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Feyyaz Kayacan's Art of War: Multiculturalism and Surrealism in *The Shelter Stories*

Feyyaz Kayacan'ın Savaş Sanatı: Sığınak Hikâyeleri'nde Çokkültürlülük ve Sürrealizm

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Abstract

Feyyaz Kayacan, one of the pioneering figures of the Turkish short story, pursued a multicultural life and published his works in French, English, and Turkish. His literary journeys across languages and cultures not only enabled him to get in touch with the literary and artistic movements of his time but also allowed him to take an active part in the surrealist groups in London. After surveying Kayacan's international identity and his quest for belonging both in his actual life and in his short fiction, this article concentrates on *The Shelter Stories* (*Sığınak Hikâyeleri,* 1962), a collection of the short stories that portray the Londoners during the Second World War. It traces the possible sources that might have incited Kayacan's imagination in writing such idiosyncratic short stories full of linguistic tricks and figures of speech. Drawing attention to the similarity between Kayacan's imagination and the visual representations of the wartime painters Paul Nash and Henry Moore, the article underlines that Kayacan's art of war is geared to transform dark feelings into a cheerful spirit.

Keywords: Feyyaz Kayacan, multiculturalism, Surrealism, *The Shelter Stories*

Öz

Türk edebiyatında öykü türünün biçimlenmesine önemli katkılarda bulunan Feyyaz Kayacan, çokkültürlü bir yaşam sürmüş, yapıtlarını Fransızca, İngilizce ve Türkçe kaleme almıştır. Diller ve kültürler arası yolculuğu sayesinde yaşadığı dönemin edebiyat ve sanat akımlarını takip etmekle kalmamış, Londra'daki sürrealist gruplar içinde aktif bir rol de üstlenmiştir. Bu makalede Kayacan'ın söz konusu uluslararası kimliği ve hem yaşamında hem de kurmaca metinlerinde etkisini hissettiren aidiyet arayışı anahatlarıyla ortaya konduktan sonra, 1962'de kitaplaştırılan Sığınak Hikâyeleri'ne odaklanılıyor. Makale, Kayacan'ın dilsel oyunlar ve söz sanatlarıyla dolu ayrıksı öyküler yazmasını sağlayan hayal gücüne ilham veren olası kaynakların izini sürerken yazarın imgelemiyle savaş ressamları Paul Nash ve Henry Moore'un görsel temsilleri arasındaki kimi benzerliklere dikkat çekiyor. Bu tartışma sırasında, Kayacan'ın savaş sanatının karanlık duyguları neşeli bir ruh hâline dönüştürmeye yöneldiğinin altı çiziliyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Feyyaz Kayacan, çokkültürlülük, Sürrealizm, Sığınak Hikâyeleri*

Introduction

Feyyaz Kayacan Fergar (1919-1993) was a multilingual writer and poet whose short story poetics played a crucial role in the emergence and development of an unprecedented understanding of literature in Turkey.[1] When Kayacan published his first short story collection entitled *Şişedeki Adam* (*The Man in the Bottle*) in 1957, Turkish prose had been experiencing a rupture between social realist understanding of literature and modernist tendencies. While in the 1950s social realism continued to give its products, especially revolving around village life in line with the political dynamics of the period, a flourishing avant-garde movement accompanied it.[2] The representative writers of the movement, many of whom published their first works in these years, came to the forefront with their existential themes, surreal descriptions, and poetic language, and constituted what is now known as the generation of the 1950s. Their works were distinguished with formal and thematic innovations, which often voiced an intense sense of disquiet and solitude. The writers of the generation reflected a convoluted net of influences –from each other, from their precursors, and from Western literatures and arts including painting, sculpture, and music.

Feyyaz Kayacan, one of the prominent writers of this generation, appeared to be a unique figure especially because of his multicultural life and work. He lived in London for a long time and participated in the activities of The London Surrealist Group. Kayacan's mobility between English and Turkish literatures and cultures helped him construct an original idea of literature that was powerful enough to inspire many of his contemporaries. *The Shelter Stories* (*Sığınak Hikâyeleri,* 1962)[3] reflects some significant dimensions of Kayacan's poetics shaped both by his multicultural life and his interest in Surrealism. Written in the 1950s and first appeared in journals during these years, the stories recount a series of events related to the Londoners who took refuge in shelters during the Second World War. Kayacan appeals to such a rich

[1] Feyyaz Kayacan Fergar is known as Feyyaz Fergar in England. However, he used the surname Kayacan in his Turkish works. Many Turkish readers do not even know his surname "Fergar." Since this article deals basically with texts written originally in Turkish, I will refer to him as "Feyyaz Kayacan" in the rest of the article. The story of how he received his surname is told in the first part entitled "Feyyaz Kayacan Between Istanbul and London."

[2] For a political framework of the period, see Jale Özata Dirlikyapan's *Kabuğunu Kıran Hikaye: Türk Öykücülüğünde 1950 Kuşağı.*

[3] The original collection entitled *Sığınak Hikâyeleri* consists of six short stories, while the English translation entitled *Mrs. Valley's War: The Shelter Stories of Feyyaz Kayacan Fergar* includes one more story, which normally takes place in the 1987 collection, *Bir Deli Değilin Defterleri.* This short story, "My Sister Lütfiye's Senior Moments" ("Lütfiye Abla'nın Unutkanlıkları") indirectly relates to other stories with its character who was in England when the Second World War broke out. I use the 2007 English translation by Ruth Christie and Selçuk Berilgen in my article but refer to the book as *The Shelter Stories* both because it is the exact translation of the original title and because my analysis excludes the added story.

repertoire of images that the book turns out to be a literary feast that addresses the reader's visual and auditory senses.

This article aims to uncover some of the components of this grandiose work by investigating the sources that might have incited the writer's imagination. To attain this goal, the article first sheds light on Kayacan's life between Istanbul and London. After summarizing the cornerstones of his multicultural literary activities, it shows how Kayacan's fictional world enacts his searches for identity and belonging. The article nevertheless emphasizes that these seemingly autobiographical readings of the texts resist any kind of reduction by virtue of Kayacan's aesthetic presentation. The analysis of *The Shelter Stories* elucidates the writer's possible inspiration from wartime painters who, like Kayacan, had surrealist connections. Kayacan's art of war alludes to his engagement with the war artists, especially Paul Nash and Henry Moore, as well as the more general surrealist connotations of his storytelling. Here the purpose of the article is limited in that it leaves rigorous analyses to the experts of stylistics and aesthetics and only draws attention to some interactions. Since the narrative voice of *The Shelter Stories* always balances darkness with humor, Kayacan's art of war also implies his handling of gloomy themes like war, destruction, and death. At this point, the English title *Mrs. Valley's War* is also alluded to because Mrs. Valley is singled out in the book for her strength, cheerful spirit, and laughter. Representing the characters' sense of community under the bombings of the *Luftwaffe,* Kayacan performs a narrative that lifts the reader's spirit. While the article delves into the underlying roles of the writer's multicultural environment and surrealist activities in this performance, it concludes that Kayacan's influence on Turkish literature especially in the 1950s calls for further linguistic and stylistic explorations.

Feyyaz Kayacan Between Istanbul and London

Feyyaz Kayacan was born in Istanbul in 1919. He was educated at Saint Joseph Highschool where the language of instruction was French. As David Perman explains in his introduction to *The Shelter Stories,* Kayacan's family received the surname "Frégar" upon his mother's wish, but it was later transformed to "Fergar" in the surname catalog. However, he did not prefer to use "Fergar," "a foreign-sounding name," in his Turkish publications and instead used "Kayacan" which was the surname of his maternal grandfather (Perman, 2007, p. 9). Kayacan's own account reads that after attending some classes in Political Science in Paris, he moved to England and studied Economics at Durham University (Kayacan, 1963, p. 192). There he connected to the London Surrealist Group and launched two poetry magazines, *Fulcrum* and *Dint*. Kayacan worked at BBC, initially in the Turkish Section of the BBC European Service and after the war in BBC External Services. After retiring from BBC in 1979, he continued his literary activities as a writer and translator.

Kayacan's transnational literary activities yielded one more significant product, *Core: An International Poetry Magazine,* published in London from June 1987 to June 1990. Founded by Mevlut Ceylan and Feyyaz Kayacan, it declared its intention to become an international poetry forum and thus published not only poetries from American, European, Arabic, Urdu, and Japanese literatures but also essays on various subjects extending from the early Andalusian to the modern English poetry.[4] Furthermore, in an ambitious attempt to introduce Turkish poetry to the world through English translations, *Core* published translations from many Turkish poets – Behçet Necatigil, Cemal Süreya, Ülkü Tamer, Necip Fazıl, to name but a few.

Fulcrum, *Dint*, and *Core* were examples of what is called "petite revue" and "little magazine" in Francophone and Anglophone literatures respectively. Although these terms are often associated with modernism and related movements such as Surrealism and Dadaism, they also denote the short-lived experimental magazines which put commercial considerations on the back burner (Morris & Diaz, 2015, p. x). *Fulcrum* and *Dint* were "little magazines" in both senses of the phrase, while *Core* embodied basically the latter sense. Yet one should also remember Celia Aijmer Rydsjö and AnnKatrin Jonsson's argument that the idealistic ambitions of a little magazine on the European continent were deeply imbued with a desire to earn prestige, which amounts to the presence of material and promotional concerns (Rydjö & Jonsson, 2016, p. 71). *Fulcrum, Dint*, and *Core* had indeed big ambitions which need financial support to be accomplished. Kayacan tells in an interview how Mevlut Ceylan put in the hard yards to cover the expenses of the first issue of *Core,* which aimed to challenge the English poetry of the time and show the world the powerful voice of the Turkish poetry (Kayacan, 1988, p. 64). Talât Halman's call for supporting *Core* through subscriptions and advertisements is an example of these material concerns (Halman, 1987, p. 26). In other words, although these little magazines did not seek profit, they nevertheless needed financial support to sustain their passions. Thus, they remained as short-lived ventures.

Kayacan lived in London until his death in 1993, but both his visits to Turkey and his intellectual and emotional bond with the Turkish language enabled him to retain his connections with Turkish literature and literary circles. His early collections of poems, *Les Gammes Insolites* (1938) and *Gestes à la Mer* (1943) were published in French. He published his Turkish poems under the titles of *Kaşık Havası* (1976) and *Benim Örümceğim Başka* (1982). His first collection of poems in English entitled *A Talent for Shrouds* was published in 1991. His anthology of *Modern Turkish Poetry* appeared in

[4] I owe thanks to Mevlut Ceylan both for his kind responses to my questions and for sharing with me all issues of *Core* and some other valuable sources related to Kayacan. For an account of the Turkish immigrants' literary activities in London, see his article, "Migration and Literature: London's Turkish Immigrants."

1992. Kayacan's second collection of English poems, *The Dark is Bright Enough,* was published posthumously. Even though poetry occupied a significant place in his literary career, the short story was the genre that built his image as a peculiar writer in Turkish literature. His first short story collection, *Şişedeki Adam* was published in 1957. *Sığınak Hikâyeleri* followed it in 1962. Four other collections, *Cehennemde Bir Yusuf, Gibiciler, Hiçoğlu'nun Serüvenleri*, *Bir Deli Değilin Defterleri* were published in 1964, 1967, 1969, and 1987 successively.[5] Demir Özlü informs us that although he received the short story award of Türk Dil Kurumu (Turkish Language Association) in 1963, he was having difficulty publishing his work. Except his short appearance in *Yazı* journal in the late 1970s, Kayacan was forgotten to the extent that only a vanity press published his novel in 1982 (Özlü, 2014a, p. 142). It is possible that he was frustrated by this obliviousness and ceased to publish his short stories in the 1970s. Furthermore, radio broadcasting might have gained priority in these years as he worked as the head of BBC Turkish service between 1974 and 1979 (McKane & Hope, 1993, p. 7). His first and only novel *Çocuktaki Bahçe* and 1968 collection of dramas *Mutlu Azınlık* have not drawn great interest either. Kayacan has never become a widely read popular writer in Turkey but has often been referred to as one of the most original short story writers with a significant impact on the following generations.

Telling about his multicultural experiences, Kayacan refers to his enlightenment on the richness of Turkish. He explains how he noticed the possibilities of the Turkish language, particularly its derivative potentialities when he started working in BBC. The *raison d'être* of the literati, for him, is to open the doors of words and images (Kayacan, 1988, p. 64). His complicated feelings regarding his identity and polyglot persona find a condensed manifestation in his short story "İstanbul Zeybeği" ("Zeibek of Istanbul"). Included in *Şişedeki Adam*, the story starts with a reference to James Joyce. The narrator tells how Joyce wrote his impressions of Dublin outside Ireland. According to the narrator, living in Trieste, Paris, and Zurich, Joyce overestimated, idealized, monumentalized, and symbolized the city. Suavi, who has heard about Joyce's literary adventures with Dublin, finds himself in London to view Istanbul from a distance (Kayacan, 2008b, p. 24). Suavi would start a novel in London, then his journey would traverse the universe and all the cities drafting Istanbul so that he can arrive at Istanbul (Kayacan, 2008b, p. 25). Lomas, a Londoner poet, always turns to London from another city, considers London as a trash can, but feels lonely wherever he goes. He thinks that "solitude has no soil," and that he is an exile within himself – "*sürülge*" in Turkish. He does not want to turn to London, but he carries London on his back (Kayacan 2008b, pp. 26-27). Suavi is introduced to Lomas as a Turk who describes himself as "İstanbulgilıstanbuloğluıstaniçrebultoprakbolistan" (Kayacan, 2008b, p.

[5] Besides *Sığınak Hikâyeleri* (*The Shelter Stories*), none of these collections has been translated into English.

30). This untranslatable juxtaposition of words also contains the Turkish "*toprak*," which stands for "soil." Suavi expects Istanbul to find its tongue and its soil to shape his stories in a rebellious manner, although his friend İlhan thinks that Istanbul begs a novel rather than a short story (Kayacan, 2008b, pp. 34-37).

Suavi, like Kayacan, considers telling a story as a task far from the conventionally realistic representation. When Suavi says that he is looking at the soil with the soil's eyes, he refers to the blurry border between the viewer and the viewed (Kayacan, 2008c, p. 44). This is a vision described also in "Şişedeki Adam" ("The Man in the Bottle"), whose first-person narrator sees the world out of the bottle as distorted and inverted.[6] He thinks that this is only an illusion created by the bottle (Kayacan, 2008d, p. 59), yet he is decided to carry this bottle until the end of the world. As the first man in the bottle, he believes he has a mission (Kayacan, 2008d, pp. 68-69). Not only do these short stories exemplify the susceptibility of realist vision in Kayacan's work, but they also illustrate how the problems of identity and belonging deepen the existential anxieties that lie behind this vision. Poetic yet defamiliarizing language expresses an unending anxiety portraying the characters in quest of their existence in a certain space like London or more generally in the world.

One may speculate that traveling across cities and cultures led Kayacan to reflect on different forms of viewing extending from distant to intimate, from bright to nebulous. He seems to have blended the existentialist trends of the post-war years with his experiences as a man of letters living in Europe, and feeling in Turkish. His character Hiçoğlu[7], who does not step on the ground and who looks for a name, can be considered as a surreal picture of this feeling. He has nausea because of namelessness; he walks in the air with an interval of about 5-6 cm between his feet and the ground (Kayacan, 2008a, pp. 10-13). Having a name and stepping on the ground would perhaps mean finding an identity and a ground for existence. When Suavi finally finds out who he is, he calls himself "Mevlanamarcelperest" and "puruşt," juxtaposing Mevlana and Proust; "Yunus Omros Orhan Veliot"; juxtaposing Yunus Emre, Orhan Veli, and Eliot. He then brings together Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca, Oedipus, Don Quixote, and Sancho Panza (Kayacan, 2008c, p. 51).[8] Joyce, Suavi, and Hiçoğlu, as figures

[6] For a detailed analysis of the problem of vision in Kayacan's short fiction, see Nilay Kaya's MA thesis, *Feyyaz Kayacan Öykücülüğünde Görme Problemi*.

[7] Hiçoğlu is a combination of the words "nothing" and "son/man." Hiçoğlu is identified with a sense of nothingness.

[8] As an example of how Kayacan brings together these names, see this sentence: "Ve soyların üstündeki adım ne biliyor musun: Dağlardaki Faziledipusun rakısı. Ve sonra ben yazdım KİŞİOTUNUN DON'undaki serüvenleri. Kadıköylü SANCI PAŞANIN Yeldeğirmenindeki evinde" (Kayacan, 2008c, p. 51). Those who read Turkish will notice how Kayacan makes his readers smile by using some linguistic tricks of the *meddah* tradition, which is based on a public performance of a humorous storyteller.

seeking grounds for their literary and humane existence, evoke Kayacan's linguistic, cultural, and existential dilemmas not through a serious and melancholic tone, but through its humorous style based on portmanteau words, and vivacious flows of sentences and tropes.

Kayacan's short stories in *The Shelter Stories* use a similar language and tone, but their focus on the devastating effects of war marks the distinctive feature of the collection. In Tuğrul Tanyol's description, "These are texts that often bring the narrative voice close to the language of poetry, relying on symbols and metaphors and a surrealist mode of writing that pushes the possibilities of language to the highest limits" (Tanyol, 2007, p. 13). This poetic and figurative language enables one to feel the deepest fears and anxieties of those whose chaotic souls cannot be depicted through literal language. The stories portray the Londoners, basically Alvin, Vera, Mrs. Valley, and Gareth, who wait in the shelter for the bombings to end. The non-Turkish setting and characters of these shelter stories attracted criticism from some writers, whereas Kayacan repeatedly underlined that his physical distance from Turkey drew him closer to the Turkish language. Erdal Öz's frequently cited evaluation that Kayacan appears to be an English writer who writes in Turkish, especially in *The Shelter Stories* (Öz, 2016, p. 24) is an example of how he was blamed for staying away from the native values of Turkish literature.

In an interview, Kayacan says that he would not have produced these original works if he had lived in Turkey since, in his words, "you are bound to be influenced by the ambiance in which you live, by what people think, what is super-holy or fashionable, what is in power in the literary scene and what would be considered audacious or irreverent" (Kayacan, 1991, p. 70). Furthermore, he regarded the influence of Western literature on his works as both expected and necessary (Kayacan, 1963, p. 194). What he means by this latter statement can best be understood by looking at the spread of literary waves and art movements over countries because of social and political circumstances, and a need for new styles of expression. Surrealist art, for example, emerged after the First World War as a reaction to some bourgeois values that are believed to have brought destruction. Then it became influential in many parts of the world. Hence Kayacan gravitated toward movements like Surrealism and Existentialism in his search for a new language to express existential anxieties about a devastated world. *The Shelter Stories* was one of the products of this search.

Kayacan's Shelter, War Paintings, and the Surrealist Interactions

Kayacan, who acknowledges the influence of Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* on the cyclical composition of his shelter stories (Kayacan, 1963, p. 192), has the same characters appear in each of the stories, thereby creating an effect of familiarity on the reader. The first-person narrator of the stories gives the sense that these characters are real people experiencing the harsh reality of a political disaster. Yet Kayacan's short

story poetics transforms all these realities into an artwork evoking powerful aesthetic feelings in the reader. This transformation owes some debt to his intellectual environment including the surrealist groups.

In the 1924 manifesto, Breton described the basis of Surrealism as "the belief in the superior reality of certain hitherto neglected forms of association, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested working of thought" (Breton, 1969, p. 26). When the waking state turns to be a "phenomenon of interference" and dreams get the status they deserve, the unconscious mind will reveal itself with its slips and mistakes (Breton, 1969, p. 12). Then the surrealist art, in Aspley's description, will display itself as "the surprising, thought-provoking, or provocative image" that can be met with an "immediate visceral response" by the viewer/reader rather than rational interpretations (Aspley, 2010, p. 19). Kayacan's shelter stories include such images which combine the abstract and the concrete, and which present themselves as contradictory and hallucinatory. One may even argue that they do not let rational minds and literary rules dictate themselves, yet their obvious goal to perform human angst vis à vis the war catastrophe and Kayacan's endeavor to mollify this fact with humor are noticeable. This latter aspect, which might be regarded as incompatible with Surrealism's emphasis on free association, is a subject extensively discussed by surrealists and scholars of surrealist artists and writers.

The changing definition and understanding of Surrealism across geographies and cultures in different periods make it hard to decide what is surreal and what is not. In his book on the language of Surrealism, Peter Stockwell underlines how early surrealists like David Gascoyne denied there is a certain guide to differentiate a surrealist work from the others and how they tended to view their works as "artefacts of their surreal researches" (Stockwell, 2017, p. 15). For example, free association was not easy to sustain, but it was possible to "experiment" with it (Stockwell, 2017, p. 16). Likewise, Kayacan's surrealist connections seem to have motivated him to think provocatively and experiment with language and images.

While in the 1920s the group around Breton in Paris seems to have dominated Surrealism, both in France and in some other European countries like Belgium, some groups declared themselves as surrealists. Furthermore, with its international artists and intellectuals Surrealism was not purely French even at the beginning. In the 1930s it gained an overtly international dimension. The first International Surrealist Exhibition was held in London in 1936, bringing forth the establishment of the London Surrealist Group. Feyyaz Kayacan became part of this group, which was, according to scholars of Surrealism, short-lived and ineffective (Jean, 1975, p. 81; Matthews, 1964, p. 58). As Michael Richardson notes, "[T]he movement never really established a collective ethos and activity has generally been episodic" (Richardson, 2016, p. 137).

Despite this fact, Kayacan's intellectual alertness and interest in various forms of art, especially painting, helped him give shape to his style.

A comparative stylistic analysis of Kayacan's work might legitimize Ferit Edgü's statement that there is no surreal writer in Turkish literature (Yetiş, 2016, p. 19) or Güven Turan's reaction to labeling Kayacan as a surrealist writer (Turan, 2022), but his avant-garde experimentation is evident. That is why some literati highlight Kayacan's unprecedented diction as one of the sources of the Second New Poetry (İkinci Yeni), which, they believe, holds some surrealist characteristics. For example, Asım Bezirci points to Kayacan's *Şişedeki Adam*, together with Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca's poetry and Sait Faik's *Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan* as a literary work that equips the Second New Poetry with significant tools (Bezirci, 1994, p. 51). Pursuing a similar discussion, Tuğrul Tanyol describes *The Shelter Stories* as texts that "often bring the narrative voice close to the language of poetry, relying on symbols and metaphors and a surrealist mode of writing that pushes the possibilities of language to the highest limits" (Tanyol, 2007, p. 13). In short, although the impact of surrealist activities in England is not remarkable in the world, it is remarkable in Kayacan's work. *The Shelter Stories* holds a significant place in the writer's oeuvre with its use of the art of painting. Kayacan's references to the war-time paintings by Paul Nash and Henry Moore are particularly significant both for understanding the purpose behind his surprising images and for reaffirming the ambiguous status of surrealist art. The question of whether Nash and Moore are surrealists is part of this ambiguity.

In the first story, "The Shelter" ("Sığınak"), London is described as a ghostly city evoking war and death in every corner. The first-person narrator views Dartmouth Street as a river flowing into the English Channel. He describes flying bombs, sirens, streets, and death with a poetic voice full of symbols and metaphors. Flying bombs appear to the narrator "as greedy as a swarm of locusts" and millions of people as zombies (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 17). He hears the voice of the sirens as "a screech that sent out hairs rising from the raised fathoms of de profundis" (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 18). Both his eyes and ears are exposed to the disturbing effects of war, which he details by appealing to the most nuanced descriptions of voices, colors, and visions, as exemplified in the following passage:

> "All the buzzing blue above flew into the ears. Then in preordained suddenness the engines of the bombs would stop, and silence, like a sheet of lime; would settle upon streets, houses and people – till they fell nose-diving purposively; till true, lived-in houses were scattered sky-high, as if they were so many castles built in the air; till lives went up like flying glass in the performed dominion of death and destruction" (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 18).

Such descriptions in *Mrs. Valley's War* evoke the war-time paintings of London artists, particularly Paul Nash's *Totes Meer* and Henry Moore's Shelter series, although

Kayacan additionally combined visual images with auditory depictions by using the advantages of literature.

Nash and Moore were official war artists of the British government, who worked as part of a project which was launched during the First World War and restarted during the Second World War. The government assigned these two painters, together with some others, the task of documenting the war through their artworks (O'Reilly, 2003, p. 25). Moore, being basically a sculptor, was a member of a group of avant-garde artists called Unit One, which was established in 1933. The impact of Surrealism on this group was significant though Moore only partially agreed with the ideas in Breton's manifesto. O'Reilly notes that Moore favored the power of imagination and inventiveness, but wanted to keep his art under his control instead of letting his unconscious speak (O'Reilly, 2003, p. 20). That being said, he contributed to the International Surrealist Exhibition in London held in 1936 (*International Surrealist Exhibition Catalogue*). Indeed, Richard Shone writes, "That a few artists in the 1930s were influenced by European surrealism is incontrovertible, Nash and Moore being the most prominent" (Shone, 1986, p. 371). Drawing attention to the surrealist aspects of Moore, O'Reilly gives the example of *Two Seated Women* (1934), in which the human bodies are represented as distorted images composed partly by geometrical figures (O'Reilly, 2003, p. 21). Nash's interest in abstraction and Surrealism is more emphatically noted by scholars and writers with an emphasis on his search for inner meanings in landscapes (Hiscock, 2005, p. 335; Laity, 2016).

Nash's *Totes Meer* (Dead Sea, 1940-41*)* portrays a view of the sea looking like a wrecked aircraft with the moonlit sky in the background. [9] The waves of the sea are composed of the broken pieces of the aircraft, carrying the material object into an illusionary and hallucinatory order. Through this abstraction, the concrete object comes to represent the emotional disasters people are going through. Kayacan's imageries blend the concrete and the abstract as Nash does in *Totes Meer* to make people feel the agony of deadly chaos. Likewise, and even more obviously, Moore's Shelter paintings are an inspiration for Kayacan, at times letting one match an episode with a drawing by Moore. Similar to Moore, who draws a series of shelter scenes with fetus-like images demonstrating the need for protection and security, Kayacan portrays a variety of characters sharing similar concerns and wartime anxiety.

When the sirens begin to sound, everybody rushes to the shelter which the narrator likens to a womb. "People stirred slowly like fetuses" within it (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 20) and the narrator feels that they have been forgotten and that they are "old and frayed" (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 21). Henry Moore's *Tube Shelter Perspective* (1941) depicts the shelter as a womb in which they have been forgotten. As O'Reilly illuminates, Moore's

[9] As I could not use the images of paintings and drawings due to copyright issues, I listed them in the bibliography and provided links that might help the reader.

use of pen, chalk, and paint together in this work creates the ghostly sense shared by the shelter inhabitants (O'Reilly, 2003, p. 24). When Kayacan describes how people in the neighborhood rush to the shelter, he draws attention to their vulnerability and how their naive lives are threatened by the monstrous war. Mr. Ellis's caring for his garden, Vera's delicate walking on the street with her baby, and the old men's hopeful reading in the library are all interrupted by the wailing sirens. They rush to the shelter which is described as "the inside of a knotted womb" (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 20). Moore's series of shelter paintings can be traced in their positioning in the dark shelter like fetuses, and their sleeping next to each other with their rags and bunks. For example, the narrator's description of the womb as having "double-tiered bunks" (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 20) brings to mind Moore's *Bunks and Sleepers* (1941).

Another drawing by Moore, *Seated Mother and Child* (1941), depicts a breast-feeding figure further illustrating the angelic protection of the mother. Likewise, the narrator of "The Shelter" remembers his mother: "The walls that she had conjured up around me have collapsed. I have long ago left behind the games that she used to plot for me in the garden where I was a pawn crowing for loneliness" (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 21). Referring to his mother's protective treatment of him in his childhood, the narrator underlines his current anxiety. Then the correlation he builds between womb and shelter represents his wish that the latter is as secure as the former. Kayacan's poetics here utilizes repetitive words and fragmentary sentences to convey the sense of anxiety or the lurking "vertigo": "They [the flying bombs] are coming. They will come; they will come. If only they could, if only they could come and come and come and fall and be done with it." What creates this anxiety is the suspension of the flying bombs "over" and "inside" them (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 21).

The narrator's fears are extended to all members of the shelter, illustrating the collective psychological effects of the war. Demir Özlü's analysis of Kayacan's prose explains how the writer utilizes surrealist aesthetics to delve into the dark sides of the human psyche. According to Özlü, Kayacan enriches his prose with imageries, discoveries, and language-based humor which transforms everyday reality and carries it to the level of allegories and pseudo-metaphors. Thus, Özlü maintains, Kayacan wants to illuminate the dark caves of mental realities that contain uncertainty, darkness, delirium, and dementia (Özlü, 2014b, p. 143). The shelter in *The Shelter Stories* is akin to these dark caves for reflecting people's psychological wars through linguistic tricks and tropes. The reality of war is transformed into the chaotic imagery of the human psyche.

Yet the shelter is not totally dark in Kayacan's imagination as it also reflects the sense of community and the existence of a common ground for people's desire to survive. Mrs. Valley's portrayal as a "coalition of life," for example, shows her vitality and endurance. She is made of rivers, rocks, and hills, and the rumors tell, "it was she who

brought up the sun and the stars" (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 25). Her characteristics are detailed through magical language, among which her fight against bombs and death is particularly important for Kayacan's narrative. Mrs. Valley's laughter lifts people's spirits and seems to mirror Kayacan's art of war, which balances darkness with cheerful tropes. According to Kayacan's account, some real people he knew from his neighborhood or he met in the shelter inspired him to write *The Shelter Stories*. He was impressed by "their solidarity against death" which, he believes, "glorified" them. Kayacan tells how he observed this humanistic attitude in the working-class people, what he calls "little men" (Kayacan, 1963, p. 193). Thus, the sense of anxiety is not exhaustive in the collection.

The shifts from dark feelings to hope, and deadly atmospheres to the possibilities of creation are enacted through Kayacan's poetical instruments such as fairy tale language. For example, after we learn that the narrator's wife is in York and he feels alone in London, he creates a magical solution and brings his wife from York to his mind. He then continues how he makes his mind more crowded: "To her I fast added Vera, whose footsteps had not yet faded up and down Dartmouth Road. When she thus found herself, Vera the postman's daughter stretched, stretched, four-cornering me with her tides" (Kayacan, 2007d, p. 22). This fairy-tale language continues to draw dream-like images throughout the collection.

In *The Shelter Stories,* pictorial evocations are not limited to wartime British surrealist painters. In "Alvin the Poet" (Şair Alvin), for instance, the writer enables us to visualize Alvin through *Flayed Angel* (1746) by the French painter and anatomist Jacques Fabien Gautier d'Agoty (1716–1785). The story starts with a reference to Marcel Proust's pursuit of lost time with a teacup, when, as the narrator describes, "he strung up his memories of the past like dried okra and revolved scene after scene in his head" (Kayacan, 2007a, p. 27). The narrator's memories, on the other hand, start with toilet paper plunged into many chemicals. This start takes the reader to the setting of the story – a hospital –, and its character – Alvin the poet – in bandages. The narrator imagines Alvin's unraveling bandages and many papers and poetries at his feet. "The end of the bandage was in Forest Hill," and people were still living in the shelters (Kayacan, 2007a, p. 27). Alvin is described as writing poems in the reading room of the library and watched by a few people while being unraveled: "Alvin wore a red velvet jacket, festive gear especially suited to his blonde hair. In his red jacket he resembled a flayed angel. Poems were churning over in his head and he hung them up to dry on his washing-line" (Kayacan, 2007a, p. 28). The flayed angel with a red velvet jacket offers an exaggerated image of the unraveling of Alvin's bandages like toilet paper. In the meantime, the narrator's memories unravel like toilet paper, adding new stories to the existing ones. As another manifestation of the life instinct, the narrator, like Shahrazad, makes the stories continue. Life and death often come together, not only through humor but also through eroticism as exemplified by Mrs. Valley's erotic

stories which excite Gareth, the Welsh tobacconist (Kayacan, 2007a, p. 30). The co-existence of life and death is embodied in the image of the womb implying shelter, life, productivity, and creativity.

The third story, "Vera the Postman's Daughter" (Postacı Kızı Vera), enables us to associate the narrator with the writer Kayacan: Listing people in the shelter, the narrator says, "There was I, plucked from foreign soil, trying in Dartmouth Road to recreate the sound of my footsteps on Istanbul's cobbled streets, lost to me now. There was I, myself, and when I thought of Istanbul – my heart gave birth to minarets, adorned and festive with their rings of light" (Kayacan, 2007f, pp. 33-34). The narrator's longing for his homeland not only evokes Kayacan's memories of his multicultural identity but also marks *The Shelter Stories* as a text that blends the anxieties of being an expatriate into wartime existential anxieties.

The magical presentation of this blend, suggestive of Surrealism, can well be traced in many passages in the stories. In "Gareth the Tobacconist" (Tütüncü Gareth), for example, when Gareth learns that the narrator is from Turkey, he tells him that he lost one of his legs in the battle of Gallipoli. The narrator looks at Gareth's feet and notices both of his legs. Gareth explains that he wished to have his leg back so much so that a new leg appeared in its place (Kayacan, 2007b, pp. 52-53). Imitating Gareth, the narrator makes his wish to be in Istanbul. He takes out from the pencil cases the minarets of the mosques – the Suleymaniye, Aya Sofia, Sultanahmet, and Yeni Cami. "I'll roam around in the branches of the minarets," the narrator says, also implying that a minaret can be a miraculous object sprouting branches like a tree. The narrator and Gareth climb the minarets together (Kayacan, 2007b, p. 53). Similarly, in "How They Bid For Vera the Postman's Daughter" (Postacı Kızı Vera Arttırmaya Nasıl Konuldu) the narrator teaches Turkish to Mrs. Valley. She starts Turkish lessons on the condition that they will ignore grammar rules: "For me, it's not grammar I need but simple words. Words that cut like a knife to avert the evil eye and struggle to get free of its curses" (Kayacan, 2007c, pp. 61-62).

Mrs. Valley's strong and independent character is obviously how Kayacan wants to see himself in Turkish literature. Like Mrs. Valley, he wants to have the courage to free language from rules. Indeed, referring to such avant-garde or controversial writers, poets, and thinkers as D.H. Lawrence, Freud, Faulkner, Joyce, Mallarmé, and Sade (Kayacan, 2007b, p. 50, 54), *The Shelter Stories* posits itself as an innovative and pioneering work. Disaster, fear, death, and violence are subordinated to laughter and eroticism, both of which denote life, creation, and productivity. Kayacan's playful discourse serves to keep the latter values as meant by the final episode of "The Shelter's Last Word" (Sığınağın Son Ağzından). The narrator, who is listening to the shelter after the end of the war, is approached by a policeman who asks him what he is doing. When he tells the policeman about the shelter, he does not believe in the narrator. The

policeman is "thunderstruck" when "a mighty uproar of laughter burst from inside the shelter" (Kayacan, 2007e, p. 87). Kayacan responds to the rules of literature and the policemen of literary circles with a literary shelter full of innovations and cheers.

Conclusion

Most of the criticism that considers Kayacan an escapist writer revolves around his defamiliarizing language and his distance to social realism. For example, Selim İleri expresses his "sense of alienation" while reading Kayacan's "meaningless language" (İleri, 1975, p. 24). Similarly, Erdal Öz emphasizes that *The Shelter Stories* is not engaged in the realities of Turkish society (Öz, 2016, p. 24). Orhan Duru criticizes Kayacan – together with Bilge Karasu – for his barren formalism, which might enchant the reader but does not amount to meaningful content (Duru quoted in Korkmaz, 2014, pp. 123-124). Despite these criticisms, Kayacan has been regarded as one of the precursors of the generation of the 1950s. Exploring his influence on individual writers of this generation is beyond the scope of this article, but the language he created – as convulsive as the Turkish that Mrs. Valley wants to learn – is so idiosyncratic that the short story found itself in a new path with and after Kayacan.

His contribution to Surrealism in London after 1936 was an important phase of his literary activities. He was not a surrealist *par excellence,* neither were many of his contemporaries including the painters this article dealt with. They were rather experimenting with the flow of the unconscious, dreamy representations, free association, and reshaped images. In Kayacan's words, his "brief spell with surrealism was beneficial" because of the freedom that his imagination attained (Kayacan, 1991, p. 68). *The Shelter Stories* was one of the products of this free imagination which left its mark on Kayacan's every work. Yet creating the wartime image of shelter literally and figuratively, *The Shelter Stories* further illustrated Kayacan's humanistic and collective sense of life and literature.

Kayacan's desire to glorify "the little men" whose solidarity and courage in wartime London impressed him, finds a lucid expression in the words of the narrator: "I regard it as a duty to celebrate them and whatever there is in myself to celebrate I attribute to them" (Kayacan, 2007b, p. 46). Their voices from the past touch the narrator's heart even after ten years and he believes that commemorating them provides him with new treasures from the remnants of the past. He hears the "applause and cheers" coming from the depth of the pavements (Kayacan, 2007b, p. 46). As Kayacan reveals in his interviews, he likewise imagined *The Shelter Stories* as a tribute to the ordinary people of wartime London (Kayacan, 2007b, p. 46). Aiming to transmit to the reader their cheers heard among all the despairing feelings, Kayacan performed an art of war. Engaging in the artistic tendencies of his contemporaries in Europe, and freeing his language and literature from traditional understandings, he blazed a trail in Turkish literature. This partially acknowledged fact, to which this article drew attention, needs

many other linguistic and stylistic analyses to better determine his contribution to the formation of future generations.

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Çatışma Beyanı	*Makalenin yazarları, bu çalışma ile ilgili herhangi bir kurum, kuruluş, kişi ile mali çıkar çatışması olmadığını ve yazarlar arasında çıkar çatışması bulunmadığını beyan eder.*
Destek ve Teşekkür	*Çalışmada herhangi bir kurum ya da kuruluştan destek alınmamıştır.*

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