

A STUDY ON *THE CAGE - THE NOVEL OF SEPTEMBER 12*

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ABSTRACT: Turkish democracy has been interrupted by the military coups at times. It is a fact that such events inflict deep wounds in social-cultural life. It is unimaginable that this social reality is not reflected in the literature. Its reflections on literature are particularly dealt with in the novels and short stories in more detail. One of these works is the novel *The Cage – The Novel of September 12 (Kafes – 12 Eylül’ün Romanı)* written by Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu who is a victim of September 12, 1980 military coup. In this novel, Şehsuvaroğlu describes the restricting side of military coup concerning the freedom of individuals. In this study, we will try to examine various aspects of the work.

Keywords: Military Coup, Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu, Novel, The Cage

Kafes – 12 Eylül’ün Romanı Üzerine Bir İnceleme

ÖZ: Türk demokrasisi yer yer askerî darbelerle kesintiye uğramıştır. Bu gibi olayların sosyal-kültürel hayatta derin yaralar açtığı bir gerçektir. Bu toplumsal gerçekliğin edebiyata yansımaları düşünülemez. Edebiyata yansımaları bilhassa roman ve öykü türlerinde daha ayrıntısıyla ele alınmıştır. Bu eserlerden biri de 12 Eylül 1980 darbesinin mağduru olmuş olan Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu'nun kaleme aldığı *Kafes - 12 Eylül’ün Romanı* adlı romanıdır. Şehsuvaroğlu bu eserde bir askerî darbenin bireylerin özgürlüğünü kısıtlayan yönünü anlatmaktadır. Biz bu tahlil denemesinde eseri çeşitli yönleriyle incelemeye çalışacağız.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Askerî Darbe, Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu, Roman, Kafes

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Introduction

The works of art and literature cannot be thought differently from the social context of the place where it is produced, and the reflections of socio-cultural phenomena can be observed in these works. In his book named *Nesillerin Ruhü*, Kaplan emphasises this situation as “The life is the biggest source that feeds the art.” (Kaplan, 2006: 179). Coups both in the world and in Turkey also appear in literature as one of the tragic subjects and their reflections on literature are particularly dealt with in the novels and short stories in more detail. For instance, in Latin America, the writers such as Gabriel García Márquez, Miguel Angel Asturias and Roberto Bolaño have written novels concerning the coups, civil wars and government juntas and they are one of the most important sources of the “Latin American Boom” in literature. (Epik, 2016). In Turkey, the writers such as Adalet Ağaoğlu, Kaan Arslanoğlu, Metin Eroğlu, Ahmet Altan and Orhan Pamuk have written novels concerning the coups and their effects, especially September 12th military coup whose political tension was clearly felt in the works of art. Macit Balık has analysed the effects of the September 12th military coup in the Turkish novel in his article and concludes that “the important political event of the recent history is the main determinant of the transition from the communal, ideal, external reality and classical fiction to the individual, real, internal reality and postmodern fiction respectively.” (Balık, 2009: 2408). In this study, we will try to examine various aspects of Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu’s *The Cage – The Novel of September 12 (Kafes – 12 Eylül’ün Romanı)* where he describes the restricting side of military coup concerning the freedom of individuals.

About the Author and the Novel

Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu was born in Erzincan. His mother is Fethiye Hanım and his father is Halis Şehsuvaroğlu. After completing the primary and secondary education in Erzincan, Turhal, Istanbul and Ankara, he studied at Ankara University Faculty of Agriculture. He published the magazines of “Genç Arkadaş”, “Hasret”, “Nizam-ı Âlem” and “Divan Edebiyat” and wrote at the newspapers of “Millet” and “Hergün”. After the September 12 period, Şehsuvaroğlu worked at “Millet” as page manager and columnist, at weekly “Yeni Düşünce” as chief editor and lead writer. His daily articles are published at “Ayyıldız”, “Yeni Çağ”, “Son Çağrı”, “Gündüz”, “Yeni Hafta” and his other articles and poems are published at various newspapers and magazines. He used the pseudonyms

of Muhip Alp and Derviş Edip in his articles and poems. His major works are as follows: Novel; *Kafes – 12 Eylül’ün Romanı* 1982, 2024 2006. Poem; *Eylül Seneleri* 1985, *Münzevi Pürtelâş* 1986, *La Havle - Lütfi Divanı* 2012, *Şiir Şiir Muhsin Başkan* (with Yusuf Akgül) 2012. Literary and Artistic Works; *Avrupa Topluluğu Karşısında Türkiye* (sector analysis-doctorate) 1991, *Su Barışı – Türkiye Ortadoğu Su Politikaları* 1997, *Milli Sivil Stratejik Konsept* (Writers Union of Turkey Idea Award) 1999, *Toprak ve Su Kaynaklarını Muhafaza ve Geliştirme – Strateji, Yönetim, Eylem Planı* 2000, *Kürt Sorununa Türk Tarih Felsefesi Açısından Bir Yaklaşım – Kürtler Nasıl Türk Olur* 2008, *Türk Düşüncesinin Evrimi – Milliyetçilik ve Namık Kemal* 2008, *Ziya Gökalp ve Türkçülüğün Boyutları* 2008, *Türk Sosyalizmi ve Nurettin Topçu* 2011, *Ordusunu Arayan Kumandan – Necip Fazıl ve Büyük Doğu’su* 2012, *Abdurrahim Karakoç – Şairin Haberci Olarak Portresi* 2013. Biography; *Nurettin Topçu* 2003, *Necip Fazıl* 2004, *Ziya Gökalp* 2004, *Mehmet Akif* 2005, *Namık Kemal* 2005. Tales; *Dedemden Dinlediklerim* 2011 and *Ninemden Dinlediklerim* 2011.

The Cage – The Novel of September 12¹:

After September 12, 1980 military coup, Şehsuvaroğlu was kept in detention for 17 months in Mamak Prison. Following the acquittal, he issued the newspaper “Millet” and the literature magazine “Doğuş”, founded the publishing house “Genç Sanat Yayınevi” and in there he published the *The Cage - The Novel of September 12* which is dedicated to the “painful mothers” and several books as well. The first edition of *The Cage - The Novel of September 12* was held in 1982² and it offers the opportunity to read the September 12, 1980 military coup from a different perspective of nationalistic viewpoint to the Turkish reader who is accustomed to reading it from the viewpoint of leftists. The destruction of the military coup especially on the young people can be considered to be the subject of the novel, because it has affected the future of hundred thousand of young people and destroyed their ideals. The novel tells the story of a young man who moves away from the values he fights for, has to become just like everyone else for the sake of respecting everyone else and alienates to himself and his environment.

In an interview done with him, Şehsuvaroğlu defines the novel as “... a type of novel which has a different psychological

¹ In this study the book used is Şehsuvaroğlu, Lütfü. (2015). *Kafes 12 Eylül’ün Romanı*. Ankara: Elips Kitap 2. Edition.

² In some sources it is written that the first edition of the book is in 1983.

depth apart from the depiction and plot in the first novels of that period (New Novel Movement developing in Italy)” (quoted by Toygar 2015). In his article published in the Tercüman newspaper Ahmet Kabaklı qualifies it as the first novel in the type of “New Novel” in Turkey (quoted by Çolak 2015). Although the starting point of the movie named as “Kafes” (The Cage) shot in 2015 is this novel, the scenario is completely different. Şehsuvaroğlu explained it in an interview as follows: (Şehsuvaroğlu, 2015).

The Cage’ is in the type of ‘New Novel’. Therefore, it contains interesting moods and scenes for the script. The first starting point is of course the novel; however, the script of the movie is completely new. We started with the mystery of the murder of Dursun Önkuzu. Actually, it is a casuistry.

As the meanings and structures of the literary works, which are all fiction, are organized for artistic reasons (Aktaş, 2015: 26), in this study, ultimate attention is shown in order not to intermingle official history with historical people and events described in the fictional world.

1. Structure

The subject matter of *The Cage – The Novel of September 12*³ is briefly as follows: Before September 12, 1980 military coup Muhip and Derviş Edip are two close friends fighting for the same ideal and studying at the Faculty of Agriculture. Long before September 12, Muhip disappears into the blue and takes a black seat. After the coup he stays in the cage for 15 days and 1.5 years in prison respectively. In the belief that Muhip is the only person to understand him, Derviş Edip desires to find his friend, talk to him and novelise what he has experienced. However, he is no longer the former friend Muhip. Old and alienated. Although Muhip is not eager to tell what he has experienced, he agrees to talk and it is recorded, as he wants future generations know what has happened in this painful period. After recording Muhip takes his own way and Derviş Edip starts working on the novelisation.

1.1. Case (Plot), Narrator and Perspective

The plot of *The Cage – The Novel of September 12* is different from the description of consecutive events as a chain of events in a chronological order. In order to reveal the novel fiction exactly, it is necessary to deal with outer story (frame story) and inner story (main

³ The novel based on this study is Şehsuvaroğlu, Lütfü. (2015). *Kafes 12 Eylül’ün Romanı*. Ankara: Elips Kitap 2. Edition, p.113. the page number of the quotations belong to this edition.

story) separately. The novel has been constructed in accordance with the outer-inner story technique. When we analyse the plot in accordance with the segments made by the author, it is clear that he has separated the sections by giving certain names instead of giving number. We can show this partitioning with a table as follows:

Outer Story	
I. Part	II. Part
1. and 2. Chapters	17. Chapter
Inner Story	
3. - 16. Chapters	

a. Outer Story: Although the author does not make such a formal distinction, after reading the novel the reader recognises that the first and last parts form the outer story of the novel. The outer story is depicted by hero narrator from his perspective (1st Party narrator, I). In the first part, hero narrator gives hints about the time, place and certain people in the novel which will be described with all the details later and we will examine in detail below. Hero narrator of the outer story Edip Derviş asks his friend Muhip to tell about his experiences. Edip Derviş requests Muhip, who replies his expectation with a short but brief text under the title of “What fits into a sigh of relief”, to turn this text into a novel, but when this request is not accepted, he tells him that he wants to record what has been spoken and also to present those records to the readers. His feelings are expressed as follows:

I got the tape, I went home. I tried to transcribe the tape without changing much just removing the parts that I had inferred. I took out some parts to publish later on. The parts that I have published are just these. I hope that in the future he will write his own novel. For the moment, I just want to publish this speech in order not to be wasted. (p.29-30).

The part till now is actually the story of how the novel has emerged and been written. This is also one of the manners setting out the post-modern novel feature.

In the outer story, the author gives clues about the novel referring to the actual time but we cannot find detailed information about the narrator or narrators. Narrators changes throughout the novel. Hero narrator who speaks out in the introductory part and in the other parts describes the painful aftermath of the September 12, 1980 military coup through his monologues as well as the narration

of Muhip's experiences. The tragedy of a massacred generation is depicted by means of explaining the treatment and torture that the victims of September 12 have suffered in prison and details of life in "the cage". In the last part, concluding his speech, Muhip addresses to the hero narrator as Derviş Edip and expresses that he wants the literary work of this massacred generation written, and also, he wants to be understood. Hero narrator depicts this as follows:

This tiny work stands very simple in the chain of events that have been experienced. The fact is that if we attempted to write the book of our youth, our generation, no doubt that it would be further and different. But we have this big. (p.108).

The novel that starts when the hero narrator remembers and wants to see his friend Muhip returns to the current time when Muhip goes back and ends with the Derviş Edip's desire for freedom.

b. Inner Story:

In the first and second chapters which constitute the outer story, the author tells his desire to see Muhip, whom he hadn't seen for a long time and his desire to learn what he had gone through, by combining his own tragedy. In the 17th chapter which forms the end of the outer story, by telling about the agony of leaving Muhip, the author expresses his feelings about starting to write down what he has gone through and then turning them into a novel in order to pass these experiences to the next generations. In the novel in which Muhip, who is the real hero of the novel, is a narrator in addition to the hero narrator himself, the characters aren't too many. It is obvious that there are many chains of events which occur in parallel, that there is no chronological order between past and today and that there are many monologues. The most important point with respect to the case is that there is nearly no action and that it is rather set on dialogues of two people. By turning the hero into a narrator, the author tells what he wants to say and in that way, he tries to tell the experiences on the first hand, that is, those who experienced events on the first place tell everything, making the message of the novel highly effective. Hero narrators are set in the novel as "those who have seen and gone through everything fictional" (Aktaş, 2015: 79).

The author, who tells about today and tells about where, how and why he will write the novel in the outer story, turns back to the past, and makes the protagonist Muhip narrator. They have just met

after a period of 1.5 years. He lost touch with his friend whom they had lived in each other's pocket before the coup of September 12. When they met after 1.5 years, Muhip was tired and old. During the period which he calls "inter section", he was kept in detention and prison and tortured, after that, he feels "stranger" to the life he has to lead and to those who are around. He expresses this by saying, "Not to be understood is even more difficult than death itself" (p. 29). The hero narrator wants to talk about the prison, tries to understand how Muhip feels and what he thinks and, in that way, they play a kind of intellectual game. In this game, some words associate as follows:

Words	Associations for Muhip
Here (author's house, magazine)	Home for hearts
Beautiful	The look of a baby
Ankara	The air in my lungs
Child	Flower
Birds	Freedom
Freedom	Glass cup and tea
Stars	The wink of the beloved
Night	Death

Some kind of feeling which he couldn't make out made him come back to Ankara while he was in İstanbul with his mother. At the night when the police came to search for the house, he had recited Ya-sin Surah and the following verses are stated respectively:

*But all without exemption, will be brought before Us.
(Yâ-Sîn Surah, 32);*

*A token into them is night. We strip it of the day and lo!
They are in the darkness. (Yâ-Sîn Surah, 37);*

When it is said unto them: Beware of that which is before you and that which is behind you, that haply ye may find mercy. (Yâ-Sîn Surah, 45);

They await but one Shout, which will surprise them while they are disputing. (Yâ-Sîn Surah, 49).

Although Muhip knew that he would be arrested when he came to Ankara, he finds it difficult to explain why it is on the night he recited Ya-sin Surah. He wants to be judged by the rules of

Devine Justice, however, he knows it is impossible, anyway he finds peace in trusting his God. He expresses this by saying, “I and my cage. I and my chest. I and my Lord. Peace...” (p.38). After he thinks about those who came to arrest him and talks about what he thinks about them in monologues, he wishes to be able to believe that he is one hundred percent right, that he could ignore the possibility of the fact that other points of views are true and that he could be one of those who can behave in that way. As he gets farther from the city, he tries to settle the world and hereafter, thinks about his mother and how much she is worried and becomes pessimistic. At that moment, he recites the verse which will also be in his mothers prays and finds peace to some degree.

But His command, when He intendeth a thing, is only that He saith unto it: Be! And it is. (Yâ-Sîn Surah, 82).

When he comes to a place which he calls “a high building”, Muhip, who remembers some toilets on some floors and finds the locks and files familiar, remembers his school number (137) and high school number (2000) and university number respectively until the number signifying his name is found. The last number he remembers is this number and it is something more than 6000 and after that all his life will be only a number given in the prison. Locked doors, his own foot falls, sounds of door locks locking and unlocking are told in a real and irritating manner.

Key is inserted to lock. It turns. Click. Another click. A long creakily squeaking. Door, an iron door, as if it cried every time it is opened. Foot falls again. My own foot falls. My foot falls that are stranger to me... My foot falls sounds as unfamiliar as the sound of doors and locks. Then again, sound of door, again sound of lock. Click. Click. ... Doors locked behind me, walls coming towards me... (p. 41).

The disgust Muhip feels is expressed simply but effectively by telling, in details, the locked doors, observation room, unsanitary conditions, walls coming towards him slogans on the walls and overcrowded rooms.

Slogans such as names of streets and those will be killed and inhumed where. ... They write whatever they think. There is no one who interferes with them or bans it. ... I went into the toilet. Walls are all in dirt. Slogans are even more complicated here. They are written one over another. I was about to vomit. (p. 47- 48).

What was even more disgusting than dirt is the anarchists who had leek moustache because they thought that they could frighten him with those “faces with sulky masks”. In fact, one by one they were all afraid and by the way they are, they do nothing but tire Muhip’s eyes.

When they were put in the observation room, he felt safer in a way and he realized that the slogans on the walls were more freely written than outside and he focused on a sentence:

Torturers are just officers. Be patient. Rather than suffering from pangs of conscience all your life, resist for a few days. (p. 46).

By repeating the concept of “conscience” throughout the novel, it is pointed out that whatever they did was right and didn’t bother their conscience, that they fought for their ideal and that they should bear the consequences of their rightful cause.

In all those difficulties, he wants to perform ablution and pray and then he finds peace. He recites the poem “Zindan” (The Dungeon)⁴ by The Master (Üstad) in a low voice. After that, the torture he underwent is told in details, but the severity of it is no longer important because he has already gone through first humiliation. Muhip, telling that torturers are also rendering their jobs repeatedly, stresses psychological aspect of torture more than physical aspect:

Beating isn’t important for me. I also saw the man’s face who beat me. He had purity of an Anatolian young man. It seems to me that he wasn’t aware of anything. He was like a machine. They had formed him into that way. What could he do? And so, after you get the first slap, others have no importance. After you are humiliated once and fall into that level, numbers bear no importance. One, three, five, five thousand, five hundred thousand... What matters? (p.50).

He is hopeful that he is one of that generation who will save the country and the world, who feels the authority and responsibility that will open the gates of a new era and who stays powerful by believing that. Muhip, who read nearly every area of life like Islam,

⁴ It is known to the public that the person mentioned as “Üstat” (The Master) is Necip Fazıl Kısakürek valued by nationalist and religious circles and “Zindan” (The Dungeon) is his poem “Zindandan Mehmet’e Mektup” (A Letter to Mehmet from the Dungeon).

Islamic history, eastern ideology, Greek philosophy and western ideology before he was arrested, and who is especially interested in freedom, particularly stresses that Turkey has some special conditions like being Turk and Muslim and that it is necessary to accept it after he speaks to a sympathizer of TKP (Turkey Communist Party).

They do not have the permission to have visitors. When his eyes catch a little girl's eyes, the inner voice of Muhip addresses as "My little one" and says that they have been in good condition and mentions about goodness, love and sacrifice. In fact, he does not want to be seen in this condition but tells what he feels, and wants her to witness. In conversation with the guardian, Muhip sympathizes with him, cannot answer his questions but find the answers to these questions through inner conversations. He is willing to accept the things we would endure, consider them only as a mean of oppression. In addition, while being tortured in the cage standing up or looking somewhere is not allowed but an insect attracts his attention. The insect is constantly commuting and he wants to be in its shoes, talks to it through the inner voice, and wants it to witness, as it would remain the only one.

Following the torture in the cage for 15 days and imprisonment for 1.5 years, he is in Bahçelievler now. Even though he did not use to drink, just to spite something he orders a "Coca Cola". He wants to walk like Sait Faik. Salaat, he performed even in the cage, is the only thing to stand on. He should go to the Friday prayers and should see something the congregation have not seen. He goes to the Faculty, it is exactly the time to be in love, he hopes to see the image of the girl he loves but it has been a year after graduation. He remembers the garden and other details in there, stops by the department and looks at the class. While having the tea ordered by the servant they talk about the ones who go and come. He is free now, can live as he wish but boredom which he describes "contemporary problems" or "intellectual disease" prevails. Gazing on a flower, he remembers the girl he loves and gives thanks to the God as he did not forget to love and feels cling to life.

There are many reasons for the separation of good and evil after many years, but "having a clean conscience" repeated throughout the novel is the only happiness of him. The police officer's question, "Does not it bother your conscience?", the questioning of it by "the sovereign" is expressed ironically, because even the most inno-

cents has already massacred under the name of supreme values, institutions or purposes. While walking on the road slowly and gently he thinks that there is a gush of life from every window that may be the subject matter of a novel. These topics may include love, marriage, sexuality and infidelity, but there should be a novel describing his life. Nevertheless, he expresses that there is a purpose for everything in his life, his every action is on the way of God and his life is meaningful with them. Muhip gets his melodrama out and states that it's all about traces of September and his friend Derviş Edip will continue for the future. His last words summarizing the philosophy of his ideal is as follows:

It is possible to express our emotions fit into a sigh and experiences through lots of books. It is not possible to forget any memories experienced. Sooner or later someone will write down the work of our generation. I am waiting. Save that dear readers or listeners or just you Derviş Edip, my friend, we have been, we have lived. We can be guilty or innocent in the eye of either God or people or law; however, regardless of any interest, we have fought for the sake of a goal with great difficulty whether right or wrong; we loved, we hate; we lived, we died. Nobody can deny the feelings winging us and our purity. In short, to deny us, to ignore us is impossible. It is not known how the future generations would remember us, but the thing I know is that we put our stamp on history and there are people who love us. As long as there is a source of love in our hearts, they will find it, albeit late ... (p. 108)

The hero narrator is inhumed into the night, does not know when the sun will rise again and Muhip will come back. He likens the departure of Muhip to his journeys from Çınaraltı to Beyoğlu. However, Muhsin has gone like a bird whose cage opened and will never come back again. The novelist will write the novel, the subject is specific and the plot is established.

There is almost no action in this work. No direct confrontation between those who put in the cage and the ones who are put in the cage attracts attention, handled implicitly. It may be associated with the oppressions and prohibitions of the military government prevailing at the date of publication of this novel.

1.2. Time

In the novel *The Cage - The Novel of September 12*, two different kinds of time have been used. In the parts of outer story, actual

time has been used and in the parts of inner story, past time has been used.

The time in which the novel is started to be written is the period of time in which Muhip went. “The Years of September” (Eylül Seneleri), which is used by the author repeatedly throughout the story, is the period of time when the military coup of September 12, 1980 took place. The period of time called “inter section” is the time of 1.5 years after the military coup. As a result, the time in which the outer story is told is a period of time in 1982 and the time in which inner story is told is the period of time which starts at the end of 1980 and lasts 1.5 years.

In addition, the author has a poetry book whose name is *Eylül Seneleri (The Years of September)* and which was published in 1986 by “Genç Sanat Yayınları”, and the first poem of the book is also the poem⁵ which he wrote in 1982 with the same title.

At this point, a chronological order has not been applied in the novel, and by mentioning both the time when the novel is written and the time during and before 1980, the time perspective has been broadened and enriched.

1.3. Place

The main place where the case is set is Ankara, the capital of Turkey. Some specially chosen smaller places in Ankara where the events take place are also told elaborately. Some of the most important ones of these places are as follows:

The streets of the capital are not the same anymore and has changed profoundly. Both Dervish Edip, who is the hero narrator, and Muhip sometimes find themselves in the streets and carry out some observations. Dervis Edip's house is the house where he feels compelled to go in the evening after dark. It is in danger of execution. Derviş Edip hosts Muhip and records his speech and they have tea in there.

⁵ **EYLÜL SENELERİ** Bir uzak iklimdir yaşanan / Güneş yerine ufukta görünen / Bir kan okyanusudur şimdi // Bu nedir gözlerimin önüne dolan / Kaldırın perdeleri artık aradan / Ne zaman bitecek hasretliğim // Yolunu şaşırır mı hiç rehber / Nerede dağ - bayır gezdirdiklerim / Dokuzyüzelliyedili çocuklar, ya onlar / Onlar yaşamadılar, yoktular / Ne yârlerini buldular, ne yerlerini / Bir beton kafeste bin çocuk unutuldu // ... bin sevda yüklüydü gönlüm / bir kan okyanusudur şimdi...

Istanbul is the city where Muhip's family lives. The names of the districts of Çınaraltı and Beyoğlu are mentioned. Derviş Edip likens the departure of Muhip to his journeys from Çınaraltı to Beyoğlu. Çınaraltı, a district in the Anatolian side of İstanbul symbolizes conservatism, Beyoğlu, a district in the European side of İstanbul symbolizes the European style of life. Departure of Muhip stands for his run away from the cage that restricts him even if he has gained his freedom. Şehsuvaroğlu's poem "Çınaraltından Beyoğluna"⁶ that he dedicated to "Yusuf" and "Coşkun" in his poetry book *Eylül Seneleri (The Years of September)* can also be dealt with in this framework.

Prison is described as a place where Muhip prisoned for 1.5 years and exposed to various types of torture. There the walls walk all over him.

Cage is a kind of torture mechanism in which standing up and even turning head is prohibited. Muhip was kept there for 15 days. We encounter this in the novel as follows:

How terrible was the ache in my feet. As if a new bone derived at some point in my waist. If I had leaned my back, had leaned my back against something, I would have felt in heaven. But it was forbidden. My eyes had to look straight ahead and stick to my position. Or else I was punished. It was not permitted even to stand up and wait up for. Looking left and right was strictly prohibited. Sometimes if the cage got crowded, then I would slide to the edge a little and lean my left shoulder against one of the bars and I would feel very comfortable. (p.65).

⁶ **ÇINARALTI'NDAN BEYOĞLU'NA** Hele gün karaasın ay çıksın da gör kaçacağım / Çınaraltı'ndan Beyoğlu'na ben yine bu akşam / Bir ikinci meclisinin ardından // Bu şehirde bu çağda şüphe bile şüphededir / Apak fikirler karanlık hissiyata gebedir / Gör ki insanları nasıl da sürüklenmededir / Eski sokaklardan Beyoğlu'na her akşam // Terleme şehvetten de olur tende gayretten de / Çınaraltı'nın sırrı biter bir an gelir de / Silinir arkadaş yüzleri // Fahişe sesler duyulur Beyoğlu'ndan / ve bir el şeytanın eli tutar götürür nefsi / Çınaraltı'ndan Beyoğlu'na her akşam // Bir namazın ardından Beyoğlu / Beyoğlu'ndan bir namaza kaçmak yeniden / Yosmaların gözleri seccademde ilmikler / Deodorant ve gül suyu karışımı kokular / Ve bir eski zaman güzeline şiir okumak / Gözyaşlarından bir cadı küresi yontmak / Meçhulü karıştırmak sonra / Saydam ve kaygan / Denizanasına benzer ellerimizle

Observation room is a small room caked with dirt and there are various slogans on the walls. Faculty is the Faculty of Agriculture that they are studying.

When the novel as a whole and the given name are considered, it can be concluded that it is the novel of places like “cage” and “prison” and the tragedy endured by people who have lived in these places. From this point of view, we can say that *Cage* is the novel of people who have been convicted to a place. So there are two main factors highlighted in this work: space and human. Given the word “cage” as a metaphor, it is highlighted that a tool used for wild animals as shelter is also used for people. This issue is the implicit criticism of the period and coup plotters.

1.4. People

The author keeps both the time and place and people limited, because he wants to explain all aspects of the collapse occurred after September 12, 1980 military coup, the actions taken to banalize and depoliticize the young who have no interest and take actions in accordance with their goals and whose only ideal is to protect the homeland. The heroes are the flat characters that reflect all the characteristics of the community they belong. Regardless of their importance among the heroes we will try to introduce them considering the chronological order of the case:

Derviş Edip is the narrative hero. He is one of the common people who run towards the uneasiness of a resolved society and were enserfed. His house will be executed and his bookstore will be seized. But he does not mind. He does not apply for a job for fear of being rejected. As he was a prisoner and is unemployed now, they do not let him marry to the girl he loves, his mother gets him married to someone else, but he is afraid to love and marry. He feels old.

Derviş Edip's wife is a woman who he marries to because of his mother's insistence. The author calls her as “August Rose”. It is so true to her name.

Young man is a man that hero narrator turns back to his youth suddenly and tells about his suffering. The young man is tired of the monotony, however neither can he escape from this life nor accept. The young man is actually the hero narrator, but current time and the young man are depicted interchangeably by means of applying the method of flashback. Both are unhappy. They have not been happy for two years.

Muhip is the only person to understand the author, they had lived in each other's pocket. However, Derviş Edip loses the track of Muhip before September 12, 1980. The author wants to learn all details of what Muhip has experienced, yet at the beginning Muhip is not in favour of telling his story. He feels himself like Albert Camus's "the stranger" waiting beside the corpse of his mother. Muhip is a constant devoted Muslim who tries to settle the world and hereafter. He reads on just every subject, is fond of liberty and can consider the events from different perspectives. He thinks that human soul-searching suffering is necessary and expresses that the thing that liberate people is rebellion. He utters that every single action he takes has an aim and it is for the sake of God, being estranged from the values he fights for makes him unhappy. The head has been at sixes and sevens.

Mehmet is one of "our" adolescents and called to make fun. The torturers are the ordinary officers trying to do their job. The guard is an ignorant officer to whom he speaks from time to time. He cannot comprehend the fight of Muhip, actually as seen below Muhip does not intend to be understood.

I loved him. He was ignorant, he unaware of the situation but this peasant boy, this helpless boy was worthy of being loved. He was sinless. Hope, continues to do so. I did nothing to entice him, I said nothing to him. ... I did not explain I should have been brought here, and the contradiction I endure. Above all, I never bring up the subject of fight. (p. 62).

Others are the Marxists. They are amazed. Among them, there is nobody who is smart, to converse with. They are criticized as they do not know even their struggle. It is expressed in the novel as follows:

...I bemoan that I have not encountered a proper Marxist. There was no one to talk to. (p. 22).

... In fact, we did not hold a grudge against the others, but they do not understand, they do not want to understand or they realize, but behave so in order to avoid such premiums. ... I am amazed, to find an intelligent Marxist I analyse their faces and follow their behaviours in futile. I had the chance to talk to a few of them but I'm not satisfied. I determined that they are not capable enough. Actually, the capacity of the young of this age is open to discussion... I perceived that despite of having too much experience "they" are ignorant even in their matter. (p. 83-84).

2. Content

It is not a coincidence that the name of the novel is *The Cage* – *The Novel of September 12*. The cage is a small container where it is forbidden to stand up, move and look to the right and the left sides, and in the abstract sense, it is also associated with the body of human where the spirit is imprisoned. In this context, the world where we live is likened to a cage and our hero now wishes to take wings and fly from this cage. This situation is depicted through the epigram on the very first page of the novel.

We appreciate the importance of health when we are sick. And the importance of freedom when it is gone. But freedom is a matter changing every moment, remaining always new. The world is a cage for the soul. The life between birth and death is our imprisonment. What freedoms remain even in this cage we cannot give up? (p. 7).

The poem “Kafes” (The Cage)⁷ penned in 1983 and located in the poetry book of *Eylül Seneleri* by Şehsuvaroğlu is depicted as a place where the torture is suffered during the conviction period called as “intersection”.

Almost all of the people in the novel have stomachache and it can be considered as “leitmotif”. Considering that stomachache emerges especially in times of stress, it impossible to think those who has suffered from the harsh conditions of the period separate from stomachache. It is expressed in the novel as follows:

Children's shoulders were always small. They had small hands. They had stomach-ache. It may result from what they eat. But predominately from temper and sorrow. How my stomach ached. Neither Dank nor Siligel medicated anymore. Gut was okay but it was hard to find. Children had stomach-

⁷ **KAFES** Bir “arakesit” mazgalından dinledim şehri / Geceyi yırtan tek-mil tek-mil sesler ardından / / Bu parkın çiçekleri yoktu orda, kızlar yoktu / Böyle güzel olacağımı ne bilirdim bebeğin / / “Katlanmasını bile-ne acılar mühim değil”miş / Chateaubriand için bu böyle, yaşasın Pa-ris / / Acılarla mı kuracağız beklenen çağı / Bir çan sesi çınılıyor her çağ deyişinizde / / Küskün olduğumu mu sanıyorlar onlar / Ne onulmaz ka-feslere daha dayanır yüreğim / / Ben kendime kızıyorum, hazırlıksızlı-ğıma / Hazır olduğumda çağıracağım ve gelecekler / / Gelecekler ve diyecekler ki, tamam / Ölümü kuşanacağız darağaçlarında

ache. I was just saying that the person without stomach-ache is not a person today. (p. 9).

Another leitmotif repeated throughout the novel is “conscience”. When the repetitive function of the consciences is taken into consideration, our heroes have not taken even the slightest action that will prick their consciences.

The facts that Lütfü Şehsuvaroğlu uses the pseudonyms of Muhip Alp and Derviş Edip in his works, naming the characters in this novel is not arbitrary. They are Muhip, (means lover and friend) and Derviş Edip, same as the pseudonyms of the author. As our hero narrator, he is one of the victims of September 12, 1980 military coup is taken into consideration, it can be said that Derviş Edip is actually Şehsuvaroğlu. In addition, Edip Derviş has a bookstore just as the author of the novel Şehsuvaroğlu.

In the novel, the fact that the character “Muhip” stayed in prison for 1.5 years after he was tortured in cage for 15 days reminds us of Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, the former chairman of the Grey Wolves and the Founder of the Grand Unity Party, who stayed in prison for totally 7.5 years, 5.5 years of which was in a cell. Considering that the novel was published in 1982 and that Yazıcıoğlu was in prison at that time, the agony and sorrow that the author experiences in the absence of Yazıcıoğlu and the desire to find him and come together with him are expressed in the novel.

At that time Turkey was still under the dominance of military junta and should get rid of this cage; the victims of this period are at a psychological warfare and they are not fully independent no matter they are in prison or outside the prison. These young people who are punished for the sake of their ideals are tried to be depoliticized and banalized. The people who are forced to discard the values they believe and exposed to torture get alienated to both themselves and their surroundings.

The subject matter of the novel can briefly be summarized as the arrests at the period after September 12 and the destruction of individuals exposed to torture in prisons. The important feature of the work in terms of content is that it analyses the period of September 12, 1980 military coup from the perspective of nationalist and conservative people. It is known to the Turkish public that in many works depicting this period, the subject matter is expressed from the viewpoint of leftists and the nationalists are often portrayed as ignorant, rude and selfish people. However, except a few such as *The*

Cage – The Novel of September 12 the number of works depicting the period from the viewpoint of nationalist authors is too few if not. This applies not only to the novel but also cinema and theatre. The only movie give voice to nationalists and their world during the period of September 12, 1980 military coup is “Kafes” (The Cage) adapted from *The Cage – The Novel of September 12*.

The character portrayed in *The Cage – The Novel of September 12* has an extremely broad knowledge and a culture background and is a devout Turkish young. The protagonist who fought for his ideals and beliefs regardless of any interest has resorted to God even in the times of the heaviest torture and this faith has made him strong. “Beloved” or “beloved woman” stressed on this historic background strengthens the constantly ignored humane side of the nationalist young. The main message of the novel is to ensure future generations to know and remember the people who fight for the sake of their ideals regardless of any interest.

3. Style and Stylistics

Every single sentence used in the novel is selected carefully. Short descriptions made with short sentences dominate the work. This attitude has paved the way for the emergence of a narrow-volume work. Inverted sentences are also seen frequently. The frequent use of sentences that consist of a single word or verb increases the emphasis. In addition, monologues, dialogues also constitute a large part of the work.

I shut up. I wanted to talk a little later. I stopped I mumbled. (p. 39).

Do not worry... Go ... Go ... (p. 6).

The use of epigrams quoted from the Holy Koran to famous writers and poets at the beginning of each chapter draws the attention. These epigrams also represent the essence of that section.

Everyone has a world, there is a state of all worlds. / The universe has affairs that are not alike. (p. 18).

And guard yourself against a chastisement which cannot fall exclusively on those of you who are wrong-doers, ... From the Surah Al- Anfâl. (p. 55).

I do not know what to do with this hesitant heart; neither has the strength for ultimate union, nor patience to break up. Nev’î. (p. 76).

Using the stream of consciousness (Çetin, 2004: 276) style in the novel in terms of telling the inner world of a military coup's victims is ultimately proper. This shows the compliance of the novel concerning the form and essence.

The author changes the narrators throughout the novel, the narrator changes in every part even in the chapters that constitutes the same part, and the heroes tell the moods and ideas of themselves. It provides fluency and keeps the novel from stability, requires a careful reading.

Conclusion

The Cage - The Novel of September 12 offers the opportunity to read the September 12, 1980 military coup from a different perspective of nationalistic viewpoint to Turkish readers who are accustomed to reading it from the leftist viewpoint. The destruction of the military coup especially on the young people of that period is so huge that they have to become just like everyone else for the sake of respecting everyone else and have been alienated to themselves and their environment. In that, depolitisation started to prevail among society. The novel we have analysed tells the story of hundreds of thousands of young people whose ideals and future were destroyed and it embodies their sufferings in the person of Muhip.

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