

THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE UNCANNY: (DE) TERRITORIALIZATIONS OF HOME AND SELF IN OĞUZ ATAY'S "KORKUYU BEKLERKEN" ("WAITING FOR FEAR")

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ABSTRACT

Oğuz Atay's "Korkuyu Beklerken" is a highly Kafkaesque short story that problematizes the position of an individual within spatial and individual boundaries. Alarmed by an "uncanny" letter, the protagonist quits his job so that he can seclude himself in his house, which gradually evolves from a familiar home space into an unfamiliar space of unbelonging. The "uncanny" functions as a catalyst for the protagonist, leading him to an inner quest in terms of identity and space. The notions of home and selfhood are highly intertwined in the story; that is, identity is not only a part of space, but it is also inseparable from it. Atay's configuration of home ultimately determines the protagonist's behavior, for his reconstruction of spatial boundaries parallels the protagonist's attempt to define and configure himself. While his exile in his house/burrow seems to be the only realm to find "a line of escape," it equally imprisons him, with a gradual effacement of meanings to render him totally homeless. Theoretically based on Freud's seminal essay "Unheimlich" and Todorov's notion of "the fantastic" and Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, the paper will proceed with some intertextual references to Camus' "The Artist at Work," Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener," and Mahfouz's "The Time and the Place" in terms of their contextualization of space and identity. In this paper, the relationship between home/space and identity will be examined to claim that (de)construction of home is a metaphor for (de)construction of identity. I am mainly going to argue that the protagonist's quest for selfhood, which starts with an encounter with the uncanny ultimately results in defeat, a reterritorialization, or rather as a tragic end that opens up the issue of homelessness. The protagonist's search for self-authenticity and individual emancipation is thus doomed to be lost in a quest degraded by the uncanniness of existence. He fails to find an authentic "home" within the space that is his house, and a true

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selfhood within the restrictions of his constructed identity. In Lukácsian sense, “home” is coming to terms with one’s identity, as in a quest of a modern novel hero “every road leads to the essence – leads home – for to the soul its selfhood is its home”. Yet, our character finds himself more and more in a sort of “homelessness,” obscuring the boundaries between the self and home. Just like Kafka’s “Gregor’s deterritorialization through the becoming-animal fails” with a re-Oedipalization in the end, there are no flights of escape in “Korkuyu Beklerken” as even the only glimpse of a way out –home as the cosmos of his identity – collapses and so is his quest into selfhood.

Keywords: Oğuz Atay, “Waiting for Fear”, (De)construction of identity, Uncanny, Home/Exile

ÖZET

Oğuz Atay’ın “Korkuyu Beklerken” adlı öyküsü bireyin mekansal ve bireysel sınırlar içerisindeki durumunu sorunsallaştıran son derece Kafkaesk bir öyküdür. “Tekinsiz” bir mektupla harekete geçen kahraman işini bırakıp, tanıdık bir aidiyet alanından giderek yabancı bir aidiyetsizlik alanına dönüşen evine sığınır. Bu “tekinsiz” tecrübe, kahramanın kimlik ve mekan bakımından içsel bir arayışa yönelmesini sağlar. Ev ve kendilik kavramları öyküde iç içe geçmiş durumdadır; öyle ki, kimlik sadece mekanın bir parçası değildir, aynı zamanda mekandan ayrılamaz durumdadır. Atay’ın ev konfigürasyonu kahramanın davranışlarını belirler, zira Atay’ın mekansal sınırları kurgulamasıyla kahramanın kendini tanımlaması ve kurgulaması paralellikler gösterir. Evindeki / barınağındaki bu sürgün kahramanın kaçış yolu bulabileceği tek alan olarak gözükse de, sonunda onu yersiz yurtsuz bırakacak şekilde yavaş yavaş tüm anlamların silinmesiyle, evi de onu aynı şekilde hapsedecektir. Teorik olarak Freud’un ufuk açıcı makalesi “Unheimlich” (Tekinsiz), Todorov’un “fantastik” kavramı ve Deleuze ve Guattari’nin *Kafka: Minör bir Edebiyata Doğru* (*Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*) adlı eserine dayanan bu makalede, mekan ve kimliği kavramsallaştırmaları bakımından Albert Camus’nün “The Artist at Work,” Herman Melville’in “Bartleby the Scrivener,” ve Naguib Mahfouz’un “The Time and the Place” adlı öykülerine bazı metinlerarası göndermeler mevcuttur. Bu makalede, ev / mekan ile kimlik arasındaki ilişki evin yersiz yurtsuzluğunun kimliğin de yersiz yurtsuzluğunu olduğu iddiasıyla incelenecektir. Kahramanın, tekinsiz olanla karşılaşması ile başlayan kendini arayışının bir yenilgiyle, bir yersiz yurtsuzlukla, ya da evsizlik tecrübesini açan trajik bir sonla bittiği savunulacaktır. Böylece, kahramanın hakiki kimlik ve bireysel özgürlük arayışı, varoluşun tekinsizliğiyle değersizleşen bir arayışta son bulmaya mahkumdur. Kahraman

ne evinin mekansal sınırları içinde hakiki bir “yuva” ne de kurgulanmış kimliğinin sınırları içerisinde gerçek bir kimlik bulabilir. Lukács’cı anlamda, “ev” insanın kimliğiyle uzlaşmasıdır, zira modern bir roman kahramanının “arayışı”nda “her yol öze doğrudur – eve doğrudur – çünkü ruh için asıl evi / yuvası kendiliğidir”. Ama karakterimiz kimlik ve ev arasındaki sınırları muğlaklaştırarak kendini gitgide daha çok bir evsizlik durumunda bulur. Tıpkı Kafka’nın Gregor’ının hayvan olarak yersiz yurtsuzlaşması, sonunda tekrar Oedipalleşerek başarısızlığa uğraması gibi, “Korkuyu Beklerken”de de bir kaçış yolu yoktur, zira kahramanın kimlik arayışı da tek muhtemel kaçış yolu – kimliğinin evreni olarak evi- gibi yıkılmaya mahkumdur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Oğuz Atay, “Korkuyu Beklerken”, Kimlik, Tekinsizlik, Ev/Sürgün

The Encounter with the Uncanny:

The story narrates the “weird” self quest of the protagonist whose life is completely changed by a letter he finds in his house. Trying in vain to find out the origin and purpose of the surprising letter, the protagonist can find no rational explanations: “I was afraid. Because I was at a point when I could not say ‘that is why’ ... I wish I could say ‘that is why’ once again” (37).¹ As the expression “that is why” evidently refers to the world of cause and effects, to the world of rationality, his mental position has to do with a sort of absurdity. The letter is in a “weird” foreign language; “it is as if it does not belong to any language at all”² with unintelligible signifiers³ (39). It may be said that the letter seems to come from somewhere outside the symbolic order to open up an uncanny realm of existence for the protagonist. So, frightened by the contents of this unexpected, unaddressed, unstamped letter, which turns out to warn him against leaving his house, the protagonist obsessively takes refuge at home: “Hell with all dogs and strangers. I have come here [home], to hide my fears”⁴ (40). Interestingly, his home evolves into a dualistic place: both a safe haven guarded against fear and also an uncanny realm to wait for fear. “Heimlich” home, which means

¹ “Korktum. Çünkü ‘demek ki’ diyemeyeceğim bir yerlere gelmişim...Ne olurdu bir ‘demek ki’ daha diyebilseydim.”

² “sanki hiçbir dilden değil...”

³ “Morde ratesden, Esur tında serg! Teslarom portog tis ugor anleter, ferto tagan ugotahenc metoy-doscent zist. Norgunk! Ubor-Metenga”

⁴ “Bütün köpeklerin ve yabancıların canı cehenneme! Ben buraya, korkularımı gizlemeye geldim.”

“belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate and friendly” is suddenly transformed into an “unheimlich” space (Freud 345). This sudden transformation is only one facet of various displacements and ruptures that occur throughout the story. Not only is the totality of the house disturbed, but the protagonist’s security is also exposed to some outside dangers. This threat to the totality of his identity causes him to become paranoid, even agoraphobic, completely secluding himself in his home.

An uncanny atmosphere dominates the whole story with the transformation of the house into a mysterious realm. According to Freud, an uncanny effect is produced by a writer who creates “a kind of uncertainty in us in the beginning by not letting us know, no doubt purposely, whether he is taking us into the real world or into a purely fantastic one of his own creation” (351). Atay creates such an effect as the reader cannot be totally sure whether the letter has actually been sent by a secret society, the protagonist believes, or if it is just a figment of the protagonist’s disturbed mind. The first person narration further complicates things. As various hyper-real events occur, such as the protagonist’s winning the lottery and the collapse of his home, the story seems to take place in an unreal dimension obscuring the distinction between reality and illusion. Freud argues that “an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolizes” (375).

The reality of the letter, however, is confirmed when a friend of the protagonist translates the letter into Turkish, and sends it back to him as stamped and addressed. Sibel Irzik argues that the stamped and sealed letter comes back to the protagonist as a boomerang, whose presence and ownership is “concretely and disturbingly documented” (184). At one point, the protagonist attempts to burn both the letter and its translation. However, a permanent stain which he cannot get rid of remains on the kitchen floor: “I was ready to kill everyone, to destroy the entire world in order to wipe this stain, or speck or shade out of the floor”⁵ (52). The shadow of the *unheimlich*, thus, has already marked its stain both on the house and on the consciousness of the protagonist. This shadow is like a glimpse of the Real from a crack in the symbolic order in the Lacanian sense, it cannot be experienced in and through language. It also brings to mind Jung’s shadow that everyone carries, “and the less it is embodied in the individual’s conscious life, the blacker and denser it is” (Jung 131). One might

⁵ “Bu lekeyi ya da dalgayı ya da gölgeyi taşım üzerinden silebilmek uğruna herkesi öldürmeğe, bütün dünyayı yok etmeye hazırdım.”

argue that the protagonist's problematic encounter with the letter / the fear leads him to face with his own shadow, his unconscious dark self. Thus, the entire story can be read as a painful compromise with the shadow, the trace of which is marked in the house. Such a painful reconciliation also opens up the possibility of creativity and authenticity in his quest for selfhood.

In terms of the configuration of familiar home as an uncanny realm of existence, "Korkuyu Beklerken" parallels Mahfouz's story "The Time and the Place." Mahfouz narrates the story of a young man whose old house is transformed into a fantastic place with a sudden emergence of a fantastic courtyard, a well and a lofty palm tree in the middle of the room. Urged by a "call," he starts digging up the floor of his house to find a letter, which reads "leave not your house," as it is a "safe refuge" (33). The young man ironically gets some sort of pleasure out of this anonymous command, readily making it his *raison d'être*. This is not unlike the protagonist in Atay's story, who is both troubled by and takes delight in acting upon the command of a so-called secret society.

It was ordering me not to leave the old house so that I might act on some ancient command, the time for whose implementation had not yet arrived. Despite the fact that the whole situation was garbed in a wrapping woven of dreams, and wholly at odds with reason, it nonetheless took control of me with a despotic force. My heart became filled with the delights and pains of living in expectation. That whole night I did not sleep a single moment, as my imagination went roaming through the vastness of time that comprised past, present, and future together, drunk with the intoxication that total freedom brings. (Mahfouz 31)

Before that, the young man in "The Time and the Place" also questions whether this uncanny scene is real or "a figment of [his] imagination" like our protagonist (30): "A feeling told me I was witnessing a scene I had never viewed before, and another that told me that there was nothing strange about it, that I had both seen it and was remembering it" (29). This statement is directly in line with Freud's description of the uncanny – *unheimlich* – as the class of frightening things that leads us back to what is known and familiar (340). According to Schelling, on the other hand, "*unheimlich* is the name for everything that ought to have remained ... secret and hidden but has come to light" (qtd in Freud 345). The transformation of the house, then, can be considered in terms of a change on the level of identity. Actually, in Mahfouz's story, the protagonist's literal excavation of the house is like an attempt to disclose what is supposed to be "secret and hidden." In this sense, it seems like a journey into the depths of memory and into the unconscious, as the limits of time and space

are transgressed. It is no surprise that the more he digs, the more he “smell[s] the nostalgia of bygone days” (32). Also, while digging, he “feels that [he is] drawing near to the truth... “[he is] being presented with a truth in a concrete form that was undeniable, an embodied miracle, a victory scored against time” (32-33, italics mine). The idea of the *truth* may symbolize art and creativity, or an authenticity of selfhood, which uncannily lies deep inside the unconscious and that can only be taken out by going into deeper heights.⁶ The protagonist in “Korkuyu Beklerken” likewise lets his home become a totally uncanny place in order to attain the truth out of the crisis of seclusion.

Deterritorializations of Spatial and Individual Boundaries:

The transformation of the house into an uncanny realm of existence, on the other hand, goes hand in hand with the deterritorialization of his identity and familiar meanings regarding his old life. The word “deterritorialization” is defined by Caren Kaplan as “a term for displacement of identities, persons, and meanings that is endemic to the postmodern world system” (358): Kaplan states that Deleuze and Guattari use this term “to locate this moment of alienation and exile in language and literature. In one sense, it describes the effects of radical distancing between signifier and signified, [as] meaning and utterances become estranged” (358). In “Korkuyu Beklerken,” one aspect of such a deterritorialization may be the effacement of the distinction between subject and object, as the house becomes an area in which the subject and object cannot be compromised: “I was spending my entire life with objects. And I suppose I did not like objects anyway. As a matter of fact, I was equating objects with human beings, and with both, I had some issues only I know and cannot tell anyone else”⁷(64). Sibel Irzik articulates this relationship regarding “Korkuyu Beklerken” as follows:

[The house is] a furnished area which creates the illusion that alienation is overcome, or rather which is created to overcome this illusion. It is an area in which we exist like / as everyone else. Everyday life becomes an area to wait for fear rather than a safety zone when the impossibility of such a negotiation

⁶ In Orhan Pamuk’s *The Black Book*, the protagonist Galip’s ultimate moment of creativity – his attainment of an authentic self as well as his self as an author – coincides with his discovery of the darkness within himself, the moment when he simultaneously looks at the darkness of a well, to the depths of that dream-like abyss of dust, and garbage among the apartment blocks.

⁷ “Ömrümü eşya ile geçiriyordum. Eşyayı da sevmiyordum galiba. Daha doğrusu eşyayla insanı bir tutuyordum, ikisiyle de aramda, yalnız benim bildiğim ve başkalarına açıklayamadığım meseleler vardı” (64).

is sensed. When we, even unconsciously, feel that we cannot touch objects, when we cannot relate to them in our own identities, when we cannot use them as supports to help us overcome the void between the world and ourselves, objects gain strength, they become alive, they are even personified.”⁸ (178)

The protagonist’s famous remark of “what if objects go mad one day?”⁹ refers to this sort of concern. Similarly, throughout the story the protagonist’s position as a subject of his experiences, as a real actor with a control over the events, is highly debatable. For instance, one might well claim that he initially becomes the object of the uncanny letter, which manipulates his actions. Blurring the distinctions between object and subject, becoming one with the object, has to do with the fantastic or uncanny aspect of “Korkuyu Beklerken.” Todorov regards effacement of the limits between subject and object as an attribute of the literature of the fantastic: “The rational schema represents the human being as a subject entering into relations with other persons or with things that remain external to him, and which have the status of objects. The literature of the fantastic disturbs this abrupt separation. We hear music, but there is no longer an instrument external to the hearer and producing sounds” (116).

Another aspect of the transposition of identities in the story is probably the doubling of identities. When the protagonist gradually goes mad, he seems to create a Doppelgänger¹⁰: “What is happening to us? I did not know what I meant by ‘us.’ Probably, I said ‘us’ because I felt so lonely”¹¹ (92). In his essay “The Uncanny,” Freud asserts that “the ‘double’ was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego, an ‘energetic denial of the power of death,’ as Rank says; and probably the ‘immortal’ soul was the first ‘double’ of the body” (363). The doubling of his self towards the end of the story juxtaposes with the protagonist’s earlier wish for death, suggesting a dominance of Eros – life instinct – over Thanatos – death drive – as the story progresses. Actually, the protagonist of “The Time and the Place” goes through a similar proliferation of identities

⁸ “Yabancılaşmanın aşıldığı yanılsamasını yaratan, bu yanılsamayı yaratmak üzere döşenmiş, möbleli bir alan. Herkes gibi olarak kendimiz olduğumuz bir alan. Böyle bir uzlaşmanın gerçekte imkânsız olduğu hissedildiğinde, bir korunma alanı olmaktan çıkıp korkunun beklenildiği yer olur gündelik yaşam. Nesnelere *gerçekten* dokunamadığımızı bilinçsizce de olsa hissettiğimizde, onları kendi benliğimize eklemleyemediğimizde, kendimizle dünya arasındaki boşluğun üzerinden atlamamıza yarayacak protezler olarak kullanamadığımızda, güçlenir, canlanır, hatta kişileşir eşyalar.”

⁹ “ya eşya bir gün delirirse?”

¹⁰ The idea of doubling of identities, as in the protagonist’s use of “us” instead of “me” in the story directly refers to Selim’s famous Doppelgänger “Olrıc” in *Tutunamayanlar*.

¹¹ “Nedir bu başımıza gelenler? dedim. Biz sözüyle ne demek istediğimi bilmiyordum. Herhalde, çok yalnız hissettiğim için ‘biz’ dedim.”

with the mysterious appearance of two men in his house, one who “was nothing but [him]self” and the other “who was dressed similarly to [himself]” (30). Both stories are in line with Todorov’s notion of the fantastic, in which “a character will be readily multiplied...The multiplication of personality, taken literally, is an immediate consequence of the possible transition between matter and mind: we are several persons mentally, we become so physically” (116).

Not only identities, but meanings are also deterritorialized, and the problematization of language as a system for communication is yet one feature of the displacement of meanings. Besides the unintelligible letter that is outside any discourse of meaning, the protagonist is also seriously engaged in learning languages, especially their grammar, throughout the story. As languages are systems of prohibitions¹², of belonging and territorialization, his endeavor might be read as an attempt to fit into the order. His study of Latin primarily – a dead language –, however, suggests his aim is not to master a system of communication, but to engage with language in a different sense. It may even be asserted that in his quest for selfhood, he sees the system of languages as a way of understanding how the unconscious works. Also, although the protagonist immediately gets the letter translated, he is highly disillusioned with the fact that the letter can be translated. Irzik argues the protagonist wants the letter not to be deciphered, because once deciphered the letter is domesticated, by losing its attribute of interiority (183). The letter also gives way to a possibility of language solely used by its own subject (Irzik 182). It is also to be pointed out that he eventually starts writing the same letters of threat, so there is a good chance that he has written the letter himself in the first place, which suggests his search for a possibility of another language belonging solely to himself. Likewise, at one point, he laments that if only he had words of his own, “if only there were a sentence, or a thought that belonged to [him]. If only at least one word out of the millions of words that have been articulated for thousands of years encompasses [him]”¹³ (67).

There are transpositions of the relations between the individual and society, which are manifest in the protagonist’s obsessive withdrawal. The idea of seclusion is not only a personal act in “Korkuyu Beklerken”; it is closely related to an individual’s position within society. One might claim that as a writer, Atay

¹² According to Lacan, language is acquired as a result of some prohibition systems, with the metaphorical prohibitive function of the father, with *le nom du père* (the name of the father) and *le non du père* (the no of the father).

¹³ “Ne olurdu benim de kelimelerim olsaydı; bana ait bir cümle, bir düşünce olsaydı. Binlerce yıldır söylenen milyonlarca sözden hiç olmazsa biri, beni içine alsaydı!”

has been a writer of social concerns rather than an individualistic one. The protagonist in the story mostly deems his isolation as an act against society, as “a revenge on society.”

I went on drinking, ruining myself. I watched me fade away with smoky eyes. I was going to disturb all orders; I was going to show them up. I was neither going to lock the doors nor throw the keys into the vase; I was going to put on my coat without wearing my shoes, I was going to be a good for nothing. Because I could not make up to anyone, I was going to give up all my principles; I was not going to wash the dishes after breakfast. This was the most important of all: I was going to continue existing; I was not going to forget to speak and think. I was going to work hard.¹⁴ (80-1)

The protagonist regards these obsessive routines as necessary for the continuation of order, and the abandonment of them refers to an individual disturbance of that so-called order. In his seclusion, even his telephone –his only remaining means of communication – is suddenly cut off, which leaves him totally alone. His non-conformist seclusion parallels that of Melville’s *Bartleby*, who is likewise insistently confined within the boundaries of his office. In this sense, both the protagonist’s and *Bartleby*’s stances become a sort of “individual” resistance to society: “Either they or I were being defeated. It was not clear who was losing it. The battle was obscure,” says the protagonist in Atay’s story, suggesting an unconscious struggle of an individual against society (59).

The idea of emerging as victor out of this struggle is hinted at as the protagonist likens himself to Noah in the midst of a storm: “I was caught in a big storm. Yes, I was left alone in the midst of an immense sea full with strangers, full with the ones I was estranged”¹⁵ (56). It may be argued that he wishes to escape from the tempest of a society of strangers to a sheltered, safe boat, which is his home. Only in the so-called security of his house is he able to survive. The allusion to Noah’s Arc becomes more evident afterwards when he comes up with the idea of cooking “aşure” (Noah’s pudding) with the ingredients left at home. So, it seems that like Noah, the protagonist is depicted as the only survivor of humanity. Survival can only be achieved by attaining an authentic

¹⁴ “Devam ettim içmeye, kendimi mahvetmeye. Dumanlı gözlerle, eriyip gidişimi seyrettim. Bütün düzenleri yıkacaktım, onlara gösterecektim. Artık ne kapıları kilitleyecek, ne de anahtarları vazonun içine atacaktım; ayakkabılarımı giymeden paltomu giyecektim, serserinin biri olacaktım. Kimseye yaranamadığıma göre, ilkelerimden vazgeçecektim; kahvaltıdan sonra bulaşıkları yıkamayacaktım. En önemlisi şuydu: Varlığımı sürdürecektim; konuşmayı, düşünmeyi unutmuyacaktım, çok çalışacaktım.”

¹⁵ “Büyük bir fırtınaya tutulmuştum. Evet, yabancılarla dolu, bana yabancı olanlarla dolu, uçsuz bucaksız bir denizin ortasında yalnız başıma kalmıştım” (56).

self, which requires a refusal to conform to society.¹⁶

Such distance between the outside and inside, which results from the problematization of individual and social boundaries, is necessary for the individual to come to terms with himself, to create a world of possibilities out of the experience of this exilic position. A similar idea of the spatial and social limits of man and his place in society is narrated in Albert Camus's short story "The Artist at Work." The artist Jonas suffers from the problem of needing private space to be able to survive: "The problem of living-space was, however, by far the greatest of [his] problems, for time and space shrank simultaneously around [him]" (Camus 88). When asked whether he exists, Jonas responds, "No, I'm not sure of existing. But some day I'll exist, I'm sure" (Camus 103). Only when he configures a personal space that entirely belongs to him – a small dark loft within his house –, is he able to exist. The story problematizes home and identity, and seclusion and solidarity of the artist Jonas, and his uncanny position is crystallized in his final work on a canvas: a painted word which can be read as either "solitary" (*solitaire*) or "solidary" (*solidaire*): In "the canvas, completely blank, in the centre of which Jonas had merely written in very small letters a word that could be made out, but without any certainty as to whether it should be read solitary or solidary" (115). So, in the "unstable balance the genius will build his kingdom on the centre of his exile... Only silence can protect him from the constant clamor outside him and within, and prevent his taking over the rhythm of the others, thus losing his own" (Minor and Brackenridge 79). Jonas requires such a seclusion, "a room of one's own" both to exist and to create like the protagonist in "Korkuyu Beklerken." As there are actually few characters in Atay's novels and stories other than intellectuals, or writer-characters¹⁷, (Parla 215), the character here may well be read as a figure of an artist in becoming, who requires the crisis of a willful exile in order to obtain artistic inspiration. Equally trapped between the mundane and the artistic, both Atay's protagonist and Jonas attempt to construct an authentic artist-self. Only by problematizing the experience of identity and territory, obscuring the boundaries between inside and outside, can they achieve inspiration out of this crisis. This may directly

¹⁶ Both in *Tutunamayanlar* and *Tehlikeli Oyunlar*, Atay seems to examine the question of the possibility of attaining an authentic identity, the question of coming up as a victor out of a self-quest. It may be interesting to note that the allusion to Noah as the figure of victory in "Korkuyu Beklerken" juxtapose with many references to Jesus Christ as the ultimate symbol of the victimized, and dispossessed in *Tutunamayanlar*.

¹⁷ In *Oğuz Atay'da Aydın Olgusu*, Yıldız Ecevit maintains that the word "intellectual" (*aydın*) refers to someone who struggles to attain self - authenticity. These people, she argues, lead an intellectual life, as they think and criticize. They want to get the essence of the things. Their world views are shaped outside the dominant values of society (vii).

refer to the myth of Orpheus, as “one cannot create a work unless the enormous experience of the depths ... is not pursued for its own sake” (Blanchot 99).

In his seclusion, the protagonist in Atay’s story also experiences a different experience of the passage of time: “While I was drowsing in my rocking chair, I was thinking about what to do with all the time I had. The issue of time was the one of the most important problems I had,”¹⁸ says the protagonist (57). He also delights in sleeping which helps him pass a quarter of his day without having to count the minutes. His failure to understand the passage of time, the asynchrony between his perception of time and the objective time, is a melancholic aspect of his withdrawal. The limits of the house juxtaposed with the limitlessness of present time condemn him to an Oblomov-like existence, like Melville’s *Bartleby*. Yet, as opposed to *Bartleby*’s case, boredom does not lead the protagonist to inertia but to a busy projection of things to do and words to say. Thus, he is preoccupied with various tasks ranging from learning foreign languages to drawing the boundaries of his house.

His preoccupation with the house throughout the story is a main aspect of his self-quest, as the protagonist starts to define and construct spatial boundaries in an attempt to define and configure himself. In this sense, he is obsessively engaged with drawing the plan of the house, with specifying the exact boundaries of it: “I thought about the entire house. I had to inspect everywhere. Starting from one corner, step by step ... I had to draw a plan of the house. I looked around. (I could draw the plan by heart. I knew each and every inch well enough)” (58).¹⁹ If the concepts of home and selfhood constantly overlap, then his reconstruction of spatial boundaries may refer to his endeavor to define the boundaries of his identity. The protagonist is also concerned about the totality of the house, since he seriously interrogates whether his garden can be considered within the borders of the house: “Doctor, I have tried all the possibilities, all the boundaries of these walls (I mean, the garden walls); beyond the walls can only be contemplated, imagined, you know,”²⁰ says the protagonist, bringing to mind the limits implied by all borders (89). The literal walls establishing his spatial boundaries actually stand for the symbolic walls of his identity, separating him from “the others.” The protagonist’s paranoid authority over his own

¹⁸ “Sallanan koştüğümde uyuklarken bir yandan da elimdeki zamanla ne yapacağımı düşündüm. En önemli dertlerimden biriydi zaman meselesi...”

¹⁹ “Bütün evi düşündüm: Her tarafı gözden geçirmeliydim. Bir köşeden başlayarak yavaş yavaş... Bir planını çizmeliydim evin. Çevreme baktım. (Gözü kapalı çizebilirdim planı. Her tarafı o kadar iyi biliyordum ki).

²⁰ “Doktor bey, bu duvarların (bahçe duvarları, demek istiyorum) bütün imkânlarını, sınırlarını denedim; biliyorsunuz, duvarların ötesi ancak düşünülebilir, hayal edilebilir” (89).

territory is, then, just an illusion of securing a private and authentic sphere for himself. It is an illusion, mainly because it is rather ambiguous as to whether these symbolic walls protect him from the world or whether they in fact create a prisonlike quarantine. Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener" also problematizes the idea of walls and boundaries; that is, Bartleby who "would prefer not to do anything" constantly looks at a wall just like our protagonist who dreams of "beyond the walls." Springer argues that "Bartleby the Scrivener" is also "a matter of the erection of barriers, seen and unseen, man-made and natural," and "walled off from others," Bartleby is himself "a kind of wall without reason, incomprehensible and blank" (415). So, there is a displacement of meaning with regard to the walls, which come to serve as constant reminders of the experience of the limits of time and space, rather than as guards to secure protection.

The last aspect of the deterritorialization of identities in "Korkuyu Beklerken" is a constant alienation from existence. Just like being a sort of stranger within one's own language – an aspect of minor literature for Deleuze and Guattari –, what Atay, as a true minor author, does in "Korkuyu Beklerken" is to create a character that is not only estranged from language, but also from his identity and home. The story narrates the position of the protagonist who gradually deconstructs "the familiar" through an endeavor to find "a line of escape." He comes to the verge of madness due to an obsessive preoccupation with languages and house errands in his imprisonment. For instance, after running out of food supplies at home, he insistently fasts²¹. So, in search of a true identity in solitude, he escapes from all materiality –work, money, food– eventually becoming a sort of animal. In a similar way, the protagonist talks about some frequent encounters with a unique insect in his dark and uninhabited guest room: "Because my mum always keeps the door of this room closed and because she does not let random visitors in there, this room has been isolated enough to let a strange insect reach there. Yes, this is a different kind of insect: if all insects like it are green, this would be yellow"²² (63). As this encounter seems to be a direct allusion to Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, we can read the protagonist as becoming a sort of animal like Gregor Samsa in his search for emancipation, or rather for a way out. "To become an animal is to participate in movement, to stake out the path of escape in all its positivity, to cross a threshold, to reach continuum

²¹ According to Deleuze and Guattari, fasting is a constant theme in Kafka's writing: "His writings are a long history of fasts ... To speak, and above all to write, is to fast" (20).

²² "Annem bu odayı hep kapalı tuttuğu için, olur olmaz misafirleri buraya almadığı için, demek ki bu karanlık ve soğuk oda, garip bir böceğin, oraya ulaşmasına yetecek kadar insansız kalıyordu. Evet, başka türlü bir böcekti bu: Kendisine benzeyen böcekler, mesela genellikle yeşil olursa bu sarı olurdu."

of intensities that are valuable only in themselves,” say Deleuze and Guattari (13). Becoming animal seems to be the only way for the protagonist to be authentic, or to be totally exempt from the constraints of the pre-determined ways of being, acting and feeling in the Foucaultian sense. Then, his seclusion in a burrow is “to find a world of pure intensities where all forms come undone, as do all the significations, signifiers, and signifieds, to the benefit of an unformed matter of deterritorialized flux, of nonsignifying signs” (Deleuze and Guattari 13). “Korkuyu Beklerken” is a story of such a deterritorialized flux in which the notions of home and identity are de-contextualized and deconstructed.

When the protagonist is finally able to leave his burrow / home for a couple of days, to our surprise, he finds his house totally collapsed. “It was broken down. My house was broken down... I want to go into the house, I said. I want to go in... There was a stranger pile of debris lying on my bed”²³ (95). If his identity always refers to his home, then the physical decay of the house seems to be a symbol of his psychological defeat. “The order of the absolute isolation did me no good, either. The solitude I’d been missing for years was destroyed. So, the order in my mind depends on objects,”²⁴ says the protagonist (96). At first, this catastrophe might be regarded as a final victory of “solidarity” over “solitude.” There seems to be a triumph of the emancipation of a self which has fulfilled himself, now that he has taken advantage of the house as a catalyst for attaining authenticity. I would argue, however, that the last pages of the story after the catastrophe mark a typical “re-oedipalization” since he decides to get married, and then to write the same letters of threat to some happy couples to disturb them. So, just like “Gregor’s deterritorialization through his becoming-animal finds itself blocked,” the protagonist cannot escape from the exposure of his self to the “diabolical forces” outside, actually by becoming one of them (14). Therefore, the ending of the story suggests that there is an ultimate defeat – a tragic end that opens up the total experience of homelessness and uprootedness.

His search for self authenticity and individual emancipation is thus doomed to be lost in a quest degraded by the uncanniness of existence. He fails to find an authentic “home” within the space that is his house, and a true selfhood within the restrictions of his constructed identity. In Lukácsian sense, “home” is coming to terms with one’s identity, as in a quest of a modern novel hero “every road leads to the essence – leads home – for to the soul its selfhood is its home” (Lukács

²³ “Yıkılmıştı. Evim yıkılmıştı... Eve girmek istiyorum, dedim. İçeri girmek istiyorum... Yatağında tanımadığım bir betonuğlakireç yığını yatıyordu.”

²⁴ “Mutlak yalnızlığın düzeni de yaramadı bana. Yıllardır özlediğim sessizlik de yıkıldı gitti... Kafamdaki düzen de eşyaya bağlanmış meğer.”

87). Yet, our character finds himself more and more in a sort of “homelessness,” obscuring the boundaries between the self and home. Just like “Gregor’s deterritorialization through the becoming-animal fails” with a re-Oedipalization in the end, there are no flights of escape in “Korkuyu Beklerken” as even the only glimpse of a way out – home as the cosmos of his identity – collapses and so is his quest into selfhood.

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