



Waiting for September 12: An Analysis of the Dystopian Novel *Gizli Emir*

12 Eylül'ü Beklerken: Distopik Roman *Gizli Emir*'in Bir Analizi

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ABSTRACT

The military interventions of March 12, 1971 and September 12, 1980, which took place within a 10-year period, are the most chaotic events of recent Turkish political history. Melih Cevdet Anday's novel titled *Gizli Emir* [The Secret Order], which was serialized and published in 1970 just before March 12, made 10-year projections with a highly significant insight and expression of the tragic situations developing in the minds of people through a dystopian fiction novel. The novel reflects the lives of the protagonists who hope for salvation while waiting for a secret order in a chaotic environment, and a uncannily similar event occurred right after the novel's publication. In this study, the period in question and the book were comparatively examined, similar elements were identified, and they were analyzed with regard to the disappointment and frustration caused by September 12 that was awaited like a secret order just as the secret order did. Although the analyses were primarily based on the text, the author's life and viewpoints were also evaluated, and the findings were analyzed within the framework of the literature-politics relationship.

Keywords: Coup of September 12, March 12 Memorandum, Dystopia, *Gizli Emir*, Melih Cevdet Anday.

ÖZET

On yıl arayla gerçekleşen 12 Mart 1971 ve 12 Eylül 1980 askeri müdahaleleri, yakın dönem Türk siyasi tarihinin en çalkantılı olaylarındandır. Melih Cevdet Anday'ın, 12 Mart'ın hemen öncesinde tefrika edilip 1970 yılında yayımlanan *Gizli Emir* romanı, dikkat çekici bir öngörüyle bu on yıllık süreye ait önemli izdüşümleri ve söz konusu döneme maruz kalan insanların zihinsel dünyalarında oluşan trajik durumların dışavurumunu distopik bir kurgu üzerinden ortaya koymuştur. Roman, 12 Mart sürecinde yaşananlar gibi kaotik bir ortamda gizli bir emir bekleyerek kurtuluş uman kahramanların dünyalarını yansıtırken, tarihi olarak da benzer bir süreç, romanın yayımlanmasının hemen ardından yaşanır. Bu çalışmada söz konusu dönem ve kurmaca eser karşılıklı olarak incelenmiş ve bağdaşan unsurlar tespit edilmiş, gizli bir emir şeklinde beklenen 12 Eylül'ün, romanda beklenen gizli emir gibi oluşturduğu hüsrana ve hayal kırıklığı analiz edilmiştir. Yapılan incelemeler daha çok metin merkezli olsa da yazarın hayatı ve görüşleri bağlamında da gerekli değerlendirmeler ilgili dönem üzerinden yapılmış ve elde edilen bulgular edebiyat-siyaset ilişkisi çerçevesinde analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: 12 Eylül Darbesi, 12 Mart Muhtrası, distopya, *Gizli Emir*, Melih Cevdet Anday



GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Edebî eserler; sanatsal normlar ve estetik ölçütler kadar ortaya çıktıkları toplum ile dönemin değerlerinden ve koşullarından da beslenirler. Bu durum edebiyatı ortaya çıktığı toplumun kültürüyle sıkı sıkıya ilişkilendirir. Bu yakın ilişki sayesinde edebî eserler, o kültürel yapının birer parçası olan sosyal, tarihî ve siyasi koşullarla bağdaşma fırsatı bulur. Böylece edebî eserler, incelemenin alanına giren siyasetle derin bir ilişki kurar. Yazar ve okuyucunun siyasi görüş ve ideolojileri başta olmak üzere edebî eseri meydana getiren besleyici değerler arasında siyasi unsurların bulunması ve edebî eserin ortaya koyduğu kurmaca dünyanın siyasi açıdan birtakım toplumsal olguları somutlaştırması, edebiyat-siyaset ilişkisinin temel yapıtaşlarıdır.

Edebiyat ve siyaset ilişkisinin kurmaca metinlerde en yoğun görüldüğü alanların başında ütöpik ve distöpik türdeki eserler gelmektedir. Özellikle siyasi eleştiri, yönetsel sorunlar, iktidar ilişkileri ve toplumsal tepkiler gibi bağlamlarda uyarıcı niteliklere sahip olan distopyalar, kurmaca dünyanın geniş imkânlarından faydalanarak siyaseti eser içerisinde yoğunlaştırabilen bir işlevselliğe sahiptir. Melih Cevdet Anday'ın *Gizli Emir* romanı da distöpik bir çerçevede kurgulanmış ve henüz gerçekleşmemiş 12 Mart ve 12 Eylül dönemleri için adeta uyarı niteliği taşıyan önemli bir eserdir. Bu açıdan daha derin ve büyük bir anlam kazanan “Gizli Emir” ile “12 Eylül Darbesi” arasındaki bağlantılar ve bu bağlantıların toplumsal ve sanatsal çerçevede ortaya koyduğu izdüşümler bu çalışmada ele alınmıştır. Her iki ortamda da 12 Mart Muhtırası'nın sebep olduğu bir distöpik zemin bulunmaktadır. 12 Eylül Darbesi'nin başlangıçta önemli bir aydın kesim tarafından olumlu karşılanması, romanda bir kurtarıcı olarak beklenen gizli emir ile ordu müdahalesini oldukça yakınlaştırmaktadır. Bu durumlar aynı zamanda aradaki paralelliklerin ana halkalarıdır. Bu paradigmayı perçinleyen temel nokta ise her ikisinin de geldiği ortamın neredeyse bire bir benzerliğidir. Nitekim romanda Ayot, gerçekte ise 12 Mart Muhtıra süreciyle vuku bulmuş olan sıkıyönetim oldukça benzer uygulamalara sahiptir. Bununla birlikte gerek gizli emri gerekse 12 Eylül gibi bir müdahaleyi bekleyen halk ve aydın tabaka, her ikisinde de hüsrana karşılaşır. Dönemin karanlık atmosferinde ve kaotik ortamında yönetsel bir hareket bekleyen kesimin 12 Eylül Darbesiyle karşılaşması ve romanda kurtarıcı olarak beklenen gizli emrin içi boş bir umut çıkması, distöpik görüntü açısından birbirleriyle neredeyse eşdeğerdir.

Roman, distöpik yapıya sahip olup kurmaca açısından gerçek zaman ve mekândan bağımsız olması gibi nedenlerden dolayı oldukça geniş bir yelpazede değerlendirilme olanağı taşır. Bununla birlikte siyasi, tarihî ve sosyal açılardan 12 Mart olayının haricinde aynı zamanda 12 Eylül Darbesiyle oluşan atmosferi de çağırıştırır. Nitekim darbe de gizli emir de benzer süreçler içindeki benzer koşullarla beslenerek gelişmiş olan sonuçlardır. Her ikisinin de toplumu hüsrana uğratmasının temelinde siyasi olduğu kadar toplumsal bir eleştiri de bulunur. Romanın ana fikirlerinden ve yazarın temel eleştiri araçlarından olan; içinde buldukları karanlıkta beklemekten başka bir eylem gerçekleştirmeyip varlıksal bağlarını yalnızca ne olduğu belirsiz bir umuda endeksleyen kitlenin uğradığı/uğrayacağı hüsrana, romanın yayımlanmasından on yılı aşkın bir süre sonra gerçekleşecek 12 Eylül Darbesi'nin sonuçlarıyla somutlaşmıştır.

Romanda beklenen gizli emre dair umutların son bulmasıyla biten kurgunun karşısında tarihsel süreçte 12 Eylül Darbesiyle biten bir dönem bulunmaktadır. İkinin de beklentileri karşılamanın ötesinde toplumsal açıdan hüsrana yol açan durumlar olması, akla darbenin de gizli emir gibi bir distopik eserde beklendiğini ve hüsrarla sonuçlandığını getirmektedir. Bu noktada Melih Cevdet Anday'ın distopik bir hâl alan dönemseller gerçeklikleri sanatsal bir üslupla estetize ederek keskin bir öngörü sayesinde okura on yıl önceden sunmuş olması, edebiyat ve siyaset ilişkisi bağlamında önemli bir durumdur.

Gizli Emir romanında yaşanan süreci 12 Mart Dönemi, kurtarıcı olarak beklenen fakat bir kurtarıcı işlevine asla sahip olamayan “gizli emri” de 12 Eylül Darbesi olarak ele alan bu çalışmada öncelikle *Gizli Emir* romanının politik ve toplumsal eleştirisi yüklü bir distopya olduğu gösterilmektedir. Bu çerçevede roman ile bağdaşık olarak incelenen 12 Mart Muhtırası ve 12 Eylül Darbesi arasındaki dönemin oluşturduğu karanlık ve kaotik ortam ve bu ortamın toplum üzerinde yaşattığı gerilimlerin oluşturduğu trajik manzaralar hem tarihsel açıdan hem de roman üzerinden yapılan yorumlar sonucunda görünür kılınmaktadır.

Introduction

A literary work is a work of art. Naturally, literary works feed on the artistic norms, esthetic criteria, societal ideologies, values, and conditions of the period in which they emerge, closely associating literature with the culture of the society in which it emerges. This cultural structure is a binding element that ensures literary work is closely compatible with the politics in the field of study.

Terry Eagleton (2017, p. 224) indicates that it is not necessary to introduce the concept of politics, which refers to how we organize our social life and the power relations it brings with it into literary theory and says that politics has been a part of literary theory from the beginning. Literary works are influenced by the political ideology of the author and the reader. The fictional world presented by literary works contains social and political images. Therefore, literature and politics interact with each other. The relationship between literature and politics commonly comes into play when social issues, power centers, power relations, and administrative problems are criticized.

In fiction, utopian and dystopian works are among the most intense areas of the relationship between literature and politics. Specifically, dystopias, which have stimulating qualities in contexts such as political criticism, administrative problems, power relations, and social reactions, can embed politics in the literary work by benefiting from the wide limits of the fictional world in literature.

With an exploration of agency that is based in difference and multiplicity yet cannily reunited in an alliance politics that speaks back in a larger though diverse collective voice, the new dystopias not only critique the present triumphal system but also explore ways to transform it that go beyond compromised left-centrist solutions. These texts, therefore, refresh the links between imagination and utopia and utopia and awareness in decidedly pessimistic times (Baccolini and Moylan, 2003, p. 8).

Utopia became the source of dystopia, which is considered its opposite, 400 years after the 16th century when it first emerged. Although dystopias, which constitute an implicit warning, describe the cases that people will encounter in nonexistent places and times, they also assume a didactic nature by focusing on current problems (Paličko, 2022, p. 124). Dystopias can tell the future by looking at current problems. Claeys (2022, p. 9) called this the futurological function. He explained this function of dystopia as follows: "One is to permit visionary social theory by hinting at possible futures on the basis of lost or imaginary pasts, or extrapolating present trends to their logical conclusions or outcomes." Dystopias also attract the attention of politics, perhaps because of their futurological function. This is why political dystopias arouse the most interest despite their variations. Claeys (2017, p. 5) explained it as "...it is the totalitarian political dystopia which is chiefly associated with the failure of utopian aspirations, and which has received the greatest historical attention." Dystopian works, such in Turkish literature, include important criticisms, particularly in politics. Thus, the idea that the gloomy image of the 1970s, which included the March 12 Memorandum and the September 12 Coup,

had difficult conditions in terms of administration and was fictionalized as a dystopia in *Gizli Emir* [The Secret Order] published in 1970, is the main subject of this study.

March 12 novels can be included in the political genre in the Turkish novel. This political history that includes great oppression and violence is at the center of novels, stories, poems, and music (Türkeş, 2008, p. 1060). Both the March 12 novel genre and the Anatolian novel genre are based on the oppressor/oppressed contrast. However, they are the product of very different tendencies. The Anatolian novel is focuses on the ideal and fiction, whereas the March 12 novel is about the real world and life (Moran, 2016, p. 16). Given the harsh conditions of March 12 and the intimidating and oppressive policies in the administrative sense, this period has been perceived as a dystopian order in the context of the socialist discourse in the novel. With the subsequent September 12 process, although this dystopian landscape would become more concrete, it began to be expected as a savior by a significant part of society at the beginning.

The defeat of the left on March 12 in Türkiye, its separation from the people, and the unrest caused by the continued anarchy caused the society to seek a safe life above all. Thus, the military dictatorship found an environment that supported it, at least initially¹ (Moran, 2016, p. 50).

This situation, which Melih Cevdet Anday, who dealt with a similar environment from a dystopian perspective in *Gizli Emir*, sensed 10 years ago, and presented in his work, contains important projections of the period on both social and administrative scales. This situation becomes more evident when considering the author's political views in the period.

The right-left conflicts that occupied the agenda of Turkish society until the 1980s and the military memoranda/coups of March 12 and September 12, which were realized 10 years apart, and what happened afterward were included in novels representing both views. Anday is among the authors who called themselves "revolutionary," "leftist," and "the 68 generation," particularly with *Gizli Emir* and *İsa'nın Güncesi* [The Diary of Jesus] (Gündüz, 2015, p. 504). Anday, who was in a constant search in his art life and was oriented toward different approaches, shifted from the attitude of processing simple life appearance with a surrealist view in his poems to the formalist understanding of the Second New, which directs the evocative feature of words, and from there to the social realistic view. Conversely, his prose writings have a solid idea structure and a narrative that derives its strength from humor (Par, 1996, pp. 36-37). At this point, the author, who was moved away from the Second New understanding and turned to socialist realism after the 1960s, exhibited an opposing attitude in line with the realities of the period and produced works that mostly focused on the leftist. In *Gizli Emir*, which is one of the most important works, the author gave warnings for March 12 and September 12, which had not yet taken place, in a dystopian framework. This study discussed the mutual connections between *Gizli Emir*, which gained a deeper and greater meaning in this respect, and September 12 and the projections of these connections in the social and artistic framework.

¹ All translations in quotes belong to the authors.

1. A Martial Law Dystopia in the Context of the Politics–Literature Relationship: *Gizli Emir* [The Secret Order]

Despite the dark world that dystopia depicts, it may have hope and a utopian impulse with its critical value and the transformation it evokes or aims to evoke in the reader, along with the desire to create a better future from the narrator’s perspective. In this regard, utopia and dystopia are strongly related. Contrary to the traditional perspective, such an intricate relationship is not based on binary oppositions because of utopian hope in dystopian narratives that generally appear to be pessimistic depictions of the world. The relativity of dystopian and utopian imaginations, that is, whose imagination the utopia or dystopia is, plays a major role at this point (Atasoy and Kayışçi Akkoyun, 2022, p. 13). With the suggestions and administrative factors they offer, utopias are among the most basic reflection areas of the relationship between politics and literature. Similarly, dystopias do the same, particularly with their warning nature and by showing the point to where social life has been dragged under the guidance of power.

Although it appears to be designed in a distant future, dystopias are related to the society in which they are almost always produced, including its social, cultural, and political structure. When the texts are examined with the close reading technique, such a cultural context is possibly observed. In this sense, dystopia has an effective ability and potential to predict and warn (Atasoy, 2020, p. 1141). Periods of martial law can generally be seen as peak points of a chaotic atmosphere. Undesired landscapes such as darkness, oppression, tough and inflexible attitudes, and chaos brought up by such a period are reflected in dystopian fiction works. In this context, *Gizli Emir*, which was published just before the March 12 and September 12 periods at the peak of martial law applications, should be examined considering the relationship between literature and politics.

Several tendencies in the novels approach March 12 from a leftist perspective. The first type is the tendency of those who sympathize with the left but are insufficient in understanding this historical/social period. The second refers to those who experienced or succeeded in understanding March 12 involving *Gizli Emir*, and the third is those dealing with the petite bourgeoisie. These novels brought novelty to the issues they dealt with and revealed startling, disturbing, and striking issues (Türkeş, 2008, p. 1062)

In *Gizli Emir*, the lives of people living in terror and a chaotic environment, the beginning of which is unknown, in an anonymous city for an indefinite period are narrated. Asayışı Yerleştirme Olağanüstü Teşkilatı (AYOT, the extraordinary organization for the restoration of peace) representing the power applies a great oppression and suppression policy on society to prevent the chaos caused by the gangs named “Crab,” “Hawk,” and “Owl.” All the people in the novel, particularly the intellectual characters, namely, Sculptor Nizam, Painter Macid, Chief Editor Kutsi, Politician Ahmet, and Actor Bilal, are waiting for the issuance of a “secret order” that will end the martial law by AYOT, similar to the events when the first time the secret order was heard and how and by whom it will be sent were unknown (Kacıroğlu, 2015, p.36). The main issue is that the existence of a “martial law dystopia” that emerged to suppress

certain conflicts that society will be exposed to soon after the novel's publication. This situation is concretized in the novel through various themes. In fact, the most distinct images of the dystopian and utopian narrations can be searched for in spatial depictions:

Nigâr'ın evi ara sokaktaydı. Fakat Nizam'ların sokağını bu arka sokağa bağlayan cadde her saat çarpışmalara sahne olduğu ve bundan ötürü de parke taşlarından yığınaklar, parçalanmış otobüs ve otomobil kalıntıları, çukurlar, patlamış su borularının yarattığı seller, her an çökme durumunda bulunan yapılarla dolu olduğu için geçilecek gibi değildi (Anday, 1982, p. 107).

[Nigar's house was in an alley. However, as the street that connected Nizam's alley to this alley was a stage for conflicts at every hour and it was consequently filled with piles of cobblestones, smashed bus and automobile remains, holes, floods caused by exploding water pipes, and structures that might collapse at any time, it was impossible to cross it.]

Fictional dystopian works may have a labyrinth theme due to the martial law dystopia. Thus, the author should frequently include closed and narrow spaces in a perceptual framework. "The person in closed and narrow spaces in narratives with a labyrinth theme is in conflict with time, space, and all elements of it. Space flows like an hourglass from the outside towards the inside and with a consuming quality" (Korkmaz, 2015, p. 92). In the quoted depiction, the devouring features of space are in front of the reader with all its dimensions. The space in question is nearly a wreck with all its aspects. This perception form with a wreckage style is nearly an expression of the spiritual worlds of the protagonists. To the subject integrated with the space, the martial law caused by AYOT and the raiding gangs has turned city life into a wreck. This wreck is the projection of a dystopia forecast by the author.

Gizli Emir was first serialized in Cumhuriyet newspaper in 1970 and later published in April 1970. Its authoring and publication as a book were approximately 1 year before March 12. When the novel was published, although some events in the novel enabled some readers to perceive that the author forced his imagination too much, March 12, which occurred a year later, verifies certain ideas of the author in *Gizli Emir* (Naci, 1990, p. 411). Thus, a different image of the dystopian order arising from the martial law that would be declared a few years later during the meeting when the secret order was awaited is clear:

Gece civardan makineli tüfek sesleri geldi, sokaklardan tanklar geçti. Sabaha kadar bir uçak, arsız uçtu. Ama uyuyanların hiçbiri uyanmadı. Bütün bu sesleri eski bakanlardan Fazlı titreye titreye dinledi, arkadaşlarını uyandırmadı (Anday, 1982, p. 40).

[At night, automatic rifle shots were heard in the environment, and tanks passed through the streets. An aircraft flew over us continuously until morning. But nobody

sleeping woke up. Fazlı, a former minister, listened to these sounds trembling, and he did not wake his friends up.]

A dreadful scenery dominates the environment. Fazlı's listening to these sounds trembling is a response to the grotesque landscape created by the period. This grotesque landscape turns into a dystopian moment when thinking of the fictionality of the novel. In addition, this dystopian life starts to be ordinary among people and shifts more tragically. In fact, "sleeping people staying asleep" is the most significant indicator of this situation. Here, sleeping people symbolize a mass that remains quiet in the face of martial law and does nothing but wait, submitting to the suppression of power. Considering the efforts of AYOT holding the power in this direction, the situation becomes more concrete:

AYOT kalmalıdır ve elbet adından da "olağanüstü" lakırdısı silinmelidir. Biz neden "olağanüstü" oluyoruz efendim? Böyle bir sıfat, çalışma şevki bırakır mı insanda? (Anday, 1982, p. 75).

[AYOT must stay, and of course, the nonsense of 'extraordinary' must be deleted from its name. What makes us 'extraordinary'? Would such an attribute leave any motivation to work in a person?]

The fictional individuals who live in disorder and chaos in the AYOT-governed city have now become a part of this environment. They now take this disorder and chaos for granted. Irrational applications by AYOT to keep people under control and conflicts between groups because of different forms have led to heavy pressure on people; however, these pressures have now become a simple habit in daily living. People are indifferent to things experienced. Some declarations of AYOT to direct the life of the society ironically contradict their other declarations. However, these contradictions do not cause a reaction on the people (Kacıroğlu, 2015, p. 39). The point reached has caused the "extraordinary" AYOT to become ordinary. At the foundation of this event, becoming ordinary is the acceptance of a mass who have been exposed to oppressive policies of the power groups.

According to Gustave Le Bon (2020, p. 27), the basic qualities of individuals in the context of mass psychology include the disappearance of the conscious personality, domination of the unconscious personality, orientation toward a certain direction through indoctrination, spread of emotions and thoughts in one direction, and indoctrinated ideas being put into immediate action. According to Le Bon, the individual is not himself/herself anymore and has turned into a robot that has lost the guidance of its will. The mass submits to the oppression and indoctrination of AYOT without a reaction or will and takes no action but waits for the secret order contents while watching and accepting the extraordinary becoming ordinary, although it includes intellectual and active individuals. This mass attitude and the oppressive power against it, with the addition of oppressive gangs such as Hawks, Crabs, and Owls, create a chaotic atmosphere. This chaotic and dark atmosphere is undoubtedly a dystopian fiction that is shaped by the relationship between politics and literature and involves intense political criticisms.

2. Atmosphere of the Country in the Process Leading to September 12

The 1960s are known as the years when Türkiye citizens started to be highly politicized. The role of the 1961 Constitution in this politicization process is undoubtedly great. This politicization was accelerated by the numerical increase in mass activities, union movements, political publications, university students, and political parties. Public problems now not discussed in a narrow framework and started to address the interest areas of wide masses.

In the civil period after the new Constitution, two coup attempts were prevented in 1962 and 1963. The second half of the 1960s witnessed an active political life with the influence of both domestic dynamics and international environment. Cold War conditions also affected Türkiye. On one side, the United States of America (USA), with which a rapprochement was experienced when transitioning to multiparty politics, and on the other side, the Soviet Socialist Republics Union, which started to gain the sympathy of people along with the rise of socialism, engaged the citizens' political debates. Here, the concepts of "right" and "left" by the French Revolution became the main element of political debates in the country.

Although some of the people who ruminated over the country's problems sought the remedy on the right, others saw it on the left. This intellectual division influenced political parties, publications, intellectuals, and the youth. In the general elections in 1965 and 1969, The Justice Party (AP) led by Suleyman Demirel came out as the first party and came to power. This success, which was considered a continuation of the Democrat Party, led to disappointment, particularly in the leftist circles. Those who believed that the current democracy was only a formality adopted this belief more along with the election results. An influential figure in the leftist circles was Doğan Avcıoğlu. According to Avcıoğlu and his team, who tried to explain their theses first in *Yön* and later in *Devrim* magazines, the current system could only be called a "sweet democracy" or "the Philippines type democracy" (Çiçek, 2016, p. 258). Thus, transitioning to a new socialist order through a revolution is imperative. This group who had a considerable influence, particularly on the segmented structure of the left in the 1960s, gained a substantial number of supporters among intellectuals, military, and youth.

The 68 Events that started in France and spread worldwide also affected the political atmosphere in Türkiye. In this period, intellectual debates enriched with the new constitution evolved into violence. The flourishing opposition against the USA, imperialism, and capitalism also found support in leftist circles in Türkiye as in the whole world. Some circles advocating a national democratic revolution starting from 1970 argued that the solution lay only in armed struggles and established armed organizations. This left movement was responded to with violence by the right. The nationalistic and conservative organizations of the period created rightist violence and exacerbated the chaotic environment (Zurcher, 2007, pp. 372-375). Thus, a violet environment that would continue until the September 12 coup was created.

In this period, street fights started to increase, and the number of juntas in the army also increased. The most effective among these was undoubtedly the junta established under the

leadership of Lieutenant General Cemal Madanođlu. The junta, known as the Madanođlu Junta, was different from other juntas. There were not only soldiers but also civilian intellectuals. The intellectual opinion leader of this junta was Avcioglu, who published Devrim Magazine. This group believed that Türkiye's liberation would be with socialism. However, this system change should be through a military intervention, not through parliament. The left coup planned on March 9, 1971, could not be executed when it was revealed by a spy (Atılgan, 2015, pp. 636-637). Instead, a memorandum was issued by the army to the government on March 12, 1971, and the government was forced to resign.

With the advent of 1968, increasing street incidents and acts of violence mobilized the army (Ahmad and Ahmad, 1976, pp. 339-411). In the process leading up to March 12, student incidents and deaths intensified. Leftist and rightist publications of the period wrote publications based on student conflicts (Kayalı, 1994, p. 179). The army thought that the public order in the country would be ensured by harsh measures and a technocratic government above politics. In the memorandum text, the environment of anarchy, conflicts between citizens, and social and economic unrest were cited as reasons for the intervention (Batur, 1985, p. 297). The period called the March 12 regime continued until the 1973 elections. After March 12, the Türkiye regime became even tougher. However, street incidents and violence did not decrease but continued to increase. Although a technocratic government was established under Nihat Erim's Prime Ministry, the army was always present in the background until the general elections. In this process, the freedom area was narrowed with the amendments made to the 1961 Constitution. Activities performed by illegal leftist organizations were severely punished, parties such as Türkiye İşçi Partisi [Turkish Labour Party] and Milli Nizam Partisi [National Order Party] were closed, and political lawsuits were filed against legally operating associations, federations, and publications (Özdemir, 2005, p. 266).

The civilian period from the 1973 general elections to the military coup of September 12, 1980, could not prevent conflict and chaos. This period has been referred to with negative events such as coalition governments, a deteriorating economy, US embargo, political murders, and sectarian conflicts. The escalation of violence by left- and right-wing citizens, inability of political institutions to solve this problem, and military coup exacerbated the situation.

Especially, in the mid-1970s, violence started to increase even more. The perpetrators of only 3 out of 34 politically motivated murders committed in 1975 could be apprehended. Moreover, 109 people died in 92 violent incidents in 1976, and this number increased to 231 in 1977. In 1978, with a record increase, nearly 900 individuals lost their lives because of violence. In the 1-year period between the autumn of 1979 and September 12, 1980, approximately 3,000 people died because of political murders (Ersel et al., 2005, pp. 399-400). This situation also has a very similar and coherent structure to the dystopian environment in *Gizli Emir* and is reminiscent of deaths. All these violent incidents shaken people's trust in the political institution. The parliament could not elect the president for 115 rounds of voting. In such an environment of chaos and terror, the Turkish Armed Forces staged a coup. After the coup, street events were

completely cut off. This situation looked attractive to many right- or left-wing people who were tired of the chaos and terror environment. However, after the coup, a new chaos began. Milli Güvenlik Konseyi (MGK, The National Security Council), which ruled the country until the 1983 general elections after the coup, had many negative applications. The five members of the MGK, with the support of all armed forces, ended the political conflict on the street but started a more dangerous process.

As per records, 650,000 people were detained in the coup environment and 1.683 million were blacklisted. Of the 210,000 lawsuits filed, 230,000 people were tried, 7,000 were tried with death penalty, and 517 were sentenced to death. The activities of 23,677 associations were stopped, and 3,854 teachers, 120 faculty members working at the university, and 47 judges were dismissed. Newspapers could not be published for 300 days, and 39 tons of newspapers and magazines were destroyed. In total, 299 people lost their lives in prisons (Grand National Assembly Parliamentary Research Commission Report, 2012: xiv-xv). The “anticipated secret order” passed over the country like a cylinder.

3. Thinking of “the Secret Order” as September 12

Since *Gizli Emir* corresponds to the March 12 period just 1 year ago as of its writing and publication, it is generally evaluated over March 12. However, according to Fethi Naci, this situation is not exactly the right approach.

In *Gizli Emir*, Anday depicts a police-dominated city that is overwhelmed by murders and attacks and deviates far from reason. In this context, the author describes the situation of cities that move away from rationality and come under the rule of the police. In this respect, limiting *Gizli Emir* to only March 12 is not appropriate. Although *Gizli Emir* includes March 12, its main scope is wider (Naci, 1990, p. 413). Accordingly, although the novel has a dystopian structure and presents the opportunity to be evaluated in a wide range because of reasons such as being based on real time and space in terms of fiction, September 12 is encountered as the first when it is directed outside the scope of March 12 in terms of political, historical, and social aspects within the framework of the era–personality–work. Moreover, remarkable similarities and parallels were found between the anticipated “secret order” and September 12.

The secret order, which is thought to end the chaos, is the characters’ only hope for life. All the people of the city, from intellectuals to the educated, from ordinary people to AYOT administrators and officials, experience their consciousness of existence in this act of waiting and hope. Waiting for the secret order refers to the meaning/meaninglessness of life. Nearly all behaviors and actions are shaped by this expectation and become the existential characteristic of the individual. The existence status of people is only waiting (Kacıroğlu, 2015, p. 44). However, this expectation gradually begins to be replaced with frustration toward the end of the novel. This frustration is implicated to the reader in an open-ended and implicit statements of Kutlu, who ends the novel:

Heykeltraş Nizam: bunların hepsi geçecek dedi. Bir gün gizli emir gelince...

Bu sırada kapı çalındı. Heykeltraş Nizam, “geldiler” diyerek kapıyı açmaya yollandı.

Kutlu onun arkasından:

- Sen gizli emre...

Diye bir söze başladı, bir soru soracaktı, ama esnemekten bitiremedi sözünü (Anday, 1982, p. 277).

[The sculptor Nizam said: all this will pass. One day, when the secret order comes...

Meanwhile, the door was knocked. The sculptor Nizam was sent to open the door, saying, “They are here.” Behind him, Kutlu started to say:

Do you really...

wanting to ask a question to ask a question, but he could not finish his speech because of yawning.]

Naci (1990, p. 413) explains this situation by stating “At the end of the novel, Kutlu starts to say something behind her husband, ‘Do you really...,’ but she cannot finish it due to yawning; if she could finish, maybe she was going to say ‘... do you really’ ‘believe in the secret order.’” At this point, this opinion of Kutlu, who gave the impression of a more realistic character at the end of the novel than the romantic revolutionaries, indicates that the great expectation about the secret order resulted or will result in frustration. A very similar version of the situation is also found in the September 12 coup.

Those who staged the coup stated that they did it to satisfy their aspirations for a more open regime, a more developed democracy, Western-style freedoms, and freedom of thought. However, practices have resulted in the opposite. Large segments of the public and some intellectuals, who were helpless in the face of the climate of terror and street murders in the country, welcomed September 12 positively initially. However, over time, various events resulted in the coup that led to certain adversities for society (Dorsay, 1995, p. 12). The dystopian background of the March 12 memorandum had an impact on the September 12 coup, which came with a secret order. In this context, the first parallelism is that September 12 was welcomed by a significant part of the intellectual group in the beginning and the secret order anticipated as a savior in the novel brings the coup closer in time. The main point that rivets this paradigm is the exact similarity of the environment that they both came from. The author presents this with the metaphor of “darkness”:

Birden sofa kapkaranlık oluverdi. Kutlu kollarını sağa sola açtı bilmeden.

- Niçin kapadınız elektriği? Diye sordu kıza.

Tam o sırada ışıklar yandı gene. Kız:

- Ben söndürmedim ki, dedi. AYOT’UN yat emriymiş (Anday, 1982, p. 143).

[All of a sudden, the hall went completely dark. Kutlu extended her arms right and left instinctively.

- Why did you turn off the lights? she asked the girl.

Just at that moment, the lights came back. The girl said:
- I didn't turn them off. It was the "go to bed" order of AYOT.]

Here, the darkness created by AYOT can reflect the gloomy administration. At this point, the author presents his estheticized "obscurantism criticism." In fact, the darkness created by AYOT and the obscuring of information in oppressive regimes are a projection of policies such as obscurantism, opposing brightness, and sustaining the chaos, and this reminds the obscurantist practices that prepare the ground for both the secret order and September 12.

The obscuring of information can turn obscurantism into an effort to preserve ugly and unbearably choking situations in some places and times (Blackmur, 2017, p. 116). When the process that brought about September 12 was examined, street violence and terrorism in Türkiye was found to have escalated from 1968 to 1980. Thus, democracy functions based on violence. This situation was stopped with the coup on September 12, 1980, and violence was terminated temporarily; however, democracy was left functionless until 1983 (Yavan, 2018, p. 83). This paradigm that associates both elements by period and atmosphere assumes a more rigid form as a result of both. People and intellectuals who wait for both the secret order and September 12 are faced with disappointment. The meeting of the segment of the society with September 12 who wait for an administrative move in the gloomy atmosphere and chaotic environment of the period and the secret order anticipated as a savior in the novel turning out to be a futile hope is nearly equivalent to one another in terms of a dystopian image:

Ben bilemem, dedi. Herkes söylüyor bir emir gelecek diye... Gizli bir emirmiş. (...) Evet önümüzde kavgalar, dövüşler oldu, adamlar vuruldu, bombalar patlatıldı, o ara belki kendini içeri atıp kurtulan da olmuştur, ama ben bunu önleyemem ki... (...) Doğrusunu istersen, ne emir ise bu emir, gelse bir an önce iyi olur (Anday, 1982, p. 8).

[I cannot know, he said. Everyone says that an order will be issued... They say it is a secret order. (...) Well, we witnessed fights, and disputes, people were shot, and bombs exploded, but maybe some jumped inside and saved themselves. (...) To tell you the truth, whatever this order is, it had better come soon]

What the order is, where and when it will come, and what its content are completely uncertain. The people are only waiting for an order that can save them from this dark atmosphere in the administrative sense. This points to a hopeful expectation that was not known where and how it would come in the post-March 12 period. The fiction, which ends with the failure of hopes for the expected secret order in the novel, actually corresponds to a period ending with September 12. The finding that both of them caused social frustration let alone meeting expectations indicate that September 12 was expected in a dystopia like *Gizli Emir* and resulted in disappointment. Here, Anday's foresight and the fact that he esthetized the periodic realities that became dystopian with an artistic style and presented them to the reader 10 years before have an intensely strong importance in the relationship between literature and politics.

Both *Gizli Emir* and September 12 are developed by being fed with similar conditions in similar processes. Given that both of them are causing frustration in society, there is social as well as political criticism. The frustration experienced/to be experienced by the audience, who indexed their existential ties only to an uncertain hope by taking no action other than waiting in the darkness they are in, is embodied by the results of September 12, which would take place >10 years after the publication of the novel.

Conclusion

In the evaluations of the relationship between literature and politics, dystopian fiction has a very important function in bearing traces in both fields. *Gizli Emir*, a dystopian work by Melih Cevdet Anday, is worth examining. This novel, which has a traditional compatible structure with the events of March 12 and September 12, was a warning before both events took place. Thus, the author's foresight in a political and social sense in addition to artistic criteria should be noted.

In this study, which deals with the process experienced in the *Gizli Emir* in association with March 12 and the "secret order," which is expected as a savior but can never have the function of a savior in association with September 12, *Gizli Emir* is a dystopia loaded with political and social criticism. Thus, the dark and chaotic environment created by the period between March 12 and September 12, which is examined in association with the novel, and the tragic landscapes created by the tensions this environment caused in society are made visible both historically and as a result of text-centered approaches over the novel.

Analyzing *Gizli Emir* within the framework of a dystopian fiction in terms of the relationship between politics and literature reminds both the recent Turkish political history once again and reveals the importance of an important literary work created on a very high foresight level in the context of warning qualities in addition to its artistic values.

First of all, societies cannot emerge from their crises through a mystical or mysterious process. These problems should be solved by public policies produced within society. Political institution itself should take responsibility. Undoubtedly, the citizens will build the political institution in the context of democratic principles. In the novel authored by Anday the secret order, which is seen as the solution to everything, sustains the lack of solution. Likewise, the "order" given for the September 12 coup, which was advertised as the "Operation Flag," put Türkiye in a worse situation rather than liberation.

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