Barış Bıçakçı's Our Grand Despair: Dealing with the Fugitive Past in the Crystalline Structure of the Text
Nazım Çapkın[*]

Starting from the central concept of despair as evident in the title of Barış Bıçakçı's 2004 novel Our Grand Despair, the following reflections intend to set sight on the ways melancholical disposition is represented and how this representation, in turn, determines the discrepancies in narrative voice and t emporal planes of writing and remembrances. To that end, this article urges respectively upon the multifaceted definitions of Platonic love so as to bring about the issue of social codes against which masculinities are defined, the Freudian and Benjaminian schemes of melancholy in order to better define the ambiguity of present rooted in fugitive past, and lastly the role of writing and limits of representation with relation to these schemes.

Keywords: Melancholy, Friendship, Masculinity, Love

Bizim Büyük Çaresizliğimiz: Firari Geçmişin Anlatıda Temsili
Bizim Büyük Çaresizliğimiz romanının edebi incelemesinde hayli önemli yere sahip, ilk olarak başlıkta karşımıza çıkan 'çaresizlik' kavramından hareketle, bu makalede melankoli halinin romanda ne şekillerde temsil edildiği ve bu temsilin, anlatı sesindeki tutarsızlık ve yazma ve hatırlama zamansal düzlemleri arasındaki uyuşmazlığın üzerindeki etkisi tartışılmaktadır. Yine bu amaçla, sırasıyla erkeklik tanımlarında belirleyici olan toplumsal yapıları incelemek amacıyla Platon'un sevgi tanımlarına, geçmişin ele avuca sığmaz niteliğinden kaynaklanan ve şimdiyi belirsiz kılan melankoli kavramını tanımlamak üzere Freud ve Benjamin'in konu hakkındaki çerçeve kuramlarına ve son olarak da bu çerçeve kuramlardan hareketle yazmaya düşen göreve ve temsilin sınırlarına yer verilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Melankoli, Arkadaşlık, Erkeklik, Sevgi

Giriş

"Because it was he, because it was I" writes Montaigne in his "Of Friendship" so as to explain the underlying element of his essays, which is the "complete fusion of wills" led by his beloved friend Etienne de la Boetie's sudden death. The question is, what if La Boetie had not died but just temporarily departed and he would read his friend's essays upon his return? Would Montaigne have another, preferably permanent, motivation for writing, a motivation as profound as the death of his dear friend? Such hypothetical questions reach significance and are partly answered along with a similar notion or a cult of friendship in Barış Bıçakçı's 2004 novel *Our Grand Despair.*[1] Particular 'losses' in Ender and Çetin's shared and individual stories not only manifest what is there to know about their despair but also impose a melancholic mode on the act of narration. Their collective and individual memories are visited one by one in Ender's account in an attempt to capture the past; however as we follow the traces of past, we can only reintroduce them to the time of reading not as a present illuminated by the experience of the time, but as one which is under ambiguous influence of the past; a present marked by melancholical disposition. We, as readers, join Ender in being influenced by such an ambiguity. In the face of their present day realities, he mentions his desire to write poems in transcendence, thus to disclose his mind. Their stories pertaining to the past are distractions from the vague emptiness of the present where individual anxieties lie. They hold on to each other as points of reference, reminders of authenticity; meanwhile the nature of their relationship calls into question the well-established social norms against which the two characters resist.

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[*] Research Assistant, PhD. Candidate, Bogazici University

On dwelling first on the complex nature of love in the novel, this article goes on to further explain the reasons behind the discrepancies in narrative voice with specific reference to the difference between the temporal planes of the act of narration and remembrances. It is in this light that I refer to the issue of despair against the backdrop of Freud's and Benjamin's schemes of melancholy and mourning, only to turn back to the role of writing, limits of representation when it comes to manifest the past as a source of authenticity in saving the present. Within this direction, I intend to start with the explication of this relationship mediating between *eros* and *philia*, the two terms borrowed from Plato, yet for the sake of clarity I would like to give a brief summary of the plotline.

Our Grand Despair is the account of two close friends, Ender and Çetin, moving together into an apartment after seventeen-year-separation, and are 'saved,' in Ender's words, from the pains inflicted upon them by the age-long separation. Three months later, an unexpected guest joins them: After the tragic car accident, their close friend Fikret is injured and loses his parents, and since he has to pursue his career in the United States, his sister Nihal has to be taken care of. Nihal is in the grip of excessive suffering due to her loses and barely responds to the world outside. The relationship between the three morphs into various forms, only to end in the form of love, and this brings to the fore the relationship between these two old friends which Ender tends to define as love.[2] This account, which is conveyed partly in epistolary style, namely the use of second-person narrative voice by Ender in addressing Çetin and at parts in first-person plural, is indeed about the two men's puzzlement by the recognition that they are eternally separated from their childhood memories and naiveties. It is about the futile but necessary attempt of accounting for the unaccountable, incommunicable part of them buried in the past, which Bıçakçı skillfully conveys through Ender's implied first person narration buried in the two aforementioned narrative voices.

In *Lysis,* Plato differentiates between *philia* and *eros. Philia* in male friendships is seen as the ideal appreciation of the other's goodness upon which the best friendship is based (270). In his *Symposium*, on the other hand, he disregards *eros* involved in a male friendship, as in the one between Achilles and Patroclus (10-11). Achilles, the lover of Patroclus, would rather have all the Greeks and Trojans die than to see his friend Patroclus hurt. For Plato, such relationships threaten the well being of the *polis*, a small, self-oriented place with the same people; when male friendships go beyond merely appreciating one another's goodness, *eros* becomes antithetical to the preservation of the *polis* by tempting people away from their duties.

In "Of Friendship," on the other hand, Montaigne poses his friendship with Etienne de la Boetie as a transcendental reference point he utilizes in attributing meaning to things in the world and all other relationships; after all theirs was "some ordinance from heaven" (p. 139). One another utilization derived from this 'ordinance' is the mode of thinking reflected upon the text as despair with the loss; we will revisit this matter with reference to the employment of melancholy and its relation to writing and the writing self in Bıçakçı's text. As in Montaigne, Ender and Çetin's notion of friendship is almost a religion, or a cult of friendship that replaces the conventional moral wisdom, and in the same manner as Montaigne, they have a rather subversive approach to the Platonic *polis*: Unlike *eros* and the sexual desire that it entails, in its Platonic, therefore ideal form, love (*philia*) strengthens self-understanding; it is universal and creates a desire for philosophy.[3] With its emphasis on the particular rather than universal forms, the following quotation from the novel indicates just the opposite:

> Hayatın gücü tekrarın gücüdür. Günlerin, ayların, mevsimlerin gücü. Tabii bir de şiirin. Şiirlerin tekrar eden dizelerinin gücü. Dinlere ne demeli? Hindu'nun mantrasını tekrar etmesi, Müslüman'ın tespit çekmesi ve senin 'Yemek güzel olmuş mu?' diye sorman.[4] 17

They form an unconventional family that resists easy definition and lacks the strict rules of a conventional one.[5] When asked about the nature of their relationship, Ender says: "*İki insanı birbirine götüren sayısız yol vardır. Ama gel biz burada, ikimiz için ayrı ayrı nedenlerden kaynaklanan 'erken aile kurma isteğinin' hafif kıvrımlı yolundan geçelim"*[6] (45). Elsewhere he defines their case as a great love story, and in fact, this quote foreshadows Ender's consciousness of the homosocial perception of their bonding, which will soon be discussed together with the lengthy quotation in order. Ender is worried the least about everything in

Çetin's company. He believes rhetoric to be unnecessary; now that they are together they are healed (91). They have even a grammar of their own, which Ender describes as follows: "*Hemen hemen her cümle "hatırlıyor musun" sorusuyla biter, ortak geçmişimizin g'si büyük yazılır, eylemlerimizin kipi daima güzel geçmiş zamandır ve Çetin ile Ender'i birbirine bağlayan bağlaçlar saymakla bitmez*"[7] (95).

As aforementioned, Ender often employs metafictional strategies as a self-conscious narrator in a way contributing more to the playfulness of the novel. One particular and recurrent example of this is his guard against cheap criticism that, being always at hand, could easily be foreseen. As such relationships are easily tagged as 'homosexual', he ridicules such attempts in advance and points to an essential love regardless of boundaries and categories. In her prominent work *Between Men: English Literature and Male Social Desire*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick undertakes a through analysis of the central theme of 'homosociality' and its changing patterns in English literature through ages. As it is the case with Plato's scheme of love, a quick summary of Sedgwick's work would betray the complex web of issues she raises and her expansive methodology. Yet, not only for the sole reason that it evokes Ender and Çetin's relationship with Nihal, but also in order to convey the gist of Sedgwick's arguments, we may content ourselves with this quote from the book: "[…] in the presence of a woman who can be seen as pitiable or contemptible, men are able to exchange power and to confirm each other's value even in the context of the remaining inequalities in their power" (quoted in Yaeger, p. 1140). For Sedgwick, the continuous affirmation of women bonding in both private and public realms cannot be easily identified when it comes to men, as such bonding is interrupted by homophobic reactions to "explicit expression of passion," since "obligatory heterosexuality becomes the name, though not the ultimate meaning, of the homosocial game" (Yaeger, 1141). This is what Ender has to say:

> *Eşcinselliğin sınırında dolaşan bir dostluğun hikayesi" biçiminde yorumlayan sinema eleştirmeni beyefendi, ikimizin sonunda, en sonunda, haritada bir nokta olduğumuzu görse ne derdi acaba? Bizim bu aşık hallerimize, on yedi yıl boyunca hayatımızı birbirimizi daha fazla görecek biçimde düzenleyişimize ne derdi? Encinselliğin kordon boyunca dolaştığımızı mı söylerdi? O güzel filme ilişkin berbat tanımlamanın canımı sıkan tarafı şu: Sınır var mı? İlişkiler için gerçekten bir sınır var mı? Varsa da ikinci sınıf sinema eleştirmenlerinin göremeyeceği bir sınır bu. İnsan severken basit sınıflandırmaların sınırlarını değil kendi sınırlarını görür, kendi sınırlarında dolaşır, kendi sınırlarına değer. Benim bildiğim tek sınır bu.*[8] (83)

It is this agenda of which Ender is conscious and against which he writes. These two adult men are still much convinced by the beauty of repetition and the force of monotonousness. Ankara as the setting offers a shelter for their unhomely (*unheimlich*) world in itself. The city is presented as the sphere of tranquility that goes in line with the feelings of the two characters. I believe what makes these feelings and the setting peculiar is the despair it conveys. This despair is reflected at its best in the void called Ankara, thus including the city into the novel as a character. Should we to take Ender and Çetin a small minority group, their dwelling happens to be the ghetto where the language of communication is their own made of memories. Ender openly states this feel of minority in the novel: "*Sırtlarını dışarıya bir güzel dönmüş iki insanın oluşturduğu azınlık. Düşünsene Çetin, şimdi şuraya "Milliyet Sanat dergilerine başvurmamız lazım!" diye yazsam, bu dünyada seninle benim dışımda kim ne anlar Allah aşkına!*"[9] (63). Just like Nihal, Ankara reaches significance as they revive their memories in it. Ender says,

> *Ankara'da yaşamaya sen İstanbul'a gittikten sonra başladım. Aslında biraz da buruk başladım! Ortak hatırlamalarımızla dolu yerlerin hızla değiştiğini görüyordum. Sizin sokaktaki bahçeli evler birer birer yıkıldı, basket oynadığımız park taştan betondan sevimsiz bir konser alanına dönüştü, pazaryerine dev bir bina konduruldu, Cuma pazarı binanın içine taşındı.*[10] (128-129)

The quality of Ankara as a Platonic *polis* with a 'call to reality' in its Freudian sense further stresses the nature of their grand despair and its spatial forms. For Georg Simmel (1971), individual's deepest problem arouses when he attempts to maintain independence and takes a stand against the sovereign powers of society

(51). The reaction of the metropolitan person to the swift events is moved to "a sphere of mental activity which is least sensitive and which is furthest removed from the depths of the personality" (52-53). In that respect, Ender and Çetin's protected field can be considered an alternative to the metropolitan life and the external and internal stimuli, or Plato's *polis* outlined earlier. Thus, devoid of "the rapid telescoping of changing images, pronounced differences within what is grasped at a single glance, and the unexpectedness of violent stimuli" (53), Ender and Çetin remain comfortable with their slow and habitual life as long as they are not disturbed by the mere awareness of having lost childhood innocence and excitement. Despite all the efforts, moments of disturbance that have less to do with their environment are both thematically and formalistically evident in Ender's account, which will soon be discussed with reference to despair. Their collective and individual memories are visited one by one in Ender's account in an attempt to capture the past, and the narrative is always, already belated as required by the nature of the task. He talks about his desire to write poems in transcendence, thus to manifest his mind through their blissful memories of the past. This is the only way he could exorcize the painful phases of existence in the present time; we will come back to the role of writing in our juxtaposition of Freud's and Benjamin's take on melancholia.

We read the story from Ender's point of view, as Çetin neither writes nor reads. Ender systematically inserts their great attachment to their own stories, unknown to anyone else, trying to pull Çetin's attention. As he relates, he lives time and again every single day he remembers. Although the narrative voice is second person singular, a careful reader could soon discover that in fact Ender comes to terms with his present self as well as Ender and Çetin buried in the past experiences.

Ender utilizes the first person plural narrative voice, too. Even though this seems to be a narrative necessity, one required by the shared experience of the past, one example among others from the beginning of the novel (the hospital scene in which they try to find Fikret's parents after the accident) is when Ender speaks hypothetically. He is aware of the question Çetin hesitated to ask (if his own parents' dead bodies were subject to the same procedures as Fikret's), that he wondered if the policeman was from Muğla (judging from his accent). Ender confesses that he can put these traumatic experiences into words only after four years: "*Bunları şimdi yazabiliyorum Çetin, oysa o sırada yine kapkaranlık, korkunç bir şey düşünüyordum"[11]* (11). This confession introduces another one that is made years later too; now they are fall in love with Nihal together and they find delight in it for the sole reason that they are doing it together. Another moment when Ender speak on behalf of Çetin is all the more interesting, for Ender knows even Çetin's dreams he himself cannot recall: "*Çetin, rüyalarını hatırlayan şanslı-şanssız insanlardan olsaydın, apartmandan çığlıkların geldiği o gece, korkuyla uyanmadan önce gördüğün rüyayı mutlaka hatırlayacak, bana anlatacaktın:..."[12]* (12). Later we are told that Çetin only exclaims "*Böcekler vardı*" (I saw insects) and Ender, being in full knowledge of the labyrinths of Çetin's conscience, creates a story around this brief statement.

The reason why it is Ender who narrates is that Çetin is not interested in the task: "**Sen söylemezsen ben söyleyeceğim, her şeyi darmadağan bırakarak, düzenleyerek değil dağıtarak, allak bullak ederek hatırlamaya, yazmaya devam edeceğim"[13] (39-40).** Following the good fight against the remembrances, at one point, Ender exclaims "*Çok konuşunca olan şey: Konuşmak, anlatmak, anlamsız gelmişti birdenbire. Belki de, katlanıp kaldırılması gereken şeyleri buruşturmuştum"*[14] (50). Later on he questions whether everything was as pretty as he recalls now and wishes to believe that it was; yet the question itself has also much to say about the ambiguity he implies. In order to survive this ambiguity, he recalls and narrates as a slave to their tranquility in mind. Nihal's presence in the novel is meant to elicit this ambiguity through the juxtaposition of her temporary grief (mourning) and the other two men's permanent despair (melancholia). In this frame, I will briefly turn to the Freudian scheme of melancholia, Walter Benjamin's take on it and its function in explicating this web of sorrows and what they entail for the narrative.

In "Mourning and Melancholia", Freud (1963) differentiates between normal emotion of grief and its expression in mourning and melancholia as not a state of grief. Whereas mourning is a healthy process in getting over the loss, in melancholia, the loss is of a more ideal kind. The loss occurs in unconsciousness. The relation to the object in melancholia is complicated by the conflict of ambivalence between the ego of the subject and the

object lost. The loved object is shifted on the patient's own ego in melancholic dispositions. Thus, libido withdraws to ego, not directed to another object. In other words, the identification of the ego with the lost object is what creates the tension. At the same time, the most violent accusation is hardly applicable to the patient but to the lost object.

According to Freud's theory, some of the features of melancholia are borrowed from grief and some of them from the regression from narcissistic object to narcissism. Loss of the object and the love of it are extended to self in a sadistic way, so, following, self-punishment occurs. That is the point when ego can kill itself as an object. Ultimately the ego destroys itself as it wishes to destroy the outside would, the alien within. Freudian theory sees melancholy as an attempt to deny an acute sense of privation by introjecting the lost object and deflecting attention to a series of inner dramas that covertly play out its loss. Mental features of melancholia are painful dejection, abrogation of interest in outside world, loss of capacity to love and self-reproach and a delusional expectation of punishment. Self-criticism of the patient is generally moral. It gets him closer to self-knowledge. Melancholic experience, in this sense, is a negative therapy: sadder but wiser.

Walter Benjamin points to a more productive dimension of melancholic disposition. For him, it is not disease to be cured so something to get over. Especially for the poetics of novel, or writing in general, in our day, his focus on "how of one's melancholic attachments" are given voice is of great importance (Flatley, p. 64). Flatley summarizes Benjamin's take on the relation to the past as follows: "For Benjamin, it is not only that we are motivated by the abstract desire to redeem the past, but that we actually feel these emotions from the past" (73). As opposed to the images of the future, his contention of dwelling on loss in the past helps much in identifying aforementioned ambiguity in Ender's account with the reservation that his relation to the present is depressing and cynical at the same time.

It is my contention that as opposed to the call of reality Freud inscribes to mourning and his treatment of melancholia as pathology, Benjamin's attitude towards the latter offers more insight to the novel in terms of both its form and content. For him, it is not an illness to be treated, but something that helps articulate the disposition of the subject towards the world. In Freud's scheme melancholic's attachment to the lost object inflicts destruction on the ego and causes its loss. Yet, when it is hard to define what is indeed lost, as is the case for this story, Benjamin's conception of loss as possibility in its being emptiness. Choosing Hamlet as a figure with melancholical disposition in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Benjamin goes on to claim that Hamlet's words "contain both the philosophy of Wittenberg and protest against it. […] Human actions were deprived of all value. Something new arose: an empty world […] For those who looked deeper saw the scene of their existence as a rubbish heap of partial, inauthentic actions" (p. 138-9).

It is in this sense that I claim Ender strives to respond to an empty world that opens up with nothing significant or redemptive, and it is also in this sense that his writing employs a redemptive mission (in vain) vis-à-vis the lack of a namable lost object. The empty world as Ender sees it is incorporated into past memories and conveyed in his writing. Rather than being a road taken to overcome the loss and therefore heal in Freudian sense, Ender's is a matter of articulation. Similarly, what I find to be moment of despair is when everything other than the memories escapes; the alien world outside pushes Ender further into an attachment to their world in memories. It is in this emptiness of the world outside at present Ender is offered a capacity to give meaning to the past; however, the more he tells the more his sense of loss is deepened and it leaves its mark on his account.

Where are we to posit Nihal in the text in the light of all these? Ender and Çetin's mutual love for her is more than a love story, in that it leads to self-discovery on the part of the characters. By questioning the love they feel for her, they try to come up with a definition of and name their mutual attachment. Nihal appears to be a mirror figure upon which Ender and Çetin reflect their common history, expectations from life and the despair they are—more specifically Ender is—in. Vis-a-vis the inconsistent behaviours of Nihal, they turn back upon themselves and investigate their individual and common reactions. When her mourning for her parent's death in a tragic car accident is juxtaposed to Ender and Çetin's grand despair, the result is an interesting revelation that is akin to the frame of melancholia mentioned above:

Nihal, daha doğrusu ona beslediğim yaşanmamaya mahkum aşk, beni bir erkeğe indirgemişti. İki yıl boyunca bütün sınıflandırmaları kadın ve erkek başlıkları altında yapmaya zorlamıştı. Halbuki bulutlar da var, kediler de, her dem yeşil bitkiler, binlerce yıldır yeri değişmeyen taşlar, mutfakta bulaşıklar, kenarı kıvrılan kilimler, kar altında kalanlar, sınıflandırmalara tabi olmayanlar […] oysa ben, iki yıl boyunca, bir erkekten başka bir şey olamamıştım. Aşkın insanı zenginleştirdiğini biliyorduk, fakirleştirdiğini de bilelim.[15]

Nihal is in a transition period when she starts sharing the same apartment with Ender and Çetin. Her daily routine and tranquil life has been dramatically disturbed by the sudden changes in her life. These are only implied in Ender's account, but when we first meet her, she is at the hands of a huge trauma, feel of emptiness and lack. Among many other things, she is in terrible need of security that Ender and Çetin provides for her. Her state is akin to what Freud understands from 'mourning.' Ender puts the case into words as such:

Acıdan besleniyordu sanki. Çünkü ne yapsa ondan kurtulamıyordu, iyice geçiriyordu tırnaklarını [...] Başına gelenleri o kadar sessiz sakin karşılaması tuhaftı zaten. Demek içinde olan oluyordu. Onun kapının önündeki o haline bakıp, başkalarının acısını kendi acısına dönüştürdüğünü düşünmüştüm. Bütün ölümleri tek bir ölüme dönüştürüyordu, en yakınının en sevdiğinin ölümüne.[16] (14)

In order not to be absorbed by her pains, she actively absorbs the sorrows around her. When the Freudian circle is complete, she fulfills the necessary task of mourning and undergoes the 'healthy process'. She is called back to life by the odd relationship between these two men and turns them into her own family, thus the loss is replaced. Time restores her losses, but she is also in search of an external reference in life to hold on to. This is because she knows this to be a temporary period, for there is no space for a permanent relationship with these men who are already alien to the outside world. Later this turns into a need to go for her, to escape from the past and the temporary present.

This stands in a stark contrast to what makes *Our Grand Despair* a novel about two adults' puzzlement. Ender recounts their common history to distract from this emptiness, hides their own individualities and silences the incommunicable part of their souls, which, nevertheless, manifests itself into the conscience in the time of remembering and writing. The gap between their childhood memories and the time when they start living together with the same passion as in high school days is irresistible. The more Ender tries to be a watchman of authenticity, the more he is chained to his narration. In the simultaneity of his narration and remembrance, shared experiences of the past loses its power as symbolic mediation and, as a result, the text crystalizes. At times, he cannot help but confess the futility he is in. As they cook *taze fasulye* (runner beans), they stop and listen to the voices of the children on the street and Ender confesses openly the root of their grand despair: "*Bizim büyük çaresizliğimiz Nihal'e aşık olmamız değil, sesimizin dışarıdaki çocuk seslerinin arasında olmayışıydı. Asıl çaresizlik buydu!*"[17] (102). They cannot resist but grow up and are reminded of it every single moment, and this marks the naivety behind their despair. Nihal's desire to grow up, and all the other characters in the novel are antithetical to their position, which in fact is a melancholical disposition, onto which they hold in resisting the rest of the world. *Taze fasulye* here is not an ordinary choice of food in that it is one of those associated with conventional family environment, less with an apartment two adult, bachelor men. Despite the authenticity Ender attributes to the present moment with *taze fasulye* being there on the stove, it still lacks the blissful memories and the promise of their younger age, the age of innocence of which the voices of children remind them.

Ender's account offers a significant insight into such melancholic disposition I attempted to outline all along. He starts saying, "Her şeyin geçip gittiğine, yaşadıklarımızın geçmişte kaldığına kim inandırabilir bizi? Anılarımızı avuç dolusu su gibi her sabah yüzümüze çarpmanın işe yaramayacağına kim inandırabilir?"[18] (5), and throughout the novel, he attributes the energy they need to the repetition of every single part of moment and memories. Ironically, he is chained to what the present moment brings to the fore: togetherness. So, this is both an escape from and commitment to the present. As previously mentioned, as we follow the traces of the past in

the novel, we can only reintroduce them to the time of reading not as a new present illuminated by the experience of the time, but as a present which is under ambiguous influence of the past. Ender wonders if there is any other way of communicating with the past other than remembering (133), and this influence is felt to a great extent when he fails to find an answer and is left in ambiguity: **"***Yeter, sıkıldım Çetin! İki yıl sonra bunları yazmak, yaşadıklarımızı, bizi aklı başında, her şeye hakim ve iyi niyetli insanlar olarak gösterecek bir dille anlatmaya çalışmak bilsen ne acıklı!"*[19] (104).

Writing, here, is fantasy based on the fantasies of the past depending upon their unrepresentability and questioning of the narrative credibility. The novel is not a mere manifestation of a depressive character, but narrative of the elevation of the heart in the face of the unexplainable and the irresistible, of that which demands narration. That is maybe why Ender does not appreciate things with a beginning and an end; he feels like dying (134). Another version of death for him would be to lose the richness of feeling of love between Ender and Çetin. It would be far-fetched to stretch the novel's aspect of melancholy to the Freudian definition; we cannot speak of an ego destroying itself, for these two men become a single person together in the narrative and the gap between them turns into love that nullifies self-destruction as Freud understood from melancholy. However, we should still reserve the negative therapy in writing in that Ender and Çetin are growing sadder in awareness, but it brings certain wisdom together with it. Ender imagines that one day, when they are old people, they will come to the full realization of their grand despair and there will be a rebellion within themselves against things unbeknownst to them (167). In the light of the previous readings, I would like to conclude that their despair is rooted in the knowledge of the fate of their resistance to time and the world outside, or better, emptiness in its aforementioned Benjaminian sense. Ender's account is repetitive and reproduced for this very reason; in challenging the premises of the modern society they live in, in fact, he declares his manifesto of despair, not of independence.

[1] *Bizim Büyük Çaresizliğimiz.* This and the quotations from the novel have been translated by the author of the article.

[2] Ender's mediation between '*sevgi*' and '*aşk*' is lost in translation once the word 'love' comes to define what it is in both senses. Therefore, Plato's differentiation between *eros*, *philia* and *agape* offers great insight to the dynamics of the relationship between the three main characters.

[3] Plato's conception of love and its relation to philosophy exceeds the boundaries of a brief summary. For further information please see Reeve, C. D. C., "Plato on Friendship and Eros", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta(ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/plato-friendship/>.

[4] **The power of life lies in the power of repetition. The power of the days, the months and the seasons. And, of course, that of poetry. How about religions? A Hindu repeating his mantra, a Muslim telling his beads and you asking "Does it taste good"?**

[5] I would recommend Foucault's 1981 interview "Friendship as a Form of Life" as it informs a comprehensive outlook to the politics of friendship and queer activism: "Friendship as a way of life." The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume One - Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. Ed. Paul Rabinow. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: The New Press, 1997. 135-140.

[6] There are a number of ways that connect two people. But let us say, for our own reasons, we pass through the slightly meandering path of the 'earlier strive for starting a family.'

[7] Nearly all our sentences end with the question "Do you remember?", our common past is written in capital 'p', the tense of our actions is always 'pleasantly past tense' and there is no end to the conjunctions that combine Ender and Çetin.

[8] That gentleman, the film critic, who puts it as "the story of a friendship that is on the border of homosexuality," what would he say if he saw that we two are a spot on the map in the end, in the very end? What would he say about this amative state of ours, and the fact that we shaped the last seventeen years in a way that allowed us to see each other more? Would it be the coast of homosexuality now? What bothers me about that awful description of the movie is this: Is there a border? Is there really a borderline for relationships? If there is any, it must be one that is invisible to second-rate film critics. A person in love realizes personal boundaries, not those of shallow classifications, walks upon and touches his or her own borderline. That's the only border that I acknowledge.

[9] Minority group consisting of two men who turn their backs to the world outside. Mark my word Çetin, who else but you would understand if I wrote here 'We should subscribe to the *Milliyet Art Magazine*.'

[10] I started *living* (my emphasis) in Ankara after you returned from Istanbul, a bit disappointed indeed! I was observing the swift changes in the places where we had shared a lot of memories. The detached houses on your street were demolished one by one, the park where we used to play basketball had been turned into an ugly, concrete concert area, and a huge building has been erected in the marketplace. Cheapjack has been moved inside the building.

[11] I can now write these, whilst I was contemplating on something very dark and terrible back then.

[12] Çetin, if you were one of those (un)lucky people who recall their dreams, you would definitely remember and tell me the dream you had at that night when screams from the building reached us.

[13] **If you don't, I will tell it; I will go on writing by leaving behind a real mess, disrupting everything rather than organizing and remembering disorderly.**

[14] This is what happens when you talk a lot: you mess things up that needs to be kept in order.

[15] Nihal, or rather the unrequited love that I am in, reduced me to a man, forced me to categorize every thing in line with the dichotomy of man and woman. However, there are the clouds, cats, plants very green, and stones unmoved for millennia, dishes in the kitchen, rugs half folded, those under the snow and those that are not subject to categorization **[…] I, on the other hand, have not been something more than a man. We always knew that love enriches one; now is the time to learn that it impoverishes, too.**

[16] **It seemed as if she was feeding on sorrow. Whatever she tried she couldn't escape from it, she was clenching it. It was weird she was silence about what has happened anyway. So, she was experiencing it within herself. Looking at her condition in front of the door, I had thought she was turning anyone else's sorrows into hers.**

[17] Our grand despair is not about us falling in love with Nihal, but the fact that our voices cannot join to those of the children on the street.

[18] **Who could ever convince us that everything is gone and that our experiences are buried in past? Who could convince us that slamming our faces with memories every morning like handful water?**

[19] Enough is enough, Çetin, I am worn out! I wish you knew how it feels to tell all these after two years and try to write everything in such a way that we are shown as down to earth, in full control of everything and in good faith.

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