile neighbors and the threat of sale reveal the vulnerability built into the garden's existence. As long as the land can be translated into property value, years of care can be made precarious by legal and economic processes that do not recognize care as value. Here the novel exposes a central contradiction of urban and suburban community gardening: the more people invest themselves in a place, the more devastating its reduction to transferable land becomes. A plot that has been watered, amended, planted, and remembered can still be treated as empty space by those whose categories cannot see cultivated relation.

The property threat arrives as a change of diction: a cared-for commons is described through a "more lucrative use for the land" and a "legal right to repurpose the property" (Wilhelmi, 2022, p. 91). Wilhelmi's wording exposes how market language can empty a tended place of its social memory.

This is where plot as plot becomes visible. The physical plots at Vista Mar generate the novel's social plot. Each bed becomes a node of attachment, conflict, competence, and vulnerability. The threat to the garden is not simply a plot device; it is the structural condition that reveals what the community has been building all along. The garden's possible disappearance forces characters to articulate values that ordinary maintenance had allowed them to practice without naming. Under threat, compost, water lines, rules, and neighborly irritation become signs of a world that has been collectively made.

Wilhelmi's treatment of the commons also complicates idealized environmental politics. The garden members do not become politically pure because they grow food. They disagree, misrecognize one another, exhaust one another, and sometimes mistake personal attachment for shared judgment. This imperfection is crucial. It means that the commons is not a fantasy of moral unity. It is a practice of repeated relation among people who remain partial, flawed, and tired. *Garden Variety* therefore frames collective care as difficult social labor rather than as a natural virtue.

Sonanum and the Ambivalence of Family Inheritance

Scent of a Garden moves the contest from a public commons to a private family landscape. Sonanum is intimate, sensory, and intergenerational. It is the place where Asha's childhood knowledge of scent was cultivated under Leela's guidance. It is also attached to Goldfield, the Patel family hotel in Napa Valley, and therefore cannot be separated from business, inheritance, and commercial futurity. The garden is home and asset at once. That double status produces the novel's most important tension.

Patel introduces Leela's pedagogy with a compact principle: "Life happened in the waiting" (Patel, 2023, p. 8). For Sonanum, waiting is not delay but a cultivated mode of knowledge.

For Asha, Sonanum is not simply land beside a hotel. It is an archive of embodied learning. Herbs, flowers, and scent memories connect her to childhood, to Leela, to Gujarati family history, and to a form of knowledge that predates her professional life as a perfumer. The garden carries what could be called sensory inheritance: not only what one remembers, but how one learns to remember through the body. Asha's return to the garden after professional and sensory damage is therefore not an escape into nostalgia. It is a return to a form of knowing that modern prestige had partly displaced.

For Sanjay and the business logic surrounding Goldfield, however, continuity may look different. A family may preserve itself by expanding, modernizing, and securing economic success. Patel is careful not to make commercial aspiration merely villainous. Immigrant family businesses often carry histories of sacrifice, exclusion, and disciplined ambition. Goldfield's future is not a trivial matter. Yet this complexity makes the threat to Sonanum more painful. The garden is endangered not by strangers alone but by a family logic that can plausibly describe itself as responsible.

When Sanjay insists, “This land is part of Goldfield,” Asha answers with another measure of value: “sixty years of labor” (Patel, 2023, p. 89). The conflict is therefore not only between memory and economics; it is between two incompatible ways of counting inheritance.

This ambivalence distinguishes Sonanum from a simple pastoral sanctuary. The garden is not outside family power; it is one of the places where family power is negotiated. Patel shows that inheritance can preserve and endanger the same object. Leela’s teachings help Sonanum survive as memory and practice, yet the broader family structure can also expose it to repurposing. Asha’s attachment to the garden therefore becomes a question of interpretation: what does it mean to honor an inheritance? Is preservation the maintenance of a place, the growth of a business, the continuation of a family name, or the transformation of inherited knowledge into new practice?

Sonanum’s contest also reveals the gendered dimensions of care. Gardens often depend on forms of knowledge that are feminized, domestic, sensory, or informal and therefore undervalued. Asha’s scent knowledge and tea-making practice do not initially command the same status as professional achievement or commercial expansion. Yet Patel gradually asks readers to recognize that the garden’s knowledge is rigorous. It requires memory, attention, experimentation, and embodied discipline. The struggle over Sonanum is thus also a struggle over which kinds of labor count as serious.

Seeds, Sovereignty, and Settler Colonial Ground

The Seed Keeper transforms the comparative field because Wilson’s garden-centered imagination cannot be contained by the categories of property and inheritance that shape the other novels. Seeds in Wilson’s text are not family mementos in a narrow sentimental sense. They are living relations bound to Dakhóta continuance, food systems, women's knowledge, land history, and the violence of settler colonialism. To read Wilson beside Wilhelmi and Patel is to see the limits of any garden theory that treats land primarily as aesthetic or therapeutic space.

Wilson's prologue gives this relation a more radical agency when Darlene explains that plants "have their own way of talking" (Wilson, 2021, p. 3). The phrase shifts the archive from human memory alone to a multispecies field of communication.

The novel's seed archive carries time differently from Vista Mar's public plots or Sonanum's scented beds. Seeds are small, portable, dormant, and powerful. They can be hidden, protected, lost, replanted, and passed forward. Their smallness is deceptive because they carry relations across rupture. Wilson uses this botanical form to tell a history in which land seizure, forced assimilation, agricultural industrialization, and family trauma are inseparable. The seed is not an emblem of private memory alone. It is a medium of collective continuance.

Indigenous food sovereignty theory clarifies why this matters. Whyte (2016) argues that Indigenous food sovereignty negotiates settler-colonial structures that erase the ecological value of foods and relations. Simpson's account of land as pedagogy similarly insists that land-based knowledge is process, context, and relation rather than inert content (Simpson, 2014). Wilson's novel gives fictional form to these arguments. Seeds teach because they require obligations: to remember, to plant, to protect, to refuse erasure, and to recognize that food systems are historical systems.

This is not the same kind of contest staged in *Garden Variety*. Vista Mar's conflict occurs within a property regime that can sell the garden as land. *The Seed Keeper* exposes the deeper violence by which property regimes come into being. Settler colonialism does not merely threaten cultivated spaces; it reorganizes the meaning of land, food, kinship, and authority. The novel therefore expands the book's concept of contested ground. The question is not only who owns the land, but what kinds of relation ownership has already made difficult or illegible.

Ray's teaching makes land relation ethical rather than merely spatial: survival depends on knowing how to be "a good relative" to Ina Maka, Mother Earth (Wilson, 2021, p. 6). That imperative refuses property as the primary grammar of belonging.

Wilson's engagement with industrial agriculture further intensifies this point. Chemicals, monoculture, drought, and farm debt are not external background conditions. They are part of the violence through which living systems are disciplined for extraction and yield. Nixon's slow violence is useful here because the harms of such systems accumulate gradually through soil, water, bodies, and family memory (Nixon, 2011). The garden or seed plot is not a pure alternative untouched by these systems. It is a site where their effects can be registered and resisted.

The Waverley Garden and Enchanted Domestic Property

Garden Spells enters the comparison through a different mode: Southern magical realism. At first glance, Allen's enchanted garden might seem lighter than Wilson's seed sovereignty or Wilhelmi's redevelopment struggle. Yet the Waverley garden performs serious critical work. It makes domestic inheritance strange. The apple tree's prophetic fruit and the edible flowers used in Claire's cooking transform the family backyard into a space where plant life has narrative force. The garden is not just inherited property. It acts.

Allen's opening chapter compresses Waverley inheritance into one sentence: "Their history was in the soil" (Allen, 2007, p. 2). This is not metaphor alone; the garden stores recipes, reputation, desire, fear, and futurity.

The Waverley women's relation to the garden is socially ambivalent. Their botanical knowledge gives them power, but it also marks them as outsiders within Bascom. The garden's gifts are not easily assimilated into ordinary respectability. This matters because Allen connects feminine knowledge, food, secrecy, and social stigma. Claire's cooking with edible flowers turns the garden into a form of domestic artistry that affects others, but it also reinforces her isolation. The garden gives her a place, yet that place can become enclosure.

The question of property in *Garden Spells* is therefore inseparable from the question of social belonging. The Waverley home and garden preserve a family history that is both cherished and burdensome. Unlike Vista Mar, the garden is not a commons. Unlike Sonanum, it is not threatened primarily by commercial expansion. Unlike Wilson's seeds, it does not directly articulate Indigenous sovereignty. Its contest concerns the meaning of domestic inheritance for women whose gifts make them useful and strange. The magical garden protects a form of knowledge that the town both desires and mistrusts.

Allen's magical mode allows plants to externalize social knowledge. The apple tree's prophetic fruit literalizes futurity as botanical event. Edible flowers make feeling and relation consumable. Recipes become vehicles through which plant properties enter human social life. This mode does not abandon the book's larger concerns. Rather, it shows that the garden's agency can be figured through enchantment when realism is not enough to describe the force of inherited botanical knowledge.

The garden's warnings are botanical before they are verbal. "Ivy in the garden" signals that "something was trying to get in" (Allen, 2007, p. 23). Enchantment, here, is a diagnostic mode.

Comparative Synthesis

Across the four novels, contested ground produces four different but related models of cultivated value. Vista Mar is the commons model: a shared garden whose value depends on collective maintenance and whose vulnerability reveals the inadequacy of real estate abstraction. Sonanum is the diasporic inheritance model: a family garden where sensory memory, immigrant aspiration, and commercial futurity collide. *The Seed Keeper* is the sovereignty model: seeds and land as relations that expose the violence of settler-colonial property and industrial agriculture. *Garden Spells* is the enchanted domestic model: a family garden whose magical plant life preserves stigmatized feminine knowledge and unsettles ordinary belonging.

These models should not be collapsed into one another. A community garden is not an Indigenous seed archive. A magical apple tree is not the same as tulsi carried across family histories. A hotel garden does not have the same political status as land marked by settler-colonial dispossession. The value of comparison lies in keeping these differences active. When read together, the novels show that gardens become meaningful through the specific histories and systems that contest them.

At the same time, the novels share an important proposition: cultivated land matters because it makes value visible. The garden asks whether value is measured by market exchange, family continuity, sensory knowledge, ecological relation, sovereignty, nourishment, prophecy, or collective labor. It also asks who must work to preserve those values and who benefits from their preservation. These questions are the beginning of the book's broader argument about cultivated care. Care is never abstract in garden fiction. It is attached to ground, and ground is always contested.

SLOW CARE AND VEGETAL TIME: SCENT, SEED, SEASON, AND REPAIR

Gardens demand another sense of time. They do not obey the pace of ambition, crisis, or narrative climax. Seeds wait. Cuttings fail. Compost breaks down invisibly before it can feed new growth. Scent arrives before language and sometimes after loss. Fruit ripens according to conditions that cannot be forced. The novels in this chapter use garden time to interrupt the accelerated temporalities of contemporary life. They oppose the grind not by escaping time, but by asking characters to inhabit time differently.

This chapter develops the concept of slow care. Slow care is care practiced through duration, repetition, attention, and bodily return. It is not the same as passive patience. It involves action: watering, smelling, saving, cooking, weeding, recording, sharing, and waiting again. Slow care resists the demand that repair become immediate, measurable, or complete. In these novels, the garden teaches that repair may be partial and still meaningful.

Calvo's critique of plant blindness is helpful because it identifies a perceptual habit that treats plants as background when they do not move or speak at human speeds (Calvo, 2023). Marder's work on vegetal life similarly challenges human-centered models of agency and presence (Marder, 2013). The four novels answer this challenge narratively. They require readers to notice slow forms of change: a scent returning, a seed surviving, a community repeating its tasks, a fruit carrying a future, a recipe changing the mood of a room. Such details are not decorative. They are the temporal foundation of the novels' ethics.

Seasonal Labor in *Garden Variety*

Garden Variety makes slow care visible through ordinary maintenance. The novel's practical details—hoses, compost, seedlings, plot maps, volunteer schedules, newsletters, meetings, pests, and repairs—are central to its meaning. Wilhelmi understands that the community garden is not primarily made in moments of emotional revelation. It is made by repetition. Gardeners return because plants require return. Community persists because maintenance is repeated long after enthusiasm fades.

Wilhelmi's slow care also registers climate time. Lizzie's recognition that "Drought was the new normal" turns routine watering into ecological adjustment (Wilhelmi, 2022, p. 30).

This attention to repetition gives the novel a counter-dramatic structure. Much of what matters in Vista Mar is not spectacular. It is the work that prevents collapse: fixing a problem before it becomes disaster, teaching a novice how to tend a bed, mediating a dispute before it ruins cooperation, noticing a plot before it becomes abandoned. Slow care is therefore infrastructural. It holds open the possibility of communal life through practices that may appear minor until they stop being done.

Wilhelmi's seasonal temporality also challenges the fantasy of immediate social repair. The garden does not transform its members into a harmonious community at once. It exposes their habits slowly. Some people learn generosity through shared labor; others reveal possessiveness or fatigue. The garden's pace gives conflict time to surface. This is an important feature of slow care. It does not hide conflict beneath pastoral beauty. It makes conflict livable long enough for another response to become possible.

Vista Mar's temporality is not only horticultural but administrative. Meetings, rules, and schedules may seem less organic than plant growth, but the novel places them within the same field of maintenance. A commons needs calendars as much as compost. The bureaucratic rhythm of the garden may be irritating, yet it prevents care from becoming dependent on spontaneous goodwill alone. In this sense, Wilhelmi expands the idea of vegetal time. Slow care includes the institutional tempo required to protect living spaces from neglect and conflict.

Scent, Anosmia, and Sensory Relearning in *Scent of a Garden*

Scent of a Garden offers the most intimate account of slow care because its garden is organized through smell. Asha's damaged sense of smell is not merely a professional problem for a perfumer. It is a rupture in her relation to memory, pleasure, labor, and selfhood. Sonanum matters because it returns her to a form of sensory knowledge that cannot be rushed. Smell is elusive. It arrives through attention, association, and bodily vulnerability. Patel's garden therefore becomes a site of sensory relearning.

Patel states the sensory premise directly: "Scent had a memory component" (Patel, 2023, p. 2). Asha's loss is therefore not merely technical incapacity; it is a rupture in embodied memory.

Asha's childhood apprenticeship under Leela teaches that scent is disciplined perception. One does not simply smell; one learns to distinguish, wait, name, and compare. The garden trains the body to know through patience. Adult Asha's return to Sonanum repeats this lesson under changed conditions. The damaged sensorium cannot be commanded back into professional usefulness. It can only be approached through repeated contact with herbs, flowers, air, memory, and the hands-on work of making.

Leela's lesson that "plants and trees needed time to regenerate" frames recovery as seasonal rather than instantaneous (Patel, 2023, p. 8).

This is why the garden-to-tea movement is so significant. Asha's work with herbs and petals transforms cultivation into infusion. Tea-making becomes a practice in which scent, taste, memory, and experiment meet. It is neither pure tradition nor pure innovation. It carries Leela's teachings forward while allowing Asha to create a new relation to labor after the collapse of her old professional identity. Slow care here is creative because it refuses the idea that recovery means returning unchanged to former productivity.

Patel's sensory temporality also challenges neoliberal narratives of resilience. Asha is not healed by deciding to be strong. Her repair unfolds through contact with a living place and through the acceptance of uncertainty. The garden does not guarantee the restoration of her old gift. It opens a different mode of knowing in which partial perception becomes livable. This is one of the book's key insights: slow care is not a technology of optimization. It is a practice of remaining with damaged capacity without reducing the self to damage.

Sonanum's scents also make diasporic time material. Herbs, flowers, and particularly inherited plants such as tulsi carry memory across locations. They connect Gujarat, family history, Napa Valley, childhood, and adult return without collapsing those places into sameness. Diasporic belonging is therefore not only narrative or genealogical; it is botanical and sensory. It survives through cultivation, replanting, and bodily recognition.

Seed Dormancy and Intergenerational Continuance in *The Seed Keeper*

The Seed Keeper gives slow care its deepest historical dimension. Seeds are temporal bodies. They hold the past without being dead, and they hold the future without guaranteeing it. Dormancy is not emptiness. It is a form of suspended potential that depends on conditions for return. Wilson builds her novel around this botanical temporality, making seed survival a figure for cultural continuance without reducing it to metaphor alone.

Wilson's novel literalizes vegetal pedagogy when Rosalie remembers being taught to "ask each plant for permission" (Wilson, 2021, p. 24). Slow care here is not a therapeutic preference but a protocol of respectful relation.

The seed keeper's work is slow because it is intergenerational. It often occurs outside public recognition. Seeds may be hidden, stored, carried, remembered, and planted under conditions of danger. This work does not announce itself as heroic, yet it resists erasure at the most fundamental level of food, land, and relation. Wilson's novel insists that continuance can happen through small acts that historical violence fails to notice or cannot fully destroy.

This does not mean that seeds function as simple symbols of hope. Wilson is too attentive to loss for that. Seeds can be lost. Knowledge can be interrupted. Families can be broken. Land can be poisoned. Bodies can carry trauma. The force of the novel lies in refusing both despair and easy consolation. Slow care becomes the practice of protecting what can be protected while acknowledging that harm has already occurred. Seedkeeping is therefore not nostalgia for a pure past. It is a future-oriented obligation shaped by memory.

Kimmerer's writing on reciprocity helps clarify the ethical dimension of this seed relation (Kimmerer, 2013). Seeds are not inert property waiting for human use. They are part of reciprocal systems in which humans receive, tend, and return. Simpson's land pedagogy further suggests that knowledge arises through relation with land rather than through detached abstraction (Simpson, 2014). Wilson's narrative embodies these ideas by placing seed knowledge in women's stories, family memory, and embodied practice. The seed teaches by requiring care.

The contrast with industrial agricultural time is stark. Industrial systems often demand acceleration, uniformity, predictability, and yield. Seedkeeping emphasizes patience, diversity, memory, and obligation. This opposition should not be simplified into nature versus technology. It is a conflict between temporal regimes. One regime treats plants as units in production; the other treats them as relations in continuance. Wilson's novel asks what forms of life become possible when seed time interrupts commodity time.

Enchanted Time in *Garden Spells*

Garden Spells imagines vegetal time through enchantment. The Waverley apple tree's prophetic fruit literalizes futurity, while edible flowers translate plant properties into human feeling and social relation. Allen's magical realism does not make the garden less serious. It allows the novel to dramatize how plants carry times that human beings cannot fully master: family pasts, anticipated futures, emotional atmospheres, and forms of knowledge that arrive through taste rather than explanation.

Allen makes this vegetal temporality domestic and magical: the "Waverley legacy of edible flowers" means that cooking, kinship, and plant power are inseparable (Allen, 2007, p. 1).

Claire Waverley's cooking is a practice of slow care because it joins cultivation, recipe, timing, and relational intention. Edible flowers are not decorative in the ordinary sense. They affect those who eat them. The meal becomes a botanical event through which the garden enters social life. This is a different sensory epistemology from Asha's scent work, but the two novels illuminate each other. Patel emphasizes smell as retraining after loss; Allen emphasizes taste as magical mediation between domestic labor and communal effect.

Because the flowers "could affect the eater," food becomes a medium through which plant life alters human relation (Allen, 2007, p. 6).

The apple tree's prophetic function complicates time in another way. To know the future is not necessarily to be free.

Prophecy can burden as much as it reveals. The tree's fruit makes futurity intimate and bodily, but it does not turn life into a controllable plan. In this respect, *Garden Spells* shares the corpus's larger suspicion of mastery. Even magical knowledge does not abolish uncertainty. It changes the terms on which uncertainty is lived.

Slow Care as Comparative Ethic

Across the four novels, slow care works through different media: seasonal maintenance, scent training, seed dormancy, and magical cooking. These practices are not interchangeable. Their difference is precisely what makes the concept useful. Slow care names a shared structure without erasing specific histories. In Wilhelmi, slow care is communal and administrative. In Patel, it is sensory and diasporic. In Wilson, it is sovereign and intergenerational. In Allen, it is domestic, enchanted, and feminine.

Slow care also exposes the limits of cure. None of the gardens simply repairs the world. Vista Mar remains vulnerable to property logic. Sonanum remains entangled with family and business conflict. Wilson's seeds carry continuance but not immunity from colonial and ecological harm. The Waverley garden offers magic but not instant social acceptance. Care matters because it creates conditions of livability, not because it guarantees redemption.

This distinction is politically important. Contemporary culture often turns care into individual self-management. The novels resist that reduction. Their gardens show care as relational, material, and more-than-human. A person cannot simply care herself into wholeness apart from land, family, community, food, memory, and plant life. At the same time, care can become burdensome when responsibility is unequally distributed. The garden thus offers not a simple solution but a demanding ethical field.

By slowing narrative attention, these novels ask readers to become better perceivers. They teach that harm often accumulates gradually and that repair may also require gradual work. They ask readers to notice a community's repeated meetings, a scent's hesitant return, a seed's dormant endurance, and a flower's subtle effect. Such noticing is itself part of the book's argument. To read garden fiction is to practice attention to forms of life that accelerated culture tends to overlook.

THE FAILURE OF CONTROL: MAINTENANCE, CONTINGENCY, AND BOTANICAL AGENCY

Gardens are planned spaces, but they are never fully controlled spaces. This paradox gives garden fiction much of its power. A gardener may design beds, choose seeds, prune branches, set rules, build fences, or write recipes, yet living matter continues to exceed intention. Weather changes. Plants respond unpredictably. Soil carries histories that are not immediately visible. Families reinterpret inheritances. Markets transform places into assets. The novels in this chapter make the failure of control central to their ethics.

The failure of control does not mean the failure of care. On the contrary, care becomes meaningful because control fails. Maintenance is the practice that emerges between human intention and conditions that exceed it. To maintain a garden is not to dominate it once and for all. It is to keep returning to a living system whose needs, threats, and possibilities change. Cooper's account of gardens as co-dependent works of human and nonhuman agency is particularly useful here (Cooper, 2006). Gardens disclose relation, not sovereignty.

This chapter reads botanical agency broadly. It does not claim that plants in all four novels act in the same way. Vista Mar's plants act through growth, decay, seasonal demand, and the practical organization of communal labor. Sonanum's plants act through scent, memory, and sensory retraining. Wilson's seeds act through dormancy, survival, and the obligations they impose on human caretakers. Allen's apple tree and edible flowers act through overt magic. Botanical agency, then, is not a single property but a range of ways plants shape narrative, perception, and relation.

Rules Cannot Save the Commons

In *Garden Variety*, Vista Mar's bylaws, schedules, and committees are necessary, but they cannot make the garden secure. This is one of Wilhelmi's clearest insights. Organization matters because without it the garden would quickly become unmanageable. Yet organization does not abolish vulnerability. It can mediate conflict, but not eliminate it. It can document care, but not guarantee that outside power will recognize care as value. It can create procedures, but not prevent the market from seeing the land differently.

The garden's living matter continually interrupts administrative fantasy. Plots require different kinds of attention depending on season and gardener competence. Plants fail or flourish unevenly. Water and soil create practical limits. A neglected bed can affect others. The ecology of the commons makes private negligence public. This is why rules are not merely bureaucratic impositions; they are attempts to translate ecological interdependence into social form. The failure of control is already built into the need for rules.

The looming sale of Vista Mar intensifies this failure. The gardeners may have cared for the land for years, but care does not equal ownership in the legal sense. The garden can be made precarious by documents and decisions that do not arise from its ecology. Wilhelmi therefore stages property logic as a violent abstraction. It does not need to hate the garden in order to harm it. It only needs to classify the land according to categories that ignore the relations accumulated there.

The bluntest formulation comes after the legal encounter: “No, we’re on borrowed land” (Wilhelmi, 2022, p. 93). The sentence reduces years of care to the precarity of permission.

Maintenance becomes a form of witness under these conditions. The gardeners’ repeated labor testifies that the land is not empty. Compost, beds, paths, and shared memories become evidence of a social-ecological world. Yet this evidence is fragile because it may not count within dominant systems of recognition. The novel’s tension comes from this gap between lived value and official value. The garden is rich in relation and poor in legal protection.

Family Plans and the Unruliness of Sonanum

In *Scent of a Garden*, the failure of control is more intimate. Sonanum has been lovingly shaped, but it cannot be frozen as memory or fully redirected as business asset. It resists both sentimental possession and commercial repurposing. Asha cannot simply reclaim it as childhood refuge, and her family cannot simply treat it as expandable property without damaging the relations that give the place meaning.

Sonanum’s vulnerability also emerges from scale. Leela admits, “This garden is too much for me to tend to regularly” (Patel, 2023, p. 89). Maintenance is not failure; it is the burden that makes care real.

The garden’s agency is sensory. Its herbs and flowers do not speak, yet they act on Asha’s body and memory. They draw her away from the accelerated prestige economy of perfumery and toward a slower practice of attention. This vegetal agency is not magical in Allen’s overt sense, but it is narratively powerful. Sonanum changes what Asha can perceive, what she can value, and what kind of work she can imagine for herself.

The family's attempt to control the garden's future reveals the limits of patriarchal and commercial authority. A plan can redescribe Sonanum as land available for another use, but it cannot erase the sensory and intergenerational relations embedded there. Patel does not suggest that memory automatically wins. Rather, she shows that the garden's value persists even when power fails to recognize it. The conflict forces Asha to articulate forms of value that had been stored in practice rather than in argument.

Asha later recalls that Sonanum "was always a garden" and "a place for her to play and learn and be" (Patel, 2023, p. 213). The repetition of being exceeds the business plan.

Sonanum's unruliness is also temporal. It carries past apprenticeship into present crisis and future possibility. This layered time resists the linear logic of expansion, in which family progress is imagined as growth of the hotel enterprise. The garden proposes another form of growth: not expansion outward, but deepening relation. Asha's tea-making practice embodies this alternative. It does not reject making or entrepreneurship entirely. It reorients making around sensory care rather than prestige alone.

Industrial Control and Seed Refusal

The Seed Keeper offers the starkest critique of control. Settler colonialism and industrial agriculture both attempt to reorganize land and plant life through systems of ownership, extraction, standardization, and yield. Wilson's seeds resist such systems not through romantic purity but through continuance. Their agency lies in their capacity to carry relation across violence and to require obligations that industrial logic cannot fully absorb.

Wilson gives control its colonial edge when Rosalie realizes that “what was valuable would be taken” (Wilson, 2021, p. 33). Environmental loss is inseparable from theft.

Industrial agriculture seeks predictability. It favors uniformity, chemical intervention, and the conversion of soil into production medium. Wilson’s novel places this logic against seedkeeping, which depends on memory, diversity, patience, and reciprocity. The conflict is not merely environmental. It is epistemological. What counts as knowledge? What counts as productivity? What counts as a future? Seedkeeping answers these questions differently from agribusiness. It values continuance over immediate yield and relation over control.

Nixon’s slow violence clarifies the stakes of chemical and ecological harm (Nixon, 2011). Such harm often appears gradually, through soil, water, health, debt, and family stress. It may be difficult to narrate because it lacks the spectacle of sudden violence. Wilson responds by making seeds narrative carriers. They gather dispersed harm into a form readers can follow without reducing that harm to a single event. Seeds remember by surviving, but their survival is never guaranteed.

The seed’s agency is therefore ethical. It places demands on human characters. To receive seeds is to receive responsibility. To save them is to refuse the idea that the future belongs only to systems of extraction. This refusal is not individual heroism. It is relational continuance, often carried by women whose knowledge has been threatened by colonial structures. Wilson’s novel asks readers to understand plant agency not as a whimsical attribution of personality but as a recognition that plant life organizes human obligation.

The buried bone hoe makes this critique tactile: “steel tools scar the earth” (Wilson, 2021, p. 128). The issue is not only who works the soil, but what material and ethical relation the work assumes.

Magic and the Acting Garden

Garden Spells makes botanical agency explicit through magic. The Waverley apple tree is not background scenery. Its prophetic fruit shapes the novel's understanding of knowledge, fear, and futurity. The edible flowers similarly act through taste, mood, and social relation. In Allen's novel, plant agency is not hidden under realism. It appears as enchantment, making visible what the other novels render through maintenance, scent, or seed time.

Allen's apple tree exposes the limits of domestic control through unruly botanical action: it "blooms in the winter" and fruits outside ordinary expectation (Allen, 2007, p. 24).

This magical agency complicates domestic control. Claire may use the garden's flowers in carefully prepared foods, but she does not fully control the garden's meanings. The apple tree's knowledge can be unwanted. The family's gifts can isolate as well as empower. The garden gives the Waverley women distinctive agency, but it also binds them to an inherited identity that the town interprets through fascination and suspicion. Botanical power is therefore ambivalent.

By the end, the tree is "shaking with excitement" (Allen, 2007, p. 206), a phrase that converts plant movement into affective participation.

Allen's enchanted plants also resist the separation of nature and culture. The garden's magic enters recipes, meals, romance, family conflict, and town gossip. Plant life does not remain outside society; it circulates through the most social of acts: eating. This circulation turns the kitchen into an ecological interface. Domestic labor becomes a mode of more-than-human mediation, and food becomes a vehicle through which plants participate in human relations.

The Waverley garden thus shows how magical realism can serve ecological thinking. It does not simply decorate realism with charm. It asks readers to imagine that plants have effects that exceed human intention and ordinary explanation. The tree's agency may be fantastical, but the underlying insight is shared by the other novels: cultivated plants shape human life in ways that cannot be reduced to passive resource use.

Maintenance Without Mastery

Taken together, the four novels define maintenance as care without mastery. Vista Mar must be organized but cannot be secured by organization alone. Sonanum must be remembered and tended but cannot be possessed as pure memory. Wilson's seeds must be saved but cannot be reduced to collectible heritage. The Waverley garden must be cultivated but cannot be domesticated into harmless ornament. In each case, maintenance is the practice that acknowledges dependence on living systems.

This argument revises a common reading of gardens as expressions of human design. Gardens do show design, but design is only one part of their life. Diogo et al. (2019) emphasize gardens as mediated spaces in which human agency is staged alongside the agency of materials, environments, and histories. The novels confirm this insight by showing that the most important garden events often occur where design encounters contingency. A rule meets a weather event. A business plan meets a scented memory. A seed meets a poisoned field. A recipe meets an unpredictable emotional effect.

Maintenance also has an ethical texture. It requires humility because the caretaker must respond to needs that do not originate entirely in human desire. It requires attention because living systems change. It requires persistence because completion is temporary. It requires social negotiation because gardens join human and nonhuman dependencies. These demands make gardens powerful literary spaces for thinking about life under ecological and social pressure.

The failure of control should thus not be read as pessimism. It is the condition that makes relation possible. If the garden could be mastered completely, it would become an object. Because it cannot be mastered, it remains a world. The novels ask readers to value that world not because it is secure, but because it teaches a form of care adequate to insecurity.

HORTICULTURAL REFUSAL AND PROVISIONAL BELONGING: COMMONS, DIASPORA, SOVEREIGNTY, AND ENCHANTMENT

The gardens in this book do not defeat violent systems. They do something smaller and, for that reason, more believable. They refuse to let those systems define all value. A community garden refuses the reduction of shared ground to real estate. A family herb garden refuses the reduction of inheritance to commercial growth. A seed cache refuses colonial and industrial erasure. An enchanted backyard refuses the dismissal of feminine botanical knowledge as eccentric or trivial. These refusals are modest, but they matter because they create provisional forms of belonging within damaged worlds.

This chapter develops horticultural refusal as the ethical culmination of the book. Refusal here does not mean simple withdrawal. It means the practice of cultivating otherwise under conditions that remain hostile. Planting, saving seeds, making tea, cooking with flowers, maintaining a commons, and returning to a garden after loss all interrupt dominant logics without pretending to abolish them. Horticultural refusal is small-scale, repetitive, and material. It is a politics of sustained relation.

The chapter also argues that belonging in these novels is provisional. None of the gardens offers permanent security. Vista

Mar can be sold. Sonanum can be repurposed. Seeds can be lost. The Waverley garden can isolate those it sustains. Yet the absence of guarantee does not empty belonging of meaning. On the contrary, the novels suggest that belonging becomes most ethically serious when it is understood as something to be practiced rather than possessed.

Collective Refusal in *Garden Variety*

In *Garden Variety*, horticultural refusal appears through collective maintenance. Vista Mar's members refuse the idea that shared land has value only when it can be sold, developed, or privately enclosed. Their refusal is not abstract protest alone. It is enacted through soil amendment, plot care, meetings, teaching, and the daily work of keeping the garden usable. The commons becomes a refusal of disposability because it embodies accumulated labor that cannot be adequately represented by market value.

Lizzie's simple confession, "I don't know what I'd do without it," gives the commons its emotional economy (Wilhelmi, 2022, p. 8).

This refusal is ordinary and imperfect. The gardeners do not always agree; they are not purified by their cause. Yet their repeated return to shared ground constitutes a form of belonging that is neither private ownership nor sentimental unity. They belong by doing. The garden gathers people through task, proximity, conflict, and mutual dependence. Such belonging is fragile because it depends on continued participation and because the land's legal status can undermine the community's work. But fragility does not make it unreal.

Wilhelmi's novel therefore contributes to an environmental humanities understanding of the commons as practice. A commons is not simply land held in common; it is a relation maintained through norms, obligations, and shared labor. Vista Mar dramatizes both the promise and exhaustion of this relation. The garden offers relief from the outside world, but it also demands the administrative and emotional work that makes relief possible. Horticultural refusal here is the refusal to let care remain private. It insists that care can be organized collectively.

Diasporic Re-rooting in *Scent of a Garden*

In *Scent of a Garden*, refusal is organized through sensory return and diasporic re-rooting. Asha's movement back to Sonanum does not simply restore childhood. It allows her to refuse a life defined entirely by professional prestige, family expectation, and the fear of damaged capacity. The garden gives her another grammar for value: scent, taste, apprenticeship, inherited plants, and embodied making.

Patel makes return a sensory ethics of home. Asha concludes, “Home. That's what this place became for me” (Patel, 2023, p. 213).

The motif of seeds and plants carried across family locations is central to this refusal. Diasporic belonging is often imagined through memory, language, food, and family story. Patel adds cultivation to that list. Plants such as tulsi do not merely symbolize origin; they require care in new soil. They make continuity active rather than static. To re-root is not to preserve the past unchanged. It is to carry relation forward under altered conditions.

Asha's tea-making practice transforms this diasporic inheritance into a creative future. She does not simply choose tradition over modernity. She reorganizes modern making around a slower and more relational form of sensory knowledge. This matters because the novel refuses a false binary between career and care. Asha's garden work is not retreat from making. It is a different way of making, one that values attention over prestige and relation over performance.

In choosing tea, Asha describes a practice that "combines my love for Sonanum" with learned skills (Patel, 2023, p. 210). The business is not escape from inheritance; it is inheritance reworked.

Belonging remains provisional because Sonanum is not automatically safe. The family structure that preserves inheritance can also threaten it. Patel therefore avoids easy homecoming. Asha's garden-belonging must be negotiated against commercial plans, family authority, and her own changed body. The place closest to home is not a place outside conflict. It is a place where conflict can be met through care.

Seed Sovereignty and Refusal of Erasure

The Seed Keeper gives horticultural refusal its most explicitly political form. Seedkeeping refuses settler-colonial erasure by protecting relations that colonial systems have tried to sever: relations among land, food, memory, women, kinship, language, and futurity. This refusal is not metaphorical in any simple sense. Seeds are material life. Their preservation affects what can be planted, eaten, remembered, and taught.

The danger of seedkeeping is expressed with spare urgency: Marie's mother must "keep safe enough seeds for planting" (Wilson, 2021, p. 128). Survival depends on protecting futurity under conditions of hunger.

Whyte's account of Indigenous food sovereignty as a strategy of resurgence is crucial here (Whyte, 2016). Wilson's seeds do not represent a private hobby or generalized ecological virtue. They belong to a struggle over continuance under colonial conditions. To save seeds is to refuse the idea that Indigenous food relations can be erased by land theft, boarding-school violence, commodity agriculture, or historical forgetting. The scale may be small, but the implications are large because seeds carry collective futures.

Wilson's refusal is also gendered. Women often carry seed knowledge, family memory, and the labor of continuance in the novel. This labor is vulnerable to both colonial violence and domestic fracture. Yet the novel does not romanticize women as naturally closer to land. It shows knowledge as taught, practiced, endangered, and renewed. Seedkeeping is not essence; it is discipline and obligation.

Belonging in *The Seed Keeper* cannot be understood as simple rootedness. Settler colonialism has made rootedness violent and contested. Wilson's novel instead imagines belonging as continuance through relation. Seeds can be carried. Stories can be held. Land can teach even after rupture. Such belonging is provisional not because it is weak, but because it must survive active systems of erasure. Its persistence is refusal.

Enchanted Homeplace in *Garden Spells*

Garden Spells frames horticultural refusal through enchanted domesticity. The Waverley garden refuses the town's demand for ordinary respectability. Its apple tree and edible flowers preserve a family knowledge that is useful, unsettling, and difficult to explain. The Waverley women belong to Bascom and remain marked as strange within it. Their garden is thus both homeplace and boundary.

Allen's homeplace uses pleasure as well as defense. Rose geranium wine "signaled . . . a return to happiness" (Allen, 2007, p. 8), showing that botanical refusal can take the form of remembered joy.

In bell hooks's work, homeplace is theorized as a site of resistance, which helps illuminate this domestic politics (hooks, 1990). The Waverley home is not merely private shelter. It is a place where women maintain forms of knowledge and relation that the broader social world misreads. Yet Allen complicates homeplace by making it magical and ambivalent. The garden protects, but it can also isolate. It gives identity, but that identity can feel predetermined. Belonging must therefore be chosen again rather than simply inherited.

Claire’s cooking with garden plants is a form of refusal because it transforms domestic labor into botanical power. Food becomes a medium through which the garden enters social life and alters it. This does not overthrow the town’s norms in any grand way, but it unsettles them from within. The Waverley women do not need to become ordinary in order to belong. The garden allows a different kind of belonging, one rooted in acknowledged strangeness.

Claire’s domestic art is public power because her dishes make plant effects socially legible; in Bascom, solutions can arrive through the “flowers grown around that apple tree” (Allen, 2007, p. 8).

Allen’s magical mode is important because it makes refusal pleasurable without making it simple. The garden’s enchantment offers charm, but it also carries pressure. To inherit a magical garden is to inherit expectations, fears, and social stories. Horticultural refusal in *Garden Spells* is therefore the refusal to abandon the gift even when the gift complicates ordinary life.

The Limits of Refusal

A serious theory of horticultural refusal must also acknowledge limits. Gardens can be enclosed, sold, commodified, neglected, or destroyed. Care can become exploitative when it falls disproportionately on women, elders, Indigenous communities, or overburdened volunteers. The language of healing can obscure structural violence if it asks wounded people to repair themselves without transforming the conditions that wound them. The novels in this study are valuable because they do not entirely evade these risks.

Garden Variety shows that commons care can exhaust its participants and still fail before property power. *Scent of a Garden* shows that family care can preserve memory while reproducing authority. *The Seed Keeper* shows that seed continuance persists amid real losses that cannot be undone by symbolic hope. *Garden Spells* shows that magical inheritance can become isolation. These limits prevent horticultural refusal from becoming fantasy. They keep it grounded in the difficulty of damaged worlds.

The provisional nature of belonging is therefore not a weakness in the argument. It is the argument. Belonging that depends on care must be renewed, and renewal is never guaranteed. The novels do not ask readers to believe that gardens save the world. They ask readers to recognize that small cultivated spaces can keep other values alive when dominant systems would render those values invisible.

Comparative Synthesis

The four models of refusal can now be stated clearly. Wilhelmi offers collective refusal through the commons. Patel offers diasporic refusal through sensory re-rooting. Wilson offers sovereign refusal through seed continuance. Allen offers enchanted refusal through domestic botanical knowledge. These refusals differ in scale and political status, but all of them work by cultivating relation against abstraction.

The most important abstraction they resist is the idea that land and plants are passive resources. Vista Mar's plots are not empty land. Sonanum's herbs are not decorative landscaping. Wilson's seeds are not commodities or collectibles. The Waverley garden is not a quaint backyard. Each cultivated space holds relations that require recognition. Horticultural refusal begins when characters act as though those relations matter even when dominant systems do not.

This is why the garden is such a powerful figure for contemporary American fiction. It is small enough to be intimate and large enough to expose political structures. It joins food, body, property, memory, and more-than-human life. It allows fiction to think about care without sentimentalizing care, and to think about violence without making violence the only order of the world. The garden does not erase the grind. It interrupts it, slows it, exposes it, and sometimes makes another form of life briefly possible.

CONCLUSION: WHAT GARDENS KEEP

The gardens examined in this book keep many things: seeds, scents, recipes, memories, rules, wounds, family stories, communal habits, and futures that remain uncertain. They also keep questions open. What counts as care when care cannot guarantee repair? What forms of value survive when land is reduced to property? How do plants teach characters to inhabit time differently? What kinds of belonging become possible when home is fragile, contested, or strange? These questions are the book's real subject.

Garden Variety, *Scent of a Garden*, *The Seed Keeper*, and *Garden Spells* refuse the inherited pastoral habit of imagining gardens as innocent shelters outside history. Their gardens are restorative only because restoration is shown to be labor. Vista Mar's commons depends on rules, seasonal work, and collective endurance under the threat of dispossession. Sonanum's sensory richness is inseparable from family conflict, immigrant aspiration, and Asha's damaged relation to smell and professional identity. Wilson's seeds carry continuance through histories of settler colonialism, ecological harm, and intergenerational grief. Allen's enchanted garden preserves feminine botanical knowledge while complicating social belonging.

The Book's Argument

The central argument can now be gathered in one sentence: contemporary American garden fiction imagines cultivated spaces as precarious infrastructures of care where human and more-than-human lives negotiate property, memory, sovereignty, damage, and provisional belonging. This claim reorients garden reading in three ways. First, it moves the garden from scenery to infrastructure. Second, it moves care from sentiment to labor. Third, it moves belonging from possession to practice.

Wilson's stark sentence, "The garden" (Wilson, 2021, p. 1), gathers the book's argument in miniature: a cultivated place can become memory, kinship, archive, and summons at once.

The concept of slow care has been especially important. Slow care names the repeated and embodied work by which characters tend living worlds without final security. It appears in Vista Mar's maintenance routines, Sonanum's sensory retraining, Wilson's seedkeeping, and Allen's magical cooking. Slow care is not passive. It is the discipline of returning to what remains vulnerable. It does not deny violence; it prevents violence from becoming the only imaginable order.

The concept of plot as plot has also shown how the physical garden becomes the narrative engine. The garden plot organizes conflict over value and futurity. If the land can be sold, what happens to communal memory? If a family garden can be repurposed, what happens to sensory inheritance? If seeds can be lost, what happens to sovereignty and continuance? If an enchanted garden is inherited, what happens to women whose knowledge makes them strange? In these novels, story grows from ground.

Finally, horticultural refusal names the small but consequential acts through which the novels oppose dominant systems. Refusal appears as collective gardening, tea-making, seed-saving, and magical cooking. It is not spectacular revolution, and its small scale should not be mistaken for insignificance. The novels are interested in practices that keep alternative values alive: reciprocity, patience, memory, community, sensory attention, and more-than-human obligation.

Contribution to American Literary and Environmental Studies

This book contributes to American literary studies by placing garden-centered contemporary fiction within and beyond the pastoral tradition. The garden has often been read as a site of retreat, domesticity, or symbolic innocence. The novels studied here require a different reading. Their gardens are not anti-modern refuges but contact zones where modern pressures become visible. Redevelopment, professional exhaustion, diasporic inheritance, settler colonialism, industrial agriculture, domestic stigma, and ecological vulnerability all enter the garden. The contemporary literary garden is therefore not outside the machine; it is one of the places where the machine’s effects can be felt and resisted.

The book also contributes to ecocriticism by shifting attention toward cultivated, ordinary, and domestic environments. Environmental criticism has often privileged wilderness, disaster, and large-scale ecological crisis. Those concerns remain essential, but garden fiction shows that environmental relation is also lived through smaller practices: watering, smelling, tasting, saving, cooking, meeting, and remembering. These practices connect body and world in ways that are easy to overlook precisely because they are everyday.

For care theory, the book offers a literary account of more-than-human care as ambivalent infrastructure. Care in these novels is neither pure virtue nor private feeling. It can sustain, burden, exclude, or liberate depending on how it is organized. The garden makes this ambivalence visible because it requires care while also distributing care unevenly. A community garden needs volunteers. A family garden needs someone to preserve knowledge. Seeds need keepers. Magical plants need caretakers. The question is always who carries the burden and how that burden is valued.

For plant studies, the book demonstrates that botanical agency can be read across realist, diasporic, Indigenous, and magical-realist modes. Plants act through more than speech or anthropomorphic personality. They act through growth, scent, dormancy, taste, memory, toxicity, food, prophecy, and obligation. Fiction can make these modes of action perceptible without reducing plants to human-like subjects. The garden becomes a narrative form for distributed agency.

Final Reflection

The phrase against the grind should not be misunderstood as triumph. The gardens in this book do not defeat capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, exhaustion, or ecological harm. They do not provide permanent refuge. Their power is more modest and perhaps more honest. They create intervals of relation in which other values can be practiced. They make time for attention. They hold memory in living form. They teach that care can matter even when it cannot guarantee safety.

This is why garden fiction is significant now. In a period marked by ecological crisis, social acceleration, displacement, burnout, and the commodification of almost everything, the garden offers a literary form for thinking about survival without grandiosity. It asks what can be kept, what must be replanted, what should be refused, and what kinds of relation can still be cultivated. Its answers are not final. They are seasonal, provisional, and incomplete. But they are not nothing.

What gardens keep, finally, is the possibility of a world not wholly organized by the grind. They keep the memory that land is relation before it is asset. They keep the knowledge that food carries history. They keep the lesson that repair is often tactile and slow.

They keep the hope that belonging can be practiced even when it is not guaranteed. They keep, in fragile and living form, the ethical imagination of care.

APPENDIX

Garden Variety: Vista Mar is quantified as a rule-bound commons when Lizzie states, “Each plot is twelve by seventeen feet” (Wilhelmi, 2022, p. 2). Its vulnerability becomes legal when the land is described through a “legal right to repurpose the property” (Wilhelmi, 2022, p. 91).

Scent of a Garden: Sonanum is contested between gift and asset when Sanjay says, “This land is part of Goldfield,” while Asha names it “sixty years of labor” (Patel, 2023, p. 89).

The Seed Keeper: Wilson shifts land from property to relation through Ray’s teaching that survival depends on being “a good relative” to Mother Earth (Wilson, 2021, p. 6).

Garden Spells: Allen introduces inherited botanical belonging through the claim that “Their history was in the soil” (Allen, 2007, p. 2).

Slow Care and Vegetal Time

Garden Variety: seasonal care is ecological adjustment when Lizzie observes that “Drought was the new normal” (Wilhelmi, 2022, p. 30).

Scent of a Garden: Leela’s pedagogy is summarized by “Life happened in the waiting” (Patel, 2023, p. 8), and Asha’s art depends on the fact that “Scent had a memory component” (Patel, 2023, p. 2).

The Seed Keeper: vegetal pedagogy appears in the instruction to “ask each plant for permission” (Wilson, 2021, p. 24).

Garden Spells: Claire’s practice belongs to the “Waverley legacy of edible flowers” (Allen, 2007, p. 1), where food carries botanical effects.

Failure of Control and Botanical Agency

Garden Variety: the commons is exposed as precarious when Mary explains, “No, we’re on borrowed land” (Wilhelmi, 2022, p. 93).

Scent of a Garden: Sonanum resists reduction to development because Asha remembers it as “a place for her to play and learn and be” (Patel, 2023, p. 213).

The Seed Keeper: Wilson condenses colonial extraction in Rosalie’s realization that “what was valuable would be taken” (Wilson, 2021, p. 33), and the buried bone hoe marks a non-extractive ethic through the warning that “steel tools scar the earth” (Wilson, 2021, p. 128).

Garden Spells: botanical agency becomes explicit when “Ivy in the garden” warns that “something was trying to get in” (Allen, 2007, p. 23).

Horticultural Refusal and Belonging

Garden Variety: the commons becomes affective home when Lizzie says, “I don’t know what I’d do without it” (Wilhelmi, 2022, p. 8).

Scent of a Garden: Asha’s return is condensed in “Home. That’s what this place became for me” (Patel, 2023, p. 213), and her future tea practice “combines my love for Sonanum” with trained skill (Patel, 2023, p. 210).

The Seed Keeper: seed sovereignty is carried by the necessity to “keep safe enough seeds for planting” (Wilson, 2021, p. 128).

Garden Spells: refusal can also be pleasurable, as rose geranium wine “signaled . . . a return to happiness” (Allen, 2007, p. 8).

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