

# Commonalities of Surreal and Postmodern Aesthetics in Oğuz Atay's Short Story "Neither Yes nor No"

DOÇ. DR. Ahmet EVİS\*

## Abstract

The Turkish literature of the Republican Period, a stage in which modern Turkish literature developed in a Western way and made serious breakthroughs, is a process in which different artistic understandings are successfully applied through different genres. The surrealist aesthetics adopted by the Garip Movement poets in the 1940s, and the postmodernist attitude that started with Oğuz Atay in the 1970s and continued with names such as Orhan Pamuk and Hasan Ali Toptaş are concrete indicators of the fundamental changes in Turkish literature.

This study is based on the cynical attitude in surrealism that opposes the logical order and singular reality, the importance given to the subconscious, and the original expression techniques, as well as the hyperrealism of postmodernism, the aspect of intertextuality that makes use of techniques such as parody, irony, sarcastic/ridiculous transformation, and the commonalities created by the gamification of language, which it transforms into an ontological issue. The study aims to examine the common aspects of surrealist attitude and postmodern aesthetics in literary works, in a comparative and text-centered manner, through the short story "Ne Evet Ne Hayır" (Neither Yes nor No). Following a descriptive method, the analysis of the aforementioned short story was made by considering the identical or similar principles of both movements. In line with the data obtained, it has been determined that the humor, language use, view of reality, and subconscious preferences in the short story are suitable for both surrealism and postmodernism.

**Keywords:** Oğuz Atay, "Ne Evet Ne Hayır" ("Neither Yes nor No"), surrealism, postmodernism

## OĞUZ ATAY'IN "NE EVET NE HAYIR" ADLI KISA ÖYKÜSÜNDE SÜRREAL VE POSTMODERN ESTETİĞİN PAYDAŞLIKLARI

### Öz

Modern Türk Edebiyatının Batılı minvalde gelişip ciddi atılımlar yaptığı evre olan Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk edebiyatı, farklı sanat anlayışlarının değişik türler üzerinden başarıyla uygulandığı bir süreçtir. 1940'li yıllarda şiir türünde I. Yenicilerin benimsediği sürrealist estetik, 1970'lerde Oğuz Atay'la başlayıp Orhan Pamuk, Hasan Ali Toptaş gibi isimlerle günümüze dek devam eden postmodernist tavır, Türk edebiyatında yaşanan ciddi değişimlerin somut göstergeleridir.

Sürrealizmdeki mantıksal düzene ve tekil gerçekliğe karşı çıkan alaycı tavır, bilinçaltına verilen önem ve özgün anlatım tekniklerinin yanında postmodernizmin hipergerçekliği,

\* Hatay Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fak. TDE Böl. ahmeteviss@gmail.com, Orcid: 0000-0003-4205-2661.  
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metinlerarasılığın parodi, ironi, alaycı/gülünç dönüştürüm gibi tekniklerden faydalanan yönü ile ontik bir meseleye dönüştürdüğü dili oyunlaştırmasının meydana getirdiği paydaşlıklar bu çalışmanın çıkış noktasını oluşturmuştur. Çalışmada sürrealist tavır ile postmodern estetiğin edebî eserlerdeki ortak yönlerinin mukayeseli ve metin merkezli şekilde “Ne Evet Ne Hayır” kısa öyküsü üzerinden incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Yöntem olarak her iki akımın özdeş yahut benzer ilkeleri dikkate alınarak ve betimsel bir metot tercih edilerek söz konusu öykünün tahlili yapılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler doğrultusunda öyküde mizah, dil kullanımları, gerçekliğe bakış ve bilinçaltına dair tercihlerin hem sürrealizm hem de postmodernizm açısından uygunluk taşıdığı tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Oğuz Atay, “Ne Evet Ne Hayır”, sürrealizm, postmodernizm

## INTRODUCTION

**A**lthough every new intellectual movement that emerges in the historical process comes to light by criticizing the previous ones, it definitely receives its commonalities from the legacy left behind them. This situation makes it inevitable for these movements to present commonalities in some respects. In addition, the fact that the variables that create the background culture of all movements are fed from the same sources can be considered as another reason for the mentioned commonalities. Apart from the abovementioned universal truths, periodic basic needs of the target group of theories that appear in synchronic or near phases are effective in the commonalities of different movements.

Considering the similarities in the philosophical starting points of surrealism and postmodernism, both the historical closeness and the critical aspect of the view of reality are remarkable. The intimidation created by modernism and the subjective but singular structure of reality constitutes the basic pillars of both theories. The desire to transfer everything about human beings in isolation from all borders creates the need to apply different expression methods in literary works.

The fantastic, objective criticism of reality, the rejection of logical progression based on regular cause-effect relationships, imagination, absolute freedom and subjectivity, language games, pluralism, humor, consciousness, unconsciousness<sup>1</sup>, also irregularity in language and style become the common building blocks of the artistic aesthetics of both theories. Although there are some differences in practice, it is remarkable in terms of the similarities of the reasons for the existence and basic logic of these movements.

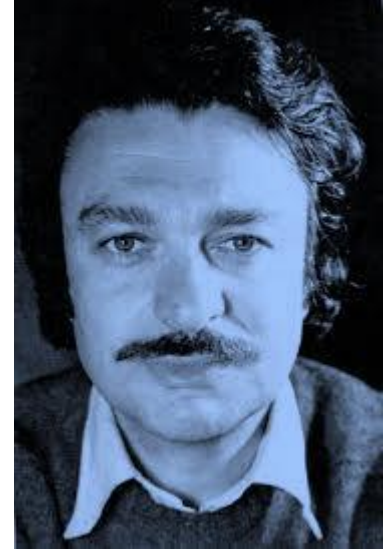
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<sup>1</sup> Freud developed the concept of the unconscious, which was used before him, around the theory of analytical psychology and made it more systematic. Freud defined the concept, especially based on dreams, and classified it according to its functionality: Over time, he developed his theory of the unconscious to include conscious, unconscious, and preconscious. Preconsciousness contained information that could be easily extracted from the existing level of consciousness, although it was not conscious. Then, he developed the topographic mind model and divided the unconscious into three “descriptive unconscious”, “dynamic unconscious”, and “system unconscious.” Later, this model was replaced by the structural model that includes self (ego), the superego (superego), and id (id) (Sheppard, 2012, p. 45).

For all these reasons, in this study, firstly, the theoretical framework will be mentioned, and then the similarities of surrealist and postmodernist literature, which are reflected in Oğuz Atay's "Ne Evet Ne Hayır" (Neither Yes nor No) short story, will be examined.

## 1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

While making sense of the conceptual framework of surrealism and postmodernism, it would undoubtedly be appropriate to first touch upon the chronological connection between the two theories. Surrealism began to make a name for itself in the 1920s. It began to have a place in the art world with two manifestos published by Andre Breton in 1924 and 1930. The theory, supported by some Dadaists and pioneered by Breton, is shaped by the criticism of modernism at the center of modern psychology. The movement, which emerged in Paris in 1920 with the hope of establishing a new world, extended through the fields such as literature, music, and cinema, leaving plastic arts aside and it was influenced by Sigmund Freud's theory of the subconscious and Karl Marx's ideology (Aktepe and Çetin, 2019, p. 206). In the



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context of the art-artist relationship, according to surrealism, art is the right treatment tool to overcome depressive atmosphere of the age and personal concerns. The artist should not allow any logical or intellectual obstacles while producing her/his works (Altuner, 2020, p. 152). Therefore, different missions are assigned to the artist, especially in surrealism, which is also fed by the Freudian psychoanalytic understanding. As Atlı stated that for Freud, who sees the artist as a kind of neurotic patient, the creative activity allows the artist both to relax by reflecting some of his emotions on the work and to create a 'super-ego'. This is the reason why the artist, who differs from people considered as normal, is more sensitive and different than 'normal' people (2012, p. 259).

*Littérature Magazine*, which is the determining publication in the emergence and development stages of Surrealism, creates an environment where writers such as Aragon, Breton, Fargue, Gide, and Valéry have the opportunity to get to know each other. The environment around this magazine aims to be the center of Dadaism in Paris. This wave of excitement, which stands against art and has determined a definite stance, enters a process of renewal and revival with the Surrealism movement after it ceases for a while (Güngör, 2011, p. 10).

Surrealism is used in most literary forms, especially poetry, until the 1960s. The absolutist and serious attitude of modernism is denounced in most of the explanations in which the rejection of logical consistency, singular discourse, and static writing techniques are criticized somewhat sarcastically. In addition, Breton claims that socialist understandings of art, which transform social issues into their basic faculties and derive their strength from positivist reality, are also rejected around surrealist principles (1969, p. 6). Furthermore, the goal of Surrealism, is to critically investigate the concepts of reality and unreality, reason and irrationality, reflection and impulse,

knowledge and "fatal" ignorance, usefulness, and uselessness (1969, p. 140). When examining the history of the emergence of the theory, it is understood that it reacted to positivist and modernist understandings of thought and art and evaluated the human and the world perceptually according to not external but to their inner reality, that is, human consciousness. Therefore, being one of the basic concepts of psychoanalytic theory, according to Güngör, the concept of the unconscious has undeniable importance for surrealists. André Breton believed that dream and reality could be dissolved in an absolute reality, in other words, in surreality. In fact, surrealism aims to regain the dignity of the unconscious and the thought. When approached from this point of view, we can see that surrealism is a spiritual movement in terms of giving importance to internalization in itself. On the other hand, its revolutionary and destructive front forms another side (2011, p. 2). In this context, we can embody the attitude that the surrealists should adopt with the statement in Breton's second manifesto, which legitimizes all kinds of rebellion (Breton, 1969, p. 178).

When the historical process of postmodern theory is considered, it can be said that in the period when modernism started to lose power and avant-garde movements emerged, it took a similar or even more radical rejectionist attitude than surrealism. Postmodernism, which has emerged as a result of a need in Western civilizations since the 1950s, is seen as a shelter with the hope of getting rid of the frame in which the human being consumed by modernism is trapped. It is also known that postmodernism did not emerge only as a reaction to modernism like surrealism. By criticizing almost all thought movements, especially Marxist and positivist thought, they are positioned against all standardized patterns/thoughts/practices with their philosophically chaotic and anarchist proposals. In this respect, it can be said that both theories emerged with a critical style around similar variables in historically close periods of time. In addition, chronologically, surrealism gained power after World War I, while postmodernism gained strength after World War II. It can be thought that they have the quality of responding to the needs of all kinds of unrest in the people of the period. Based on all these, it is understood that philosophical, socio-cultural, military, and artistic variables have been influential on both theories in the historical process and created common contexts.

Except for the historical part of the work, the common conceptual uses of surrealism and postmodernism are mostly on the view of reality, the sources from which the philosophical background feeds, and the similarities used in -related to the work- literary texts.<sup>2</sup> If we touch on reality from these elements, it is understood that there has been a reaction to reality starting from its name in surrealism and an attempt is made to overcome the familiar understanding of "truth". It is understood that human is taken as a reference with the desire to create a reality above the real. Indeed, Breton defined surrealism as "automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express-verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner-the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern" (Breton, 1969, p. 26). Additionally, according to him, surrealism is a power that can overcome all kinds of obstacles and a kind of light that will illuminate the

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<sup>2</sup> Although each of the explanations of these concepts has such a content that can be the subject of separate studies, only certain aspects and parts of subject will be mentioned.

darkness. (1969, p. 47). Parallel to this thought, surrealism seeks more towards the reality of imaginary autonomy, because it believes that the real truth is here. In any case, it is a common thought that the world is perceived, and so-called reality, is postponed. The real truth beyond what is seen is the 'upper truth' (Batur, 2020, p. 165). Because surreality, which concerns the ontological dimension of surrealism, is directly in reality itself. It is neither above nor outside of it. Since what includes the individual can also be contained by that thing, it can be the other way around (Passeron, 1982, p. 36). Moreover, the creative and persistent attitude in the spirit of surrealism has an understanding that breaks the usual forms (Elmas and Macar, 2021, p. 630). Considering the basic emphasis in the definitions, it is understood that limitlessness and personal preference are emphasized. In other words, in surrealism, the validity and necessity of individual perception are sought without any known description/classification/explanation/ criterion.

Although there are similar definitions of the subject in postmodern thought, we believe that Jean Baudrillard's explanation with "simulation theory" is appropriate. Emphasizing that in the digitalized world in the postmodern age, "everything" detaches from its objective identity and turns into a simulation, Baudrillard redefines reality in the context of virtuality and calls it "hyperreal" (1994, p. 21). In the postmodern age, it is no longer possible to talk about the absolute truth. Everything that exists is nothing but digitalized, virtual, detached models. Therefore, nothing can be real or idealized; the most hyper-realized (Baudrillard, 1983). In such an understanding of reality, the artist of the postmodern era has shifted the route to a different aesthetic direction, instead of reproducing them in this environment of 'imitation' realities, which is foreign to him as well. This is also a step that turns the aesthetics of literature upside down; means the formation of a new textual ontology (Ecevit, 2013, p. 49).

It is understood that the common points of both theories' views of reality are united in the context of abstraction and pluralism. In fact, most of the commonalities between them are based on their perception of the stated reality. At the literary level, it is understood that the causality that supports all kinds of logical progress is ignored in both theories depending on the aforementioned elements, fiction comes before reality, and the reader is positioned as both the interpreter and the author of the text as the main element.

There are concepts such as dream, the marvelous, imagination, and fantastic, which displace the absolute objectivity in literary works, and which are the basic foundations of both theories. Among these, it is necessary to mention the fantastic as it points to a separate genre. As a matter of fact, it is possible to ignore an absolute truth through the fantastic. Elements such as time, place, and narrator in the novel are freed from being confined to a uniform and/or standard usage with the fantastic. The fantastic also allows for the destruction of familiar patterns and social and individual norms. As Todorov states the supernatural element in the nature of the fantastic gains originality by causing the destruction of daily life, narrative, and systematic structure. (1973, p. 166). Besides, apart from the institutionalized censorship, the censorship in the author's psyches struggles through fantastic (1973, pp. 158-159). From what has been mentioned, it is understood that fantastic is one of the possibilities of the rebellious attitude in surrealism and postmodernism, apart from its in-text functionality. Finally, when the importance is given to psychology by

postmodernism and especially surrealism is remembered, the commonality of the bond between fantastic and psychoanalytic becomes even more meaningful.



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Humor is one of the basic elements of both surrealism and postmodernism. While surrealists use humor more on the axis of sarcasm, postmodernists apply it to literary texts with methods such as irony, parody, and sarcastic/ridiculous transformation from intertextual techniques. The purpose of both theories to use humor is to demolish the serious and absolutist structures of deep-rooted thought systems (modernism, Marxism, etc.) with a cynical attitude and a little humiliation. The humor adopted by the surrealists aims to devalue, weaken, or even eliminate the dominance of all environmental, social, political, religious, or public values and the norms imposed by them. For a similar purpose, postmodernists wish to pacify other intellectual movements they oppose by turning the element of comedy into a critical weapon.

By making use of the intertextual techniques preferred in

literary texts, the content and thematic structure are shaped around the mentioned purposes. A pluralistic structure is created in many elements of the works, thanks to the expression styles designed around parody, irony, and ridiculous/cynical transformation, not just a humorous discourse. A functional and therefore conscious criticism is carried out with sarcastic references to more than one text, belief, or event. To touch briefly upon the aforementioned techniques, the opposite of what is expressed in irony is meant. Kierkegaard defines irony in its most general form as saying the opposite of what is meant in oratory (Kierkegaard, 1990, p. 247). Although the purpose is criticism, the irony should not be confused with criticism. Because, according to Murat Belge the main issue in criticism is "change". In criticism, the mistake is determined, shown, changed, or aimed to be changed, while in irony, it is out of the question to use change as a means or purpose (2016, p. 206). The irony is examined under seven headings according to the way it is used: verbal irony, situational irony, romantic irony, dramatic irony, tragic irony, specific irony, and unconscious irony (Cebeci, 2008, pp. 300-309). In terms of its functionality, the irony is important in terms of creating an interesting and lively expression in the works besides the level of criticism. Parody, on the other hand, is defined in the dictionary as a type of play that creates a ridiculous effect from this separation between form and essence by making fun of a part or whole of a work that is considered serious, giving it a completely different essence without distorting its form (TDK, 2011, p. 1892). The emphasis on play in this definition is parallel to the view of reality by both surrealists and postmodernists, especially by detaching fiction and important work or event from their objective reality and making them funny. In the ironic/cynical transformation, which is similar to parody, there is a humorizing style rather than substance. Serious texts are ridiculed through the deformation or banalization of the language. In summary, in parody, the

subject is brought into focus. It is adapted to the subject of the new work by playing with the form or style of the text with meaning deviations. In sarcastic/cynical conversion, style is prioritized. Without much change in the subject, a critical, offensive, and sarcastic attitude is adopted towards the text exemplified by the use of language (Evis, 2021, p. 134).

Another of the most severe commonalities between surrealism and postmodernism is the mission attributed to language. Language is positioned as a priority in the formation and application of the rebellious and chaotic spirit in both theories. With surrealism, the "furor" that should be created primarily in an intellectual sense will be thanks to language. According to Breton, this furor can occur when the language is handled in a very different way from the familiar patterns or stereotypical visual images, even at the level of insanity (1969, p. 175). The automatic writing style that emerged as a result of the idea of automatism also turns into one of the basic expression methods of surrealism. The inherent lack of logic control and the fact that it is not bound by any absolute rules or guidelines makes automatic typeface functional (Breton, 1969, pp. 267-268). In a similar line, it is seen that the language, which was shaped by structuralism in postmodernism and systematized and specialized with modernists, was moved away from grammatical rules and placed on a more anarchic ground by getting rid of its usual conventions (Emre, 2006, p. 111). Either the length of its historical process or the diversity in theorists enables the postmodern understanding of language to be designed or discussed more systematically than surrealism. Names such as J. Derrida, J. F. Lyotard, and L. Wittgenstein shape the postmodern understanding of language, which facilitates the acceptance of theoretical validity. Derrida's theory of "deconstruction" and Wittgenstein's "language games" concepts pave the way for contradictory language use and pluralistic meaning creation in postmodern thought. This makes Lyotard and Wittgenstein's design of 'language games' conceptually necessary and transforms them into original "forms of life"<sup>3</sup> (Sarup, 1993, p. 150).

The pluralism of meaning and the ontological identity of the language are created with these techniques, which center the text and make the reader the dominant element. However, the basic logic here is not to reach the essence but to create content that can create different meanings for each reader. Therefore, practices such as unusual reconciliations, never-before-seen image designs, and deliberate distortion of spelling and punctuation are encountered in literary works. All these reasons reveal the rejection of language and meaning imposed/created/try to be created through singular and absolutist language uses of both surrealism and postmodernism. Therefore, it can be said that the main tool of the rebellion in both theories in literary works is language.

Oğuz Atay, one of the important names of Turkish literature, is mostly known for his novelist identity, but he also manages to make a name for himself with the short stories he wrote. It is an undeniable reality that the share of the accumulation of the 1950s generation on the basis of the success in his stories. As a matter of fact, Karadeniz emphasize that this generation, which succeeded in following the developments in Western literature simultaneously for the first time, was significantly influenced by the movements such as Surrealism, Existentialism, and Dadaism,

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<sup>3</sup> According to Wittgenstein the term "language-game" is used here to underline the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life (2009, p. 15<sup>c</sup>).

which had great repercussions in Europe at that time, and successfully adapted the principles of these movements to their stories (2013, p. 1831). However, Oğuz Atay's stories, at first glance, do not contain formal essays as the 1950s generation did in the short story genre. In fact, considering the modernist techniques in his novels, it can even be argued that his stories are more straight-line in terms of fiction. It can be said that Oğuz Atay has certainly established a unique story world, and that he has also reached a significant stage in Turkish storytelling (Apaydın, 2021, p. 3). The aforementioned new stage is due to the fact that Atay wrote most of his stories in an integrated manner in accordance with postmodern principles, unlike the 1950s generation, who were more in a modernist line.

The author brings together eight of his modernist and postmodernist stories in his work *Waiting for Fear*. It is also possible to talk about a general common structure in the stories shaped around themes such as alienation, loneliness, melancholy, and criticism of modernism. In addition, the short story "Neither Yes Nor No" differs greatly from other stories in terms of content, language, and narrative techniques. The humorous atmosphere reflected throughout the story, which is close to the epistolary novel genre<sup>4</sup>, criticism of objective reality and the satire of modernism are handled in an avant-garde manner. In addition, the contradictory uses in the grammatological structure and the opposition to all kinds of uniqueness bring the short story closer to the limits of postmodern and surrealist aesthetics from the aforementioned aspects.

## 2. THE SATIRE OF THE ABSOLUTE AND THE REVOLT

The fifth short story of the book *Waiting for Fear*<sup>5</sup>, "Neither Yes Nor No", is based on the publication and evaluation of a long and strange letter sent with a signature M.C. by Dr. Akin Korkmaz whose name is abbreviated as F.G., replying to the letters from the readers in the column of the newspaper he works for called *Gönül Postası* (*Heart Affairs Post*).

The most distinctive aspect of the short story is that the dominant atmosphere progresses in line with the ironic discourse and the humorous and critical attitude shaped in parallel. The organization of the characters and the criticism of the social structure about absolutism and/or standardization are in common with Oğuz Atay's other works. The fact that the two people in the central position in "Neither Yes Nor No" are "the disconnected" and their ironic presentation of their experiences can be given as examples of these partnerships. This situation, which aligns with the postmodern understanding, has an essential place in Oğuz Atay's understanding of art. Because As Tosun states irony is not just any tone in it, it is the basic form of expression (2011, p. 20). Atay, who symbolizes the loneliness and misunderstanding of the intellectuals in terms of his characters, through his works, is also disturbed by the social corruption created by the ignorance in the society. Namely, according to Özpalabıyıklar, in Atay's writings, "intellectual" (or at least

<sup>4</sup> Epistolary, which is seen in novels and stories, aims to add a flavor to these narrative types, to seek other ways of expression, and to present the inner worlds of fictional characters to the reader firsthand (Yivli, 2016, pp. 92-93).

<sup>5</sup> The book *Waiting for Fear*, which was preferred as the main text for the review, was translated into English by Fulya Peker and published by Contra Mundum Press in 2021. In all quotations from this section, the specified short story will be used and only the page number will be included.



“learned”) people are outside the society, far away, excluded, and so are “the ignorant” people (2011, p. 27).

It is emphasized that both Akın Korkmaz, who is given an intellectual identity from the very beginning of the "Neither Yes nor No" story, and M.C., who is described as "ignorant" on the following pages, were not accepted by the society. It seems meaningful in this context that Doctor Akın Korkmaz is described as a "maniac" and likened to M.C. by his colleagues: "Then one day, this letter arrived. Here, I said to my friends at the newspaper, let's see you find a solution to this one. And right away, I began reading the letter to them. No one listened till the end. I read just half a page and again it was decided that I was maniac. But I was not the one who had written that letter." (p. 158). Although Akın Korkmaz reacted to this situation at first, he thinks that the ascription made by looking at the definition of the word "maniac" in the dictionary is not wrong: "I asked a friend who knows a foreign language, we checked the dictionary together: A disorder of the mind that shows up in the form of a high and uncontrollable excitement, this show how “mania” was defined. I explained this definition to the people at the newspaper; ‘Come on, you maniac’, they responded. They find me pretentious; I feel the same about them.” (p. 157). As a result of the "pretentious" emphasis in the quote, Doctor Akın Korkmaz tries to ironically express his response to the people of the society he cannot hold on to, the people who insult him by calling him “maniac” and seek solutions to their problems by writing letters to newspaper columns (Atay, 2019, p. 304).

Evaluations treated as schizophrenia or mental illness are the first reactive stances in the work that seems appropriate to the postmodern and surrealist understanding. In fact, Akın Korkmaz's ironic criticism of both his friends in the magazine and M.C. is nothing but a mockery of "normality" defined in the standard form. It can be read as an example of loud and sarcastic criticism in surrealist and postmodernist thought that he ironically ridiculed the young person in parentheses by publishing a letter full of inconsistencies and spelling errors with what he said to his so-called friends in the magazine.

The multiplicity of discourses that do not fit the chronological flow in the story and create inconsistencies in the fiction also shows that logical truth is displaced. The events M.C. describes in his letter distract the story from a linear progression in time. The social/historical time is clearly stated at the beginning of the letter: “Between the years 1967-1971, I mean since 1967, up to this day I really deeply sincerely honestly virtuously love a young and beautiful girl. I will seriously openly truthfully certainly and exactly explain the events that took place between us from 1967 up to today's date” (pp. 158-159). As the plot progresses, M.C.'s historically inconsistent discourses emerge, and this situation is particularly emphasized by the narrator: "We run into each other in 1970 (three years after he was struck by her all of a sudden)" (p. 162). Akın Korkmaz's emphasis on historical inconsistency in parentheses, as the narrator, can be evaluated as the aim of raising awareness about time in the reader. Apart from this discourse, which is contrary to the chronological progression, different expressions in which the time-centered linearity is disrupted are also included in various parts of the story and again emphasized by the narrator: “Schools were closing. (I'd like to draw your attention to time disorder and consequent absence of the

concept of time)" (p. 164). The reflection of the discourses detached from the logical progression of the flow of time in the story to the general and their attention by the narrator by expressing them clearly from time to time makes the use of time conceptually suitable for the perceptual-oriented understanding of time that progresses irregularly in surrealism and postmodernism.

In "Neither Yes nor No", the criticism of institutional and public organizations can also be read as a criticism of the desire to create a standardized society. Because, as it is explained in Çavuş and Namlı's article, when the education received from the family and religious institutions was insufficient to meet the needs of modern times, institutions providing education in various fields were opened. With the education given under the control of the state, it is aimed to meet various needs and to raise individuals who are suitable for the values of the state and society (2021, p. 366). Therefore, this situation causes the individual to experience identity confusion in the face of society. Institutionalization, which has become nationalized and widespread with the construction of modern society, is treated with ridicule in the story. Especially thanks to the absurd events in places such as schools, prisons, and workplaces, the serious and functional aspects of these institutions are simplified. For example, the girl whom M.C. loves, going to school and what happened afterward is an ironic satire of educational institutions:

"I went up to school, met the headmaster (...) We went to the headmasters room. The girl I love came as well. (So, in village schools these things seem to happen much more easily compared to the schools in big cities.) (...) I asked for permission, I want to talk to you in a place empty deserted where there is no one alone face to face secretly. Don't get angry, I kindly request. Please? I begged the headmaster went out the door: as soon as he went out the door, he came back and sat at his desk (Dear M.C., now even the headmasters are acting incomprehensibly like you.) (...) The teacher boyfriends took in hand the girl to the square to make her talk (they must've lost their minds like you)." (pp. 167, 168, 169).

The fact that both the principal and the teachers devote time to M.C.'s affairs, and that despite the girl's refusal, they act in accordance with the meaningless and persistent attitude of the young boy creates an ironic atmosphere for the institutional structure of both the school and the teaching profession. In another example, the fact that M.C. was imprisoned for doing illegal things or being forced to do so, but still evaluated himself as innocent can be evaluated as a criticism of the institutions:

"I can't say Im not guilty, I can't tell anyone, I can't say I didnt do it, Im taking the guilt on me. If I tell the truth, no one will believe me. They will call me a liar. I know the ones who did this to me Im embarrassed. But these are illegitimate people, even their names arent real, they had been given nicknames. How can I find a way out of this situation sir? If I can go out, I will take my gun hand (in hand) sir (Don't do this, you see the things that already happened even without you taking your 'gun hand.')

Not a good move, but my conscience can't accept it shedding blood both sides also myself I will waste (...) Behind the iron bars, four walls, I go through woe pain anguish suffering for my love without guilt without sin" (p. 174).

Rather than how much of what is told in the letter is true, the possibility of corruption and therefore its unnecessariness is brought to attention. It is possible to come across other uses in fiction to support these situations; however, these examples are sufficient to embody the critical

emphasis on the modern world institutionalization that makes the individual a slave to the social structure.

When considered on the level of social criticism, it can be thought that another satire is about the arabesque society of the period. It can also be interpreted as a criticism of the arabesque culture in Turkey in the 1970s. In fact, the story offers a striking cross-section of the human typography of this geography, with M.C.'s sense of morality, obsessions in male-female relations, and his discourse specific to his "lad culture" (Ecevit, 2011, p. 491). In the story, the criticism of arabesque, which has become fashionable in terms of the social music taste of the period, is given through M.C, who defines himself as an honest, brave, young man: "I was down. I got a lot of records. I was playing for her. I played for her ..... the most (To avoid an advertisement, I'm omitting the name of the singer and the song) I played this for her for 3 years constantly never bored and the person I love listened (How do you she listened? (...) My dear, how could a person listen to this unbearable song for three years?)" (p. 162). The prevalence of arabesque music, which was mostly listened through vinyl records in Turkish society between the years 1970-1980, and the conformity to the melancholic discourse corresponding to the content of this genre can be interpreted as a criticism of the arabesque trend that has become fashionable by being represented by M.C.. The inference in question is significant in that it seems parallel to surrealism and postmodernism, which stand against all kinds of cultural stereotypes.

The characterization of the people who are functionally involved in the story as different from the personality type that society accepts as normal coincides with the idea of being contrary to both surrealist and postmodernist thought. Starting from their names, it is understood that both people do not feel a sense of belonging to society. Using abbreviations in the form of F.G. and M.C., different from the names that the society takes for granted, makes the story meaningful in terms of alienation. In fact, the distinctness of the two names makes one think that they cannot be a part of the society. In addition, the fact that the narrator, who is named Doctor Akın Korkmaz at the beginning of the story, is given as F.G at the end of the fiction (p. 177) creates an inconsistency. The absence of the use of a pseudonym or a special signature turns into a problem that needs to be resolved for the reader. This content, which centers the reader and the text, can be considered one of the common points of both postmodernism and surrealism. In a similar vein, despite being introduced as a disconnected, unhappy, and lonely type, M.C. often makes affirmative characterizations when talking about himself in the story: "I am a 24-year-old tall dark skinned serious honest youngster who did military service and documented dropout from the second year of high school. (...) I am a cultured cultivated thoughtful skillful knowledgeable educated thoughtful youngster. I do my own work, I get along well with everyone (I doubt that), cover my gaps (?), I correct my mistakes" (p. 159, 168). Despite these statements of the young man, it is understood that he is neither accepted by the girl he loves, nor by the girl's family, nor by the society. Despite the fact that the girl said to M.C. "Reject reject I reject" (p. 162) many times and her family did not consent to their marriage, ignoring the situation and interpreting his situation as neither yes nor no, and being imprisoned for his deeds and being described as a criminal, shows that he is not accepted by both individuals and society. Furthermore, the illogical discourse in

M.C.'s letter bring to mind the concept of the unconscious. Considering the relation of the unconscious with obsessions, repressed emotions, dream state, pleasure-based desires, impulses, and memories, it is possible to evaluate M.C.'s love, which has almost turned into an obsession, as a partial expression of the subconscious. The fact that the sense of reality in the events is at a level to be questioned again coincides with the fact that the unconscious is related to the part that is disconnected from the objective reality.

As a result, it can be said that all kinds of stereotyping around the absolute realism and normality situation in the story are criticized with an ironic rhetoric through ironic discourse, especially on the cast, fiction, time, theme, public and social structures. The dominance of humor in the style, on the other hand, confirms that the satires are practiced with derogatory intentions, making the story in line with the common aesthetic norms of surrealism and postmodernism from the specified aspects.

### 3. LANGUAGE AS AN ONTOLOGICAL INQUIRY

Oğuz Atay's understanding of language stands out with its features that are in line with the poststructuralist plane prioritized by postmodernism, enriched with language games, and supported by intertextual techniques. While it provides plurality in meaning in the texts that it deconstructs with the deliberate destruction of spelling and punctuation, its direct references to the ontological side of the language are important indicators of language skills. In addition, in the formation of the satirical ironic language highlighted by postmodern and surrealist literature, Atay's stories are ideal texts that exemplify the specified aspects of these movements. Parallel to these thoughts, according to Parla, Atay can make people laugh with unexpected language games and the chain of associations he establishes with these games. His associations progress so freely that even such use of language can be seen as an exercise of freedom (2012, p. 230).

The grammatical structure in the story "Neither Yes Nor No" largely conforms to the basic principles of both surrealism and postmodernism. The humorous discourse, especially created with errors in spelling and punctuation, turns into a satire for modern aesthetics, which desires perfection in language, as well as creating a chaotic structure. With this usage, which can also be considered as a parody of language, an imposing language understanding that is tried to be standardized is opposed. The reader's awareness of the language issue is increased by the narrator's emphasis on spelling errors in M.C.'s letter:

"I showed the letter to some friends; there were some who found it interesting. Therefore, I found it appropriate to publish it as it was. But I could not help adding my own comments to some parts of it, in parentheses. There were hardly any punctuation marks in the letter. A friend of mine said that it would be nicer to publish it the way it was. Furthermore, this kind of literature was not regarded as some sort of skill, apparently. I have not accepted that idea. M.C.'s already mixed-up thought-order would only become more confusing that way. Other than that, I corrected the spelling of some words and that was it" (p. 158).

It is noteworthy that the quote contains an ironic discourse on the rejection of the dominance of postmodern literature. In addition, despite the emphasis at the end, it is seen that the narrator

did not make any corrections to clarify the text in terms of language and style. Cohesion is provided by Akin Korkmaz's corrections or comments in parentheses rather than M.C.'s writings. M.C.'s utterances in many places suitable for the irregular flow of consciousness necessitate an appropriate method of writing: "This is my job my occupation (I made paragraph break; because he could only have said these sentences as a long monologue—I mean an inner monologue—separate from the flow of events, at the office, at his desk, while looking at the 'obscure' record sender's envelope.)" (p. 171).

The part of the story, in which the importance of language is underlined, and the situation is handled together with the funny element, is intertwined with an ironic attitude in the context of "Turkish": "I didn't listen to anyone about this matter (Despite everything, I would've liked to come face to face and talk to you honestly, boldly, turkish-ly)" (pp. 163-164). The narrator's emphasis on the changes he made in spelling and punctuation is also significant in that it points to the importance given to language: "She did not respond: NEITHER YES NOR NO (capital letters are mine) (...) "With who I wonder?" (Quotation marks are mine.) With my friends. (For some reason, I found it more appropriate to remove the quotation marks.)" (p. 159, 162).

It is seen that Akin Korkmaz, who mocked M.C for the written language he used and tended to constantly correct the letter grammatically, often highlighting them in parentheses, criticized the young man in terms of linguistic awareness. However, it is significant in terms of reflecting the general view of the language and style in the story that he notices the parts where M.C. used punctuation marks, even if they were wrong in the following parts of the letter, and presented them by their originals:

"My chest burnt like fire (indent is mine). If I lose, I will kill. Myself. Her too. (Punctuations are M.C.'s.) I took off my body before the mother of the person I love look mom can you see. These cuts. I. (The punctuation marks are his.) She looked. (Initially, I supposed M.C. never uses punctuation marks. During my last reading when I looked carefully at the fading ink of the letter, I realized these marks. I apologize)" (p. 164)

Considering that the narrator describes M.C. as ignorant and criticizes him throughout the fiction, apologizing to him is nothing but appreciating the level of awareness in the language despite the mistakes made. The fact that Akin Korkmaz apologized to the young man despite his tendency to correct mistakes and emphasize them, and that he published the part exactly the same despite all his mistakes, and this is meaningful in that it points to the normality of contradictory uses in the language. Here, it can be said that postmodernism's grammatical aspect of advocating disorder and the "extremity" of language in surrealism is an appropriate usage. In addition, it can be said that the issue of language irregularity, which is reflected throughout the story, is the main emphasis pointing to the ontological side of language in both theories.

Apart from these, it is understood that the content suitable for the terminological language used by the surrealists is discussed in accordance with the short story. Because "the Surrealists devised their own lexicon, even if they may not always have actually coined the terms or phrases in question, but concepts such as "hasard objectif" (objective chance), "amour fou" (mad love) and "beauté convulsive" (convulsive beauty) have become watchwords associated with the movement, as have words in much more common parlance, like desire, revolt, and revolution" (Aspley, 2010,

p. 16). The emphasizes on "mad love" and "convulsive beauty" in the quote and M.C.'s obsessive love in the story are in a consistent bond/relationship. In this context, it can be thought that the story was constructed in accordance with the surrealist terminology.

One of the issues particularly highlighted in the story "Neither Yes nor No" is, in fact, the one-sided discussion of the importance attached to language by Akin Korkmaz and M.C... As emphasized before, despite the corrections at the level of exaggeration, another point that draws attention, apart from the presentation and appreciation of the mistakes, as well as the mistakes, is that M.C and Akin Korkmaz are both opposites and have the same qualities at the linguistic level. At the beginning of the story, the narrator's statements about the language he used show that he stayed away from the regular grammatical language use like M.C, whom he criticizes: "Maybe I could not hold down that job because of my silence and timid attitudes at the company. I was probably using too many adjectives and my sentences were somehow never ending" (p. 156).

While the possibility of both young men identifying with each other makes the reader think that M.C and Akin Korkmaz are the same person. Akin Korkmaz's use of the name F.G at the end of the story also creates a surprising effect on the reader. If indeed Akin Korkmaz is the person answering the letters, why does he use the abbreviation F.G? How is it possible for a person with such sensitivity to language to prefer a language loaded with endless adjectives? Doesn't Akin Korkmaz's expression match exactly with the long sentences filled with adjectives used by M.C.? All these questions create in the reader's mind whether M.C., F.G., and Akin Korkmaz are the same person, which turns into a puzzle waiting to be solved for the reader. In other words, an existential problem is created in terms of language approach, sentence structures, and style, also the situation in question turns into a paradox. The present ambiguity, on the other hand, creates a pluralistic plane in content and meaning and includes the story within the boundaries of surrealist and postmodernist aesthetics in terms of language.

As a result, Oğuz Atay created awareness of the language itself in general, with the use of language that derives its strength from irony in "Neither Yes nor No", while in particular, it created an awareness of social satire and the individual's question of existence. Furthermore, it can be said that the use of irregular language and the discussion of language as the main issue made the story suitable for both surrealist and postmodern language understanding.

## CONCLUSION

Surrealism and postmodernism are distinctly different from other currents of thought with their rebellious and cynical identities. The commonalities of both theories rests in the differences in their view of reality, the discourse-based irony, and the rejection of all kinds of standardization; especially the modern world criticism. Apart from the closeness of both theories in the historical process, the overlapping of the intellectual, literary, social, and political sources they feed on, has created an organic commonality between them. The satirical attitude, especially at the beginning, was effective primarily in fine arts and then reflected in literature in a short time. In Turkish literature, with the 1970s, works that are largely appropriate for both theories have emerged, and a sense of art still continues in this way.

Oğuz Atay, one of the important names in Turkish literature, has created a perceptual and personal universe at the level of consciousness by pushing the limits of objective reality with his novels and short stories written within a certain historical process. Atay, one of the first representatives of postmodernism in Turkish literature, treated loneliness, alienation, the satire of modernism, the questioning of language, and fictional reality as common variables in the general structure of his stories. Unlike his other short stories, he wrote the "Neither Yes nor No", which is the basis of the study with the focus on humor and included it in the borders of surrealism as well as postmodern understanding. As a result of the examinations and evaluations, it has been understood that the questioning of reality, the construction of the rebellion atmosphere around various variables, and the transformation of language into a paradox as an ontological problem, make the short story suitable for the mentioned partnerships of both postmodernism and surrealism. In addition, the standardized and imposed reality, the satire of the social structure in the story, as well as the cynical aspect of the humorous ironic discourse, and ultimately the language-existence relationship are presented as a puzzle for the reader to solve.

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Prof. Dr. Soner Akpınar

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