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**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *THE ANGUISH* BY NECİP FAZIL KISAKÜREK  
AND *EBB AND FLOW* BY EDWARD TAYLOR ACCORDING TO THEIR  
CONTENT AND FORM**

**NECİP FAZIL KISAKÜREK'İN *ÇİLE* VE EDWARD TAYLOR'IN *MET CEZİR*  
ŞİİRLERİNİN İÇERİK VE BİÇİM BAKIMINDAN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI OLARAK  
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**Abstract**

In this paper, two poems, *Ebb and Flow* by Edward Taylor and *The Anguish* by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek are going to be comparatively analyzed with respect to their religious or mystical aspects, their forms and languages. Though they lived in different centuries from each other and came from different countries, they reflected many similar and different ideas in their poems. The most common point they have is that their poems have religious and metaphysical elements. The principal purpose of this papers is to explore these similar and different ideas and comparatively discuss them.

**Key Words:** Suffering, Rise and Fall, God and Man, Lyricism, Spirituality, Metaphors.

**Özet**

Bu çalışmada Edward Taylor'ın *Ebb and Flow* ve Necip Fazıl Kısakürek'in *Çile* şiirleri içeriğindeki dini veya mistik öğeler, biçimleri ve dilleri bakımından karşılaştırmalı olarak analiz edilecektir. Birbirlerinden farklı yüzyıllarda yaşamış ve farklı ülkelerden olmalarına rağmen şiirlerinde birçok ortak ve farklı fikirlere yer verdiler. Onların en ortak yanları şiirlerinin dini ve metafizik unsurlar taşımasıdır. Bu makaledeki asıl amaç bu benzer ve farklı fikirleri ortaya çıkarmak ve karşılaştırmalı olarak irdelemektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İzdırap, Yükselme ve Düşüş, Tanrı ve İnsan, Lirikizm, Ruhaniyet, Metaforlar.

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## 1. Introduction

In world literature it is possible to see many poets touching on the same themes. Necip Fazıl Kısakürek who is one of the most famous poets of Turkey and Edward Taylor, one of the most discussed poets of the American literature though he was born in England, are two of them. Although they lived in different centuries, they expressed many similar ideas in their poems since the the source benefitted from is the same: religion even though they believed in different ones. These two poets were influenced by religion while composing their works to a great extent. In this article, the influence of religion on the content of two poems, *The Anguish* by Necip F. Kısakürek and *Ebb and Flow* by Edward Taylor is comparatively debated as well as the form and the language of them.

## 2. Comparison of *The Anguish* and *Ebb and Flow* in Terms of Their Content

*The Anguish* and *Ebb and Flow* have many common points in terms of their content. First of all, the titles of these two poems have similar implications and meanings. In *The Anguish* of which name shows the fact that the persona of the poem deeply suffers from something, Necip Fazıl's persona in this poem seeks his rise and freedom from his burdens and sufferings. In the first stanza this burden or responsibility on the persona is expressed as "This man shall drag the void along his nape." Here the persona, this man is not free as he is held on his nape. So he is suffering in the hands of destiny. Likewise the title of *Ebb and Flow* represents the rise and fall in the inner world of men. And through this fall the persona suffers and with the rise he feels happy and relieved again. As Stanford touches on "The *Ebb and Flow* expresses one of Taylor's recurrent themes, the fear that his heart has grown cold toward God, and the hope that, through God's grace, his affections will be warmed." (Stanford, 1989: xli) For these reasons these two poets share the same feeling of impotence before God's authority and they both find the peace in God's asylum as in *The Anguish* or in Lord's as in the case of *Ebb and Flow*.

Besides their titles the whole of these poems employ religious elements, that is to say these two poems are composed around man's seek for relief, and salvation after a suffering or doubt which are certainly provided by God. In *The Anguish*, the persona suffers from a great burden on him or her which described as:

It burnt my life's gem at once to ashes  
When I felt the arrow's flaming venom;  
Grappling with death as in headlong crashes,  
My inmost spewed out my cranium.

There is a very severe description of the anguish felt by the persona in these lines. With the influence of the venom the persona is about to die and his or her mind is purified with the same anguish. That is the core idea of this poem; with deep suffering, the mind and heart of the persona is purified. At this point it is useful to remember Şecaatin Tural's comment on this poem. He suggests that "Human is consented to suffer by believing in God to get the peace of submission to divine decree." (Tural, 2003: 210) and he gains a new pure identity after an identity crisis. This crisis is expressed in the following lines as:

Dictionaries, find a word for my plight!  
A name that all men can identify.  
You, my ragged garments, hold my hand tight.  
You mirrors, divulge to me; who am I?

As it is clearly seen in these lines, the persona questions who he is and wants help from dictionaries to describe his situation and identity. The persona becomes aware of his position in this world and he begins to see the reality in the following stanza beginning with "Atoms had a carnival, wined and dined and ending "I saw God, who is Unknown though renowned." These are the lines where crisis in the poem begins to be solved and the awakening and opening his/her eyes of the persona to the truth, the truth of God. According to Necip Fazıl, "Poetry is a work of seeking absolute truth. The absolute truth is Allah." (Kısakürek, 1987: 473-4) As M. Abdullah Arslan demonstrates "Necip Fazıl is a poet who always questions the goal of creature" (Arslan, 2002: 99). In the next line, it says "And rays of light danced and pranced all around." From now on the persona begins to feel relaxed and liberate himself/herself from the anguish. Furthermore in the last stanza, he challenges the fate; "Kneel before me, Fate, and forsake your night;"

In *Ebb and Flow* the persona feels sinful as his "tinder box is scarce" and he has doubts, and then relieved. As Roy H. Pearce points out "The great bulk of Taylor's poetry consists in this: vision of the world of sinful men as it partakes of God and God's order. (Pearce, 1950: 31) In this poem the persona goes and comes between reliance or belief in God's grace and doubt that is why it is named as "Ebb and Flow". In other words we can express it as rise and fall and this rise and fall belongs to man who is doubtful and sinful. As man is sinful by birth according to Puritan way of belief, he must strive to get rid of his original sin and be a good person and thus become one of those lucky men who are suitable for Paradise. In this poem man's heart is seen as God's tinder box and it waits for the spark to come from Lord. Though in the beginning of the poem the persona is contented with his situation, in the stanza beginning "But now" he expresses his doubt and worry about his sincerity and. In the following lines this can be clearly seen:

I finde my tinder scarce thy Sparks can feel  
That drop out from thy Holy flint and Steel.

Hence doubts out bud for feare thy fire in me  
'S a mocking Ignis Fatuus,  
Or lest thine Altars fire out bee,  
It is hid in ashes thus.

In this respect, Taylor and Kısakürek fall apart. Taylor's poem opens with a positive, nice atmosphere in terms of the persona and his relationship with God and then develops in a negative way because of the persona's doubt and towards the end this relation is compromised again. However, in Kısakürek's poem the opening is dark and gloomy and in the middle the mystery of this gloomy atmosphere is uncovered and in the end the persona gets rid of this anguish and gains a relief.

In both Taylor's and Necip Fazıl's poems the close relationship between God and man strikes the reader's attention. As Evan Prosser indicates "Intimacy with God is shown to exist on many levels. Taylor is enough in tune with God to be part of an immediate cause and effect relationship with Him." (Prosser, 1967: 375) It is possible to see its example in *Ebb and Flow*. The persona sounds to God or Lord by saying thy. Furthermore the flame is ignited by a stark coming from Lord. Taylor expresses this idea in the first and second stanzas. In the last two lines of the first stanza it says:

Those Holy Sparks of Heavenly Fire that came  
Did ever catch and often would flame.

The heart of the persona would be flamed by the spark of Lord as it is clearly shown in these lines. In *The Anguish* the persona is deeply suffering. The origin of this suffering is mainly resulted from his connection with Sufism. As İlyas Ersoy mentions in his thesis “In Kısakürek’s occupation with Sufism, the sufferings in his mind have increased so much that he experienced a spritual crisis. (Ersoy, 2007: 149) This suffering is relieved by exploring God’s art and the truth of God. This exploration of the perona can be seen in the line “Atoms had a carnival, wined and dined.” The atoms round and in this the persona gets the knowledge of God’s truth. He infers that everything on Earth commemorates God and then he confesses that “I saw God.” Furhtermore he desires to be so close to God that he claims “everlasting life” as pointed in the last line of the poem.

The following common point of these two poems is that both of them juxtapose the strong connection to God and doubt. In *Ebb and Flow* it is clearly written. In the opening of the poem it says “When first thou on me Lord wrought’st thy Sweet Print”. In this line it is obvious that the persona is totally occupied by Lord’s authority and love. As Thomas H. Johnson claims “Taylor’s sole inspiration was a glowing, passionate love for Christ. (Jonson, 1939: 11) The Print of Lord is encarved on the persona’s heart and then in the following line it is said “My heart was made thy tinder box.” Here the strict connection to Lord is emphasized. The persona is ready to be ignited by a spark that will come from Lord. But in the following lines there begins detachment from Lord comes as:

“Hence doubts out bud feare thy fire in mee  
’S a mocking Ignis Fatuus.”

These doubts are what cause the persona feels detached from God and His fire. However in the last two lines his hopes are rekindled and they still maintain their presence.

In the *Anguish* the ambivalence and reality is juxtaposed. In the beginning the persona is bewildered by the “voice coming from the realms lost” His ambivalence is expressed as “Month afer month I roamed broken, aghast.” But towards the end of the poem he sees the truth by completing his anguiah and thus he says “I saw God, who is Unknown though reknowned.” And his ambivalence and bewilderment disappears as seen in the third line of the last stanza. “You are the root where all branches unite.” This means he has solved the mystery of the “atoms, rays and forms.”

### 3. Comparison of *The Anguish* and *Ebb and Flow* in Terms of Their Form and Language

In the *Anguish*, the tone is exteremely startling and some dreadful. The persona is in a very bad condition in the opening stanza and its following till the stanza begining with “Atoms had a carnival,” There are many expressions that prove this like “It burnt my life’s gem at once to ashes.” However the atmosphere in the poem is soothed as it approaches to the end. In the stanza beginning with “Atoms had a carnival, wined and dined” the persona’s anguish is relieved by what he sees and in the last stanza the persona is totally relaxed and the tension is lowered. In the *Ebb and Flow* however the opening of the poem is very cool and the persona is like a pries on whom the influence of God is deeply felt. So in the beginning the tone of the poem is quite peaceful as the persona is quite submissive and he gets what he desires from God. Then in the following stanza the atmosphere becomes negative as the persona feels afraid and ashamed as he has doubts. But at the end of the poem his hope to be forgiven by the God still continues. By taking all these into

account, it is obviously seen that in *The Anguish*, there is a flow from a bewilderment and confusion to a real, true way, the truth of God. But in *Ebb and Flow* there is a submissive and compromised beginning, then it becomes doubtful but at the end of the it the situation of the persona is positive.

The genre of these two poems is lyrical but this does not mean that these two poets reflected their emotions enthusiastically. They exposed their deep emotions which are in religious sense. By looking at their poems one can understand that they are not written to make people's feelings be exhilarated but to make people more conscious about the metaphysical world they describe. For *The Anguish*, Tural claims that "Necip Fazıl, setting off from his inner world, he intended to reflect the further part of the seen world." (Tural, 2003: 211) So, the lyricism in Kısakürek's poem is not the one that we see in other lyric poems. Similarly Taylor's poem reflects the inner account of the persona through a lyrical way but this lyricism dispatches us to see the metaphysical world and how to be close to God.

The language of these two poems is quite spiritual and metaphysical. Most of the words used by these poets are related with spirituality. In the *Anguish*, there are many examples of such expressions as "heavens, builders of woes, pain, death, God, Unknown and Fate. Similarly in *Ebb and Flow*, Taylor makes uses of such kinds of spiritual, religious terms such as "Lord, holy Sparks of Heavenly Fire, Holy flint and Steel and Spirit." As soon as the reader starts reading these two poems the metaphysical atmosphere catches him or her. For instance, *The Anguish* opens with "a voice descending from the realms lost." And this spiritual air continues in the following lines with such words as "heavens agape, arrow's flaming venom, my soul, mythic heifers and etc." In *Ebb and Flow* the atmosphere is also quite spiritual. It begins with "When first thou on me Lord, wrought'st thy Sweet Print," which proves that the persona speaks not to a human but a spiritual authority, God. In the next lines the presence of such phrase as Sparkes of Heavenly Fire also demonstrates how a metaphysical atmosphere the poem has. The fire here is not the fire a person may normally understand but it is the fire of God and so its sparkes are not normal sparkes but immaterial as it will fire the persona's heart.

The language is also highly symbolic and metaphorical. The metaphors these two poets use are usually religious again. For instance in *The Anguish*, in the first stanza "the roof" represents the heaven, builders of woes represents God. The next example is the "void" which represents the destiny of the persona. Similarly in *Ebb and Flow*, the poet employs many religious metaphors and symbols. For example, "Sweet Print" in the first line stands for God's or Lord's print which is loved by the persona. And this is not a material prin but a divine print as the persona mentions this print is carved on him. Another example is "tinder box" which represents the softness and fragility of the persona's heart. The final example is the "Censar" which stands for the persona's heart that is full of Lord's fire. Though these metaphorical expressions make understanding of the poems hard, they strengthen the image created by the poet.

In terms of rhyming *The Anguish* and *Ebb and Flow* have different schemes. The rhyme scheme of *The Anguish* is: a b a b c d c d and etc. But, the rhyme scheme of *Ebb and Flow* is: a b a b c c d e d e f f and etc.

Besides the rhyme schme, the meter of these two poems are also different. The *Anguish* has pentameter; the lines of the poem consist of ten syllables and five feet.

However in *Ebb and Flow* there is not a definite meter order. The first line has ten syllables but the second line has eight syllables. But it is certain that the beginning line of each stanza has more syllables than the other lines. The first lines have ten syllables and the second and third lines of each stanza have eight syllables and the others have six then the lines that have more than ten syllables come again. So, *Ebb and Flow* has both pentameters, tetrameters and trimeters.

When it is looked at the literary devices in *The Anguish* and *Ebb and Flow*, it is seen that these two poets give much importance to metaphoric expressions most of which are related to immaterial world. Since many of the metaphors have been touched on, we will analyze other literary devices together with some of the metaphors.

In *The Anguish*, in the first stanza, in the fourth line “crack” has onomatopoeia. It imitates a sound peculiar to the nature. In the second line of the third stanza, there is a metaphor; the “soul” of the persona is made similar to a “cauldron”. In the first line of the sixth stanza there is personification. Atoms are not human but they are mentioned to have “carnival” and to have “dined”, two of which are peculiar to human.

In *Ebb and Flow*, in the second and third line of the first stanza there is anaphora. “My” is repeated in the beginning of the third line. In the first line of the second stanza there is metaphor. The persona’s “heart” is made similar to the God’s “Censar trim.” Since other metaphors have been explained before they are not written here.

#### 4. Conclusion

Conclusively, while Kısakürek and Taylor shared different lands and experiences, they exposed similar feelings in their poems. They handle metaphysical elements in their poems and they seem to have similar pious values, though they believed in different religions. Both of them use poetry in the service of religion and revelation of religious emotions by making use of different poetic forms. As a result the beauty of holiness, the strong connection of man to God is explored in these two poems of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Edward Taylor. In both of them we do not see the descriptions of nature, life or people, but we see the situation of men before God. In *Ebb and Flow*, the poem is told by a priest-like persona while in *The Anguish* the persona is like a sinful man at the beginning of the poem who suffers and later owing to his suffering reaches God. When it comes to their style, Necip Fazıl prefers to use four line stanzas consisting of ten or eleven syllables while Taylor chooses to write short and in a form peculiar to him. This poem is written in three stanzas consisting of six lines most of which have different syllables. Therefore Kısakürek’s style or poetic form is quite different from Taylor’s though they both had similar topics to a great extent.

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*Comparative Analysis of the Anguish by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Ebb and Flow by Edward Taylor*

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