VISIONS OF NIGHTMARE: AN ANALYSIS OF DYSTOPIAN FICTION IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH AND TURKISH NOVELS

A Master's Thesis

by

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To my grandmother, Yıldız

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ABSTRACT

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This study focuses on contemporary dystopian novels written in English and Turkish literature. As it is a popular tradition among today's readership, the first chapter discusses dystopia as a genre. The second and third chapters provide close readings on Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* (2007), Cem Akaş's *Y* (2018), Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann: An Adventure* (1999), and Oya Baydar's *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* (2019). While it aims to inform the reader about the development of the dystopian genre, this thesis seeks answers to the questions of how we can read these authors from different countries in relation to each other and how they complement each other as writers that use the same genre. While seeking an answer to these questions, the concept of "kinship" proposed by Wai-Chee Dimock is thought to be useful. This thesis proposes that there is kinship through genre between Winterson and Akaş, while Lessing and Baydar form this kinship from a more political and activist position due to the parallels in their personal experiences. In regard to this concept, while discussing Winterson and Akaş through gender and sexuality, this thesis reads Lessing and Baydar together through their eco-dystopia. Through their similarities and distinctions, all four authors contribute to the tradition

of the dystopia separately; however, it is also essential to establish a connection and relationship between their works as the authors wrote their works under the traditions of their Anglophone and Turkish literatures.

Keywords: contemporary novel, dystopia, eco-dystopia, gender and sexuality, kinship

ÖZET

KÂBUS TASAVVURLARI: ÇAĞDAŞ İNGİLİZ VE TÜRK ROMANLARINDA DİSTOPİK KURGUNUN ANALİZİ

Ulaş, Irmak

Yüksek Lisans, Türk Edebiyatı Bölümü

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Bu çalışma, İngiliz ve Türk edebiyatında yazılmış çağdaş distopik romanlara odaklanmaktadır. Günümüz okurları arasında popüler bir gelenek olduğu için birinci bölümde bir tür olarak distopya ele alınmaktadır. İkinci ve üçüncü bölümler Jeanette Winterson'ın *The Stone Gods* (2007), Cem Akaş'ın *Y* (2018), Doris Lessing'in *Mara and Dann: An Adventure* (1999) ve Oya Baydar'ın *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* (2019) romanları üzerinden eserlerin yakın okumalarını yapar. Bu tez, okuyucuyu distopik türün gelişimi hakkında bilgilendirmeyi amaçlarken, farklı ülkelerden bu yazarları birbirleriyle nasıl okuyabileceğimiz ve eserlerinde aynı edebî türü kullandıkları için birbirlerini nasıl tamamladıkları sorularına yanıt aramaktadır. Bu sorulara cevap aranırken Wai-Chee Dimock'un önerdiği "akrabalık" kavramının faydalı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Winterson ve Akaş arasında tür üzerinden akrabalık varken, Lessing ve Baydar bu akrabalığı kişisel deneyimlerindeki paralellikler nedeniyle daha politik ve aktivist bir konumdan oluşturuyor. Bu kavrama ilişkin olarak, bu tez, Winterson ve Akaş'ı toplumsal cinsiyet ve cinsellik üzerinden tartışırken, Lessing ve Baydar'ı kaleme aldıkları eko-distopyalar üzerinden okur. Benzerlikleri ve farklılıklarıyla dört yazar da distopya geleneğine ayrı ayrı katkıda bulunur; ancak yazarlar distopyalarını

İngilizce ve Türkçe yazılan edebiyat gelenekleri çerçevesinde kaleme aldıkları için eserleri arasında bir bağlantı ve ilişki kurmak da elzemdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: akrabalık, çağdaş roman, distopya, eko-distopya, toplumsal cinsiyet ve cinsellik

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INTRODUCTION

The term dystopia has become a word that almost everyone has become familiar with within this age of anxiety and turmoil. As the antithesis of utopia, dystopian works often depict authoritarian and oppressive regimes. Such works demonstrate how the governments have the power to excruciate people and how easy it is to control the media to manipulate people. Even though the term dystopia had been used by John Stuart Mill in an 1868 parliamentary debate before, Gregory Claeys suggests in his study, "Origins of Dystopia: Wells, Huxley, Orwell," that it entered widespread circulation only in the twentieth century (107). Therefore, literary works that portray the image of hell on earth have replaced utopias that symbolize freedom, happiness, and hope. However, contrary to prevalent belief, dystopias are not the exact counterparts of utopias. Dystopias are not exactly pessimistic. Instead, they serve as a warning for humanity, aiming to prevent the future they describe. Therefore, I argue that dystopias are written to warn people against the dangers that have begun to emerge in real-life societies.

Dystopian tradition in literature has appeared in a variety of ways throughout the 20th century. There have been various examples of dystopia in English literature that explore the consequences of corruption, war, disease, and ecocide throughout the years. Works like *1984* and *Brave New World* introduced this genre to wider audiences, and they remain popular even today. No matter how much time passes,

dystopian literature maintains its impact through new literary texts, cinematic works, and television series. In recent years, a relatively new genre called Young Adult (YA) fiction has taken its place in the literary scene, and these works continue to deal with dystopian features. Even though the mainstream dystopian literature has begun to change with the recent examples, the interest in the melancholic worlds of Orwell and Huxley will never seem to go out of date.

It is possible to examine the historical background of the concept of utopia, from Plato's *Republic* to Thomas More's *Utopia*. It is possible to summarize the literary tradition that More formed its basis as follows: The character's journey to an unknown place is illustrated; in his journey, the character is informed about the social, political, and economic aspects of the place they go. The protagonist carries the knowledge they have gained back to his own country and spreads the message that there are better ways to live. In this imagined society, people do not rely on any external or divine forces to bring order to society. In short, utopian societies are built by people, for people. The utopian author depicts their ideal society by offering solutions to the problems in the society he lives in. However, the dystopian writer critiques the community they live in by taking the existing problems further and turning them into frightening future visions.

Erika Gottlieb claims that dystopian fiction is a genre that began to develop after Christianity (3). In our modern secular world, the salvation of humanity depends on enlightened people and a just order. However, writers who had witnessed an unjust and power-hungry ruling class started to narrate the image of hell on earth by describing the worst possibility in their dystopias. With the rise of fascism in the

early twentieth century, writers began producing fiction and non-fiction dystopian works. It is possible to see many literary works, from Katherine Burdekin's dystopian fiction novel *Swastika Night* (1937), which presents an alternative reality where the Nazis won the war, to Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* (1938), which has dystopian non-fiction features and aims to warn against fascism.

The dystopian genre in Turkish literature has increased in recent years, especially between 2015-2019. In addition to the re-publications of dystopias written in earlier periods, the abundance of dystopias has entered the field of literature for the first time. Aside from the sudden increase in the last ten years, we can see the first serious boost after 2000[1].

Consequently, in this thesis, I will be analyzing contemporary dystopian novels from Turkish and English literature to observe how the authors from different geographies approach dystopian fiction as a genre and see whether specific narrative differences emerge due to historical, cultural, and religious differences. The primary texts to be analyzed in this thesis are Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann* (1999), Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* (2007), Cem Akaş's *Y* (2018), and Oya Baydar's *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* (2019). This comparative study aims to find answers to the questions of how we can read these authors from different countries together and, since they all use the same genre while narrating their stories, how they complement each other.

[1] Yılmaz Açık provides a detailed list of utopias and dystopias written in Turkish literature in his study *1980 Sonrası Türk Edebiyatı'nda Bilimkurgu Romanları*.

In Jeanette Winterson's dystopia, *The Stone Gods*, reckless state policies and the government's obsession with control bring the end of the world. Instead of solely criticizing the government, Winterson presents technological advancement both as progress and destruction. In doing so, she questions the human/non-human connectedness and how technology serves to the dominant patriarchal ideology in her alternative world/s. Winterson challenges the patriarchal ideology that controls and destroys both nature and women in her novel. Therefore, Winterson uses her dystopian narrative as a vehicle for challenging patriarchal beliefs and practices, such as the objectification of women and the obsession with traditional structures of heterosexuality.

Cem Akaş's *Y* depicts a world where only women live. Unlike Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*, he defines his book as a dystopia. The period in which men were alive is called "the Dark Ages," and the reader follows the life of the person with the only Y chromosome in the world. The narration reveals that men were wiped out due to a virus and that the protagonist of the novel, Constantine, was the first man to be born a hundred and fifty years later. The book is divided into three parts with the titles "Prolog," "Analog," and "Epilog" respectively. The "Prolog" opens with a baby left at the doorstep of a middle-aged couple, Iliad and Arendi. After adopting the baby, they decide to hide Constantine from the government and raise him as a girl. The rest of the book explains how Constantine copes with being the only man in the world and how other people react to this problem.

Oya Baydar's *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* was published in 2019 as the first eco-dystopia of Turkish literature. In the novel, an unnamed character narrates the struggles of an unnamed country and planet Earth against climate change. The novel depicts a climate catastrophe that occurs in the near future and destroys the whole world. In the beginning, water wars begin between countries due to drought, and people start to ration their water. After the drought, it begins to rain non-stop, and this causes floods and typhoons. Novel's narration shifts between the characters "Kadın," "Adam," and the omniscient narrator. As a result of the change in narrative perspectives, the reader learns about the problems faced by humanity both before and after the climate catastrophe. As the novel progresses, we learn that there were environmental changes even before the drought and floods, but people did not care about the problems, and instead of finding solutions, they ignored the signs.

Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann: An Adventure* takes place in a fictive future where wars and climate change cause an ecological catastrophe. Lessing displays a world turned upside down. The technological developments we experience today are left behind in Lessing's world. People use ancient survival methods such as pot-cooking on fire, drawing maps on animal skin, bathing in groups by the lake, and eating plant roots. Throughout the novel, we follow siblings Mara and Dann and their efforts to understand what happened to the world. The narrator mentions that their world was once technologically and socially advanced. However, now one part of the world is destroyed by drought, and the other part is in a new Ice Age. This eco-dystopia depicts Mara and Dann's survival efforts in the face of environmental changes. One of the most striking aspects of the novel is Lessing's efforts to describe wars, the slave trade, and class differences through ecological changes.

While analyzing these novels, I will also discuss notions such as gender, queer, women, and politics. Gender, queer, and women will be discussed in more detail and comprehensively in the second chapter, as Akaş's and Winterson's texts enable me to explore these topics better. The reason behind examining them under the same title is because of their similar approach to these topics. While Winterson writes a dystopia of a patriarchal world, Akaş reverses this by offering a matriarchal world. These subjects could have also been discussed through Lessing and Baydar's works, but I prefer to explore them through Akaş and Winterson since I do not believe that a comprehensive comparison of these notions would emerge in Baydar and Lessing's dystopia. However, examining politics and political ideologies through Lessing and Baydar would be more relevant because I believe that these writers created worlds in which ecological disasters prevail because of their personal political beliefs and thoughts.

In the light of previous information, I have divided my thesis into three parts. In the first chapter, I will discuss the concepts of utopia and dystopia and their places in Turkish literature. In the second chapter, I will compare Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* and Cem Akaş's *Y* from a gender perspective. In addition, I will mention Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* briefly while talking about Akaş's text. Even though both texts depict a society consisting entirely of women, Gilman's novel is an example of utopia while Akaş's is a dystopia. Lastly, in the second chapter, I will analyze Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann: An Adventure* and Oya Baydar's *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi*. Since both are eco-dystopias, I plan to compare them to show their similarities and differences.

Additionally, I believe that a kinship presents itself between Akaş and Winterson, and also Baydar and Lessing. In chapters two and three, I will try to show that Akaş and Winterson's dystopias implicitly make them kins because, as Wai Chee Dimock suggests, in order to effectively contextualize the commonalities, peculiarities, and parallels between works, the genre's circulation should not be tied to just one national identity (77). To put it differently, the works of Akaş and Winterson, although they show apparent differences, establish a connection through the dystopian genre. As a result of this connection, both works become part of a larger totality instead of being tied only to their separate national literatures. In the case of Baydar and Lessing, I plan to show this kinship through the affinities and parallels in personal experiences and mindsets. Overall, I believe that Dimock's idea of kinship enables the works produced within national borders to go beyond the invisible national boundaries.

Consequently, I believe that comparing these authors will help their works to go beyond the national borders in which they were written. Through their similarities and differences, I would like to show that they could all be part of the system of world literature. As Dimock's kinship argument also suggests, whether through genre or personal experiences, the works become part of a larger formation by complementing each other and becoming a whole. In light of this, by comparing novels from the same genre, I hope to bring the connection between them into the open in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 1

UTOPIA AND DYSTOPIA

1.1. Utopia's Development as a Literary Genre

Utopias derive from people's desire to live a better life. The desire to find the perfect life has led people to create alternative worlds where everything is flawless and everyone is happy. In their fictional world, the utopian writer aims to offer a solution to the unsatisfactory living conditions by creating a different world from their own. In other words, utopias represent the hope people are looking for and hoping to find.

The word "utopia" was first used by Thomas More as the name of the fictional island he described in *Utopia*. Fátima Vieira suggests in "The Concept of Utopia" that utopia is a neologism, but its meaning has changed continuously since its first usage. Furthermore, it has been used as the root for forming new neologisms such as "eutopia, dystopia, anti-utopia, alotopia, euchronia, heterotopia, eco- topia and hyperutopia" (3). Etymologically, the term comes from Greek origin, and it is formed by combining the prefix "ou," meaning not, and "tópos," meaning place. As a result of this combination, the word utopia simply means no place or nowhere and refers to a non-existent place where the ideal or perfect community lives. More's imaginary island has even shaped the dictionary meaning of the word utopia. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines utopia as "[a]n imagined or hypothetical place, system, or state of

existence in which everything is perfect, [especially] in respect of social structure, laws, and politics." Both More's definition of the word and the dictionary suggest that utopias are about ordinary life. While More's narrative depicts a self-contained community where everything is perfect, dictionary definitions, in general, underline the term's function in offering a solution to the economic, social, and political problems that the utopian writer observes in their society by presenting a flawless alternative. Therefore, I argue that while utopia offers an image of the perfect society, it also functions as a tool for us to comprehend reality by underlining the problematic aspects of the existing living conditions.

Nevertheless, there is no consensus among utopian literature scholars regarding the term's meaning and scope. Even though Thomas More coined the concept of utopia to name his island, we should not reduce the word's meaning to a specific history or author. I argue that this concept goes beyond the boundaries of time and space as it has acquired different meanings since More. Moreover, it will likely continue to take on new meanings as humanity's understanding of the "ideal" changes. This standpoint allows us to understand More's use of the term more effectively and its acquired new meanings.

The discovery of previously unknown geographies through travelers and missionaries from the 15th to the 17th century is crucial for the evolution of utopia. The Age of Discovery revealed that there were different communities and living conditions in the world. As an outcome of exploring new places, people who had longed for a different and better life got convinced that they could still build a happy life. Thus, utopian literature began to gain importance during the Age of Discovery,

and classical works of utopian literature like Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun* (1623), and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627) were written during this period.

Not every literary text proposes to deal with political or philosophical debates. However, utopian fiction is a genre that incorporates politics, philosophy, and literature because it generally presents a philosophical conjecture, political proposal, and literary vision. The reality vanishes due to literary utopia's fictive feature, combined with politics and philosophy, for an alternative possibility. The genre simply presents an order that exists nowhere and offers a contrasted version of the current order. As Darko Suvin suggests in *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*:

> Utopia is the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis. (49)

Suvin is interested in seeing utopia as a literary genre. Bearing this in mind, I want to emphasize some interdependent notions in this definition. Suvin's explanation indicates how utopian thinking is a practice in which concepts such as "community," "institution," "individual," and "practice" complement each other in a way that they ensure consistency and resolve conflict if they manage to work together. Therefore, utopia as a verbal construct seeks coherence: It creates fictional order, overcomes ambiguity, and provides an ideal for a better life.

Utopian fiction is not a genre that presents an ideal order entirely disconnected from reality. As Bülent Somay suggests, utopia is "no more an idealistic dichotomy: the

actual is not counterposed to the ideal; rather, the actual is challenged by a possibility which is given a semblance of actuality" (36). Utopia then displays a "future that might be" by presenting a universe that differs from the actual world but is not entirely detached from reality:

> The naïve mind sees a possible reality as actually existing: its working seems to be perspective and passive. The sophisticated utopian writer on the other hand is clearly aware of the gap between possible and actual reality, but tries to close it by giving to a possibility the appearance of actual reality: he is consciously creative and active. (Gerber 5)

Utopian literature, therefore, is a discourse that is inherently related to the actual world. Since the genre generates its content based on reality, it permits us to ask questions that probe the relationship between fact and fiction: What is the line between reality and fiction and truth? What does fictive narrative say about the past, present, and future? Lastly, to what extent is it possible to implement the utopian writer's imaginative vision in the actual world?

So far, I have established a semantic background regarding the meaning of utopia. Although there is no consensus regarding the term's definition, there seems to be a common ground concerning the function of utopias: a sense of longing. Whether this yearning is related to humanity's return to eternal heaven, finding immortality, or even overcoming the modern world's difficulties, almost all utopias contain a sense of longing. Therefore, in addition to the discussions on the word's meaning, there are also various explanations of the sources of utopias.

As mentioned earlier, utopias contain a sense of longing and a desire to achieve a better way of living. From social or political manifestos to monotheistic religions to myths of various societies, dreaming of a refined social order and thus yearning for a

better life has been the source of inspiration for many utopian narratives. Lyman T. Sargent explains in "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited" that utopianism is a "universal human phenomenon" that roots in social dreaming (3). Furthermore, he suggests that the first eutopias we know of come from myths, and we create labels such as golden ages, arcadias, earthly paradises, etc. Moreover, "simplicity, unity, security, immortality or as an easy death, unity with God or the gods, abundance without labor, and no enmity between homo sapiens and the other animals" are the shared features of all these eutopias (10). Specifically, in early utopian writings composed right after More, the Golden Age is depicted as the happiest age of the individual. The absence of classes and private property and acquiring the utmost benefit with the minimum effort is the most striking feature of Golden Age-related utopian narratives.

Through the Golden Age narratives, it is asserted that people had simple lives, lived in abundance, and everyone was equal, and thus, they led a happy life. In these narratives, peace, and tranquility prevail because people had not yet acquainted themselves with the wars and responsibilities brought by the modern world. In *Utopianism*, Krishan Kumar summarizes the content of these narratives as follows:

> Paradise and the Golden Age contribute the elements of harmony. Human beings live in a state of quiet contentment. Everyone is at peace with himself and with other men. The order of creation is one. Human beings live in and accordance to nature … Simplicity is the keynote of this order. It is by the restriction of needs that so few demands are made on nature and society … In so far as utopia strives for stability, for an order of unchanging perfection, then Paradise and the Golden Age are the images that underpin this vision. (18)

Therefore, the golden age narratives conveyed through utopias tell that it is possible to return to the ideal order that had existed in the world at some point in time.

However, even though Paradise and Golden Age narratives dominate the first examples of the utopian genre, some scholars argue that utopias are almost always a secular literary form. While Robert C. Elliott summarizes utopia as "the secularization of the myth of the Golden Age, a myth incarnated in the festival of the Saturnalia[2]" (24), A. L. Morton also comes to the same conclusion (45). The myth of Cokaygne is another theme that has been narrated in many cultures since medieval times. Cokaygne refers to a place where one lives in abundance and constant satisfaction. In the mid-fourteenth century poem, "The Land of Cokaygne," a community that lives in magical abundance, eternal youth, and earthly Paradise is depicted (Morton 12). In this land, everything comes true, and people live in prosperity without working. Furthermore, the poem attacks the idea of Paradise and claims that the land of Cokaygne is superior to heaven:

> Though Paradise is merry and bright
> Cokaygne is a fairer sight.
> For what is there in Paradise
> But grass and flower and greeneries?
> Though there is joy and great delight,
> There's nothing good but fruit to bite,
> There's neither hall, bower nor bench,
> And only water thirst to quench. (Somay 37)

As can be seen from this medieval poem, utopia seeks more than heavenly promises. In the lands of Cokaygne, where happiness is sought primarily through sexual gratification and earthly pleasures, the concept of Paradise is ridiculed.

Even though the narratives of the Golden Age and Cokaygne prioritize the desire for earthly abundance, utopia is almost always political. Utopian writers intervene in the political sphere by creating a world where social inequalities and corruption in class

[2] An ancient Roman festival held in the name of the god Saturn.

societies do not exist. Ruth Levitas claims in "Utopia Matter?" that utopia is closely related to refusal: "the refusal to accept that what is given is enough; the refusal to accept that living beyond the present is delusional; the refusal to take at face value current judgments of the good, or claims that there is no alternative" (42). What is more important is that utopian writers construct their narratives in relation to society and the problems it faces. This is what makes literary utopias political. Creating alternative ways of life for the corrupt society by depicting a more just and egalitarian order is one of the primary aims of utopianism.

Most contemporary critics see utopias as the representation of hope, the essence of the desire for a better world rather than a potential imaginary place. Furthermore, critics such as Fredric Jameson see the process of imagining a better place as the most fundamental step of utopian thinking. Rather than valuing the outcome of utopian thinking more, Jameson appreciates the vision behind the utopian desire:

> The Utopians not only offer to conceive of such alternate systems; Utopian form is itself a representational meditation on radical difference, radical otherness, and on the systemic nature of the social totality, to the point where one cannot imagine any fundamental change in our social existence which has not first thrown off Utopian visions like so many sparks from a comet (*Archeologies of the Future* xii).

Overall, the utopian writer is compelled to create fiction. They have to tell things as if they are real, and in order to do that, they have to form a connection between the world they aim to criticize and the imaginary world they create. As Jameson implies, the process of imagining is the basis of utopian literature, and it is this act that leads to resistance to social and political corruption that affects our everyday lives. Since utopian thought leads to society's transformation, visionary literary utopias offer a perception of a radically transformative world.

There are debates about whether the concept of utopia exists in Eastern and Islamic cultures. Regarding the historical evolution of utopia, the belief that utopia does not exist in Eastern societies prevails. As for Turkish literature, scholars argue that utopia did not exist in the Ottoman Empire until the Tanzimat period. In his "Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Edebi Bir Bakış," Engin Kılıç suggests that there cannot be a tradition of utopia in cultures that acknowledge God as the only one who brings order to the world or societies that believe development can only be possible by returning to the past, which is the ideal order (Dağ 73). Krishan Kumar is also one of the scholars who claim that utopia is a genre unique to Western cultures. In *Utopianism*, Kumar explains that utopia can only be seen in societies with classical and Christian heritage:

> Other varieties of the ideal society or the perfect condition of humanity are to be found in abundance in non-Western societies, usually embedded in religious cosmologies. But nowhere in these societies do we find the practice of writing utopias, of criticizing them, of developing and transforming their themes and exploring new possibilities within them … One reason why it is difficult to find utopia in non-Western societies is that they have mostly been dominated by religious systems of thought … [Even though] utopia is a secular variety of social thought, [it is still] a creation of Renaissance humanism. Its practitioners have often been devout Christians — Francis Bacon no less than Thomas More — but what their utopias principally declared was a faith in human reason. In their utopias, whatever the case in their other speculations, they were more concerned with the City of Man than the City of God. (33-5)

I argue that Kumar's argument, which defends humanity's faith in reason as a mentality unique to Western societies, is reductionist and is only a criticism of Islamic societies. Explanations based only on the Renaissance, specifically on their devotion to reason, draw a harsh line between Eastern and Western civilizations and lead to the creation of binary oppositions.

Critics such as Lyman Tower Sargent and Jacqueline Dutton, on the other hand, propose that non-Western societies also exhibit utopian tradition. Dutton's view on this issue is particularly intriguing. She claims that Eastern utopias have their sources in a great variety of traditions and worldviews; therefore, reductive classifications become useless. She also suggests that instead of using the negative phrase "non-West" when referring to the utopian visions that derive from cultures beyond the predetermined boundaries of the Western genre, critics should explore new methods of phrasing the range of utopian possibilities emerging in different cultures. Additionally, she suggests using "[i]ntercultural imaginaries of the ideal" to be more neutral while studying "different traditions of speculative and idealistic thought grounded in the projection of a better society" (224). Ultimately, this new expression Dutton proposes enables literary and social comparative utopian studies to develop.

In "The Three Faces of Utopianism Revisited," Lyman Tower Sargent asserts that even though they may not be named utopia, there were products that carry the characteristics of utopia in China, India, and Southeast Asia even before Thomas More (20). Why, then, is whether non-Western cultures have utopias a critical question? Sargent answers this question by explaining that those who claim this genre does not exist in Eastern cultures usually tend to associate utopianism with Christianity. He also makes his standpoint clear on the subject:

> 1. Utopianism (social dreaming) is a common human phenomenon;
>
> 2. Every culture has produced body utopias;
>
> 3. There are city utopias and even independent utopian traditions outside the Christian West; and
>
> 4. Thomas More invented a particular literary form that spread rapidly. More's invention was of immense importance; it gave a form to utopianism that has

> been adopted universally. This form sprung from traditions and precursors and has now produced many offshoots. (19)

Accordingly, many critics make assessments by taking the West as the only example while classifying utopian works. This conception causes many non-Western products to be excluded from the utopia category. The expectation that works of this genre in other cultures must exactly match those in the West leads to the inability to conclude this dispute and generates reductive inference.

For instance, Buchi Emecheta's *The Rape of Shavi* is one of the examples of utopian writing outside Western literature. As one of the most influential female novelists in contemporary African literature, Emecheta's novel presents a more mythical and lyrical quality than utopias written by Western authors. Even though her science fiction writing may not be considered sophisticated enough like Marion Zimmer Bradley or Joanna Russ's novels, Emechate nevertheless has initiated a beginning in African women writers' journey in science fiction and utopian genres. Since she displays a comparison between the technologically advanced world of Europe and an Arcadian-like village in African civilization, her novel presents an allegory regarding the relationship between the "civilized" Europe and "savage" Africa. In short, "illustrating the movement from utopia to dystopia and back to utopia, Emecheta reveals a cyclic view of history ... that utopian societies are never permanent but are constantly built from shattered pieces" (Dodson 6). As a writer who spent much time in England and Nigeria, Emecheta depicts the clash between these worlds. She also built her utopia on the notion of returning to the past, namely the ideal times of living, by imagining an untouched world in Africa and comparing it to the myth of Arcadia.

According to Krishan Kumar, secularism is required for utopianism to exist in any culture. As he finds it missing in the Eastern cultures, he claims that those cultures do not have the necessary capacity to have utopian thinking. Zhang Longxi, on the other hand, states that even if we accept this argument, Chinese tradition under the influence of Confucianism has a secular understanding, even though it is different from that of Medieval Europe (7). Confucius was more interested in the present rather than the afterlife. Additionally, some contemporary scholars do not accept Confucianism as a religion; instead, they see his views as part of a philosophical tradition. Considering that there had always been religious practices that believed in God, gods, and heaven long before Confucius, these practices might have shaped Confucianism's cultural and ideological background. Then it is possible that Confucius shared similar beliefs with his contemporaries on spiritual and theological matters.

However, as Keqian Xu and Guoming Wang suggest, Confucius partially accepted some aspects of ancient religious traditions for "educational, ethical and socio-political purposes" (84). Since he rationalizes religious myths or uses religious rituals pragmatically, Xu and Wang call Confucius the "killer of ancient religious mythology" (84). The philosopher's ability to transform these myths and rituals into realistic and pragmatic thinking makes his ideas more secular. Unlike the prevailing structure of traditional utopia, focusing human effort on the present is the way to reach perfection for Confucius (Longxi 8). Instead of faith or expecting divine intervention, Confucianism believes in reaching perfection in the future by reviving the culture of the past and implementing it in the present. Therefore, contrary to Kumar's argument regarding secularism being missing in Eastern cultures,

Confucianism and its emphasis on pragmatism and rationalism make secularism an extremely salient component of Chinese culture.

1.2. Utopia in Turkish Literature

There are also disagreements on whether utopias have been written in Turkish literature. These disputes are because utopias written in Turkish literature are analyzed based on the characteristics of utopian texts written in the West. As Necla Dağ suggests in her study, critics who do not support this argument explain that there are utopian texts written in Turkish literature that carry a mission of individualization instead of a mission of rebellion or of overthrowing the established order (89). Moreover, as explained earlier, since there is no consensus on the definition of utopia, we cannot reach a decisive conclusion about what features a work should have to be considered a utopia. Therefore, even though it was not used as a concept in Turkish literature until the middle of the nineteenth century, scenarios that display happy societies are called utopia beginning from the twentieth century onwards.

As noted earlier, the utopian genre began to draw attention during the Tanzimat period, like many other inventions in Turkish literature. The majority of the nineteenth-century Turkish writers were political actors, and they mostly took France as an example in literature and politics. Being influenced by France led them to use the idea of the Republic as the subject matter of their utopias. Ziya Paşa's "Rüya" (1869), Namık Kemal's "Rüya" (1875), and Molla Davutzade Mustafa Nazım Erzurumî's *Rüyada Terakki ve Medeniyet-i İslamiyeyi Rüyet* (1913) are some of the first examples of utopia in Turkish literature. While Ziya Paşa and Namık Kemal convey their visions of prosperity and advancement through dreams, Molla

Davutzade reflects technological developments in all areas of life, unlike any utopia written in Turkish literature, and displays a totalitarian order. Davutzade's text may be one of the most utopian works of its time because it presents a narrative that describes the ideal society in detail, tries to explain how to reach that perfection, and stimulates the desire to create such a society.

Some other utopian texts written until the declaration of the Republic are Mehmet Murat's *Turfanda mı Yoksa Turfa mı?* (1891), İsmail Gaspıralı's *Darürrahat Müslümanları* (1889), Halide Edip Adıvar's *Yeni Turan* (1912), Ali Kemal's *Fetret* (1911), and Müfide Ferit Tek's *Aydemir* (1918). Offering alternatives for the collapsing Ottoman Empire and providing solutions for the salvation of the society are the common objectives of all these works. While some of them highlight the reasons for the dissolution of the Empire, others propose new ideologies for a better society.

There are also texts written with utopian features after the declaration of the Turkish Republic. For instance, as one of the first utopias of the Republican era, Ahmet Ağaoğlu's *Serbest İnsanlar Ülkesi* (1930) advocates the idea of the republic. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, on the other hand, constructs an urban utopia through Ankara to describe the Turkey he dreams of in his novel *Ankara* (1934). Additionally, some utopias written after the declaration emphasize the idea of the nation-state and use the concept of individualism more.

From the second half of the twentieth century, we see that works that carry the characteristics of utopia continue to be written. For instance, in Melih Cevdet

Anday's feuilleton[3] text *Raziye* (1975), utopian heroes seek to change their society's ingrained traditions and beliefs. In other words, these heroes desire to create a place governed by reason. On the other hand, Ali Nar's *Uzay Çiftlikleri* (1988) is the first Islamic utopian work of Turkish literature, but it is more limited in terms of content.

Buket Uzuner's *Balık İzlerinin Sesi* (1993) and İlhan Mimaroğlu's *Yokistan Tasarısı* (1997) are other utopian works written during the 1990s. In addition to using a postmodern approach, Uzuner examines the concept of utopia through the island metaphor, which is the most fundamental concept of classical utopia. Similarly, Mimaroğlu's text also contains the island analogy. As the name suggests, his utopia carries most features of the genre. Communist capitalism is the prevailing order in Yokistan[4]. In addition to highlighting individuality, there is no private property, religion, or unemployment in the society the author envisions. The novel's Yokistan represents the good in a world full of evil and emphasizes the idea that this place will eventually become Varistan[5].

When it comes to the 2000s, utopian works such as Latife Tekin's *Unutma Bahçesi* (2004) and Armağan Ethemoğlu's *Son Masal* (2004) meet the reader. Similar to some of the other utopias in Turkish literature, Tekin also uses the island metaphor. The novel emphasizes individuality once again. The narrator fantasizes about a life isolated from society yet intertwined with nature. Ethemoğlu, on the other hand,

[3] It corresponds to "tefrika" in Turkish.
[4] Nowhere Land.
[5] A place that exists in reality, which Mimaroğlu calls Varistan.

frequently uses fairy tale elements in his novel. We see the desire to create new and flawless worlds in this utopia written from a postmodern point of view.

Studies on the readers' reactions to the utopias written in Turkish literature both during the Ottoman period and after the Republic are quite limited. As a literary genre that has started to gain significance recently, there are a few academic research regarding utopias in Turkish literature. Necla Dağ's *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanında Ütopya (1923-1950)* is the most comprehensive study I have come across on this subject. Dağ's study takes the subject to the very beginning and presents rich research on the concept of utopia and how the concept emerged in the first place. Additionally, Emre Mete's research *Modernleşme Işığında Türk Ütopyaları* also provides a thorough analysis on Turkish utopias. However, he prioritizes focusing mainly on the history of Turkish utopias as he claims many critics discuss Turkish utopias in the context of Turkish modernism. His work attempts to show the transition from Ottoman utopias to modernist utopias.

1.3. Dystopia's Development as a Literary Genre

The twentieth century is an era in which sub-genres of utopia flourished. Dystopia (negative-utopia), satirical utopia, anti-utopia, feminist utopia, and ecological utopia are some of the sub-genres of utopia. Even though the following chapters will analyze dystopia in relation to gender and ecology through selected literary texts, in order not to go beyond the scope of this study, this part will only discuss the concepts of dystopia and also anti-utopia to semantically separate the two concepts from each other.

There are various terms to define works that envision adverse future alternatives. One of these alternatives is anti-utopia. Some critics use the term anti-utopia interchangeably with dystopia and cacotopia. For instance, in *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, Krishan Kumar admits to using "anti-utopia as a generic term to include what is sometimes called the 'dystopia' or - more rarely - the 'cacotopia'" (447). While the Greek prefix "dys-" refers to "sick and bad," another Greek prefix, "anti-", refers to "opposite and opposing." Even though the words are closely related, they differ in meaning.

In *The Utopia Reader,* Claeys and Sargent, on the other hand, consider anti-utopia and dystopia as different genres. They define dystopia as a utopia that the author intends a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which the reader lives. However, they propose anti-utopia as a utopia that the author expects a contemporaneous reader to view as a criticism of the idea of utopianism or some type of eutopia (2). Other scholars such as Tom Moylan, John Huntington, and Raffaella Baccolini also seek to clarify the distinction between dystopia and anti-utopia by defining the concepts.

While Huntington establishes a calculated link between utopia and dystopia, he keeps anti-utopia separate from these concepts. He claims that even though utopia and dystopia are opposites on the surface, both aim to construct coherent wholes to make an idea work. They are exercises that aspire to entice the reader to the ideal or deflect them away from a nightmarish life. In short, "[b]oth are the expression of a synthetic imagination, a comprehension and expression of the deep principles of happiness or unhappiness" (124). On the other hand, anti-utopia conflicts with utopia

and dystopia. Huntington suggests that anti-utopia offers doubt, criticism, and skepticism to the solutions of utopian thinking:

> [T]he anti-utopian form discovers problems, raises questions, and doubts ... [I]t is a mode of relentless inquisition, of restless skeptical exploration of the very articles of faith on which utopias themselves are built ... While the utopia attempts a vision of a coherent preferable world and draws our attention to the way it improves on the world we have, the anti-utopia questions utopian solutions. (124)

Hence anti-utopia disregards the values of utopia based on the catastrophes faced by humanity and considers utopia as imaginary fiction that is unlikely to come true. There is a similarity between dystopia and anti-utopia as they both have a pessimistic perception of the future. However, anti-utopia also attacks dystopia because it does not propose a social order.

It is not surprising that the dystopian genre increased in the twentieth century. The damage caused by the events in this period on human psychology led the number of dystopias to rise gradually. In a world where the population increases and constant wars transpire, the possibility for everything to be perfect and society to reject its flaws becomes less and less likely. Dystopian narratives generally refuse the order and rules promised by utopias. Accordingly, in *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age*, Russell Jacoby demonstrates that there are at least three reasons for the unpopularity of utopian thinking: the collapse of the communist states, the widespread belief that utopians and totalitarians are indistinguishable, and the increasing impoverishment of the "Western imagination"(5). From these arguments, we see that the dystopian genre claims that the alternative utopia proposes will eventually become despotic, and the individual will begin to tend toward evil.

It would not be wrong to say that dystopia disagrees with utopia's dependence on bringing happiness through technological and scientific developments. After the First World War, we see that technological development has brought more war, hence destruction, as opposed to happiness. The idea that a paradise would emerge from the ruins of war becomes more and more of a dream come true. Russell Jacoby states that "[t]oday most observers judge utopians or their sympathizers as fool-hardy dreamers at best and murderous totalitarians at worst" because of the so-called utopian ideology behind the Nazi Reich and radical Islamists (ix). For instance, even though the October Revolution was promising for some people, we cannot ignore the horrors experienced by those who opposed it. Sacrificing people to any particular system to consolidate political authority, infiltrate their private lives, and manipulate the education system to raise generations that support the dominant ideology lead to the formation of a tyrannical world.

Then technological development or scientific progress is not the only factor that dystopia condemns. The genre aims to draw attention to specific points such as deviant authorities, individuals who have been left without purpose, destruction of nature, and misuse of the obtained power for one's profit. Unlike anti-utopia, dystopia tends to display a dark future rather than oppose utopia. In dystopian works, there is a desire to exhibit various shady possibilities that the current system may cause in the future. In other words, such works criticize the dominated order and wish to prevent any future dangers.

In their works, the dystopian writers seek to show that a nightmare-like future is not far from the society in which they live. They want to show the reader that if no effort is made to prevent it, the ending described in the dystopian world might become a problem that can take place in their world. In his *Narrating Utopia*, Chris Ferns demonstrates that utopian fiction emphasizes the difference between the society the author lives in and the society they construct by blurring the link between the fictional society and the real world. On the other hand, "the dystopian writer presents the nightmare future as a possible destination of present society, as if dystopia were no more than a logical conclusion derived from the premises of the existing order and implies that it might very well come about unless something is done to stop it" (107). In short, the dystopian writer holds a mirror for people and enables them to see reality. Thus, dystopian narratives depict the deterioration in society and try to encourage people to take necessary precautions and alert them by giving them an unnerving image of the world.

One of the common themes dystopian writers such as Orwell, Zamyatin[6], and Huxley use is totalitarianism and how totalitarian regimes demand complete obedience from their citizens. In his "The Origins of Dystopia," Claeys defines totalitarianism as being hostile to the individual and individualism. Moreover, he claims that unlike other monarchical doctrines and military dictatorships, it is driven by the desire to

[6] Even though he does not belong to Anglophone or Turkish dystopian traditions, I believe it is essential to include Zamyatin in my discussion here as his prominent dystopia *We* (1924) is one of the first works that comes to mind when dystopia is mentioned. Additionally, even though they are from different literary traditions, considering the relations of Lessing and Baydar with socialism, it is relevant to cite his name alongside Orwell and Huxley.

exercise complete control over the bodies, minds, and souls of its citizens. Claeys describes seven features adopted by totalitarian regimes as follows:

1. a one-party state with hegemony over the secret police, and a monopoly over economic, cultural and informational sources; …
2. a technological basis to centralized power, e.g., especially through the use of the media and surveillance techniques;
3. the willingness to destroy the large numbers of domestic 'enemies' in the name of the goals of the regimes; such as the Jews under the Nazis, the kulaks (rich peasants) by Stalin; or the intellectuals by Pol Pot;
4. the use of 'total terror' (an emphasis particularly associated with the work of Hannah Arendt) to intimidate the population and ensure complete loyalty;
5. the willingness of the regime to annihilate all boundaries between the individual and the party/state , by destroying most intermediary organizations and politicizing any which remain, such as youth organizations;
6. a 'totalist' philosophy or ideology which demands absolute loyalty and sacrifice, and the absolute submission of the citizen to the party/state, leaving no part of private life unpoliticized; …
7. a cult of leadership; … (119-20)

The utopian genre did not stand a chance against totalitarian regimes such as Nazism and Stalinism and the genocides they caused. After the atomic bombings of the Second World War, the weapons of mass destruction continued to develop further with modern technology, contributing to the rise of dystopian distress. Destructive weapons with devastating consequences strengthened totalitarian regimes, and the fears and anxieties of society regarding the future began to echo in dystopian narratives.

In addition to the corruption of the world, the increasing dehumanization and mechanization of human beings are one of the other themes used by dystopia. As Claeys demonstrates in *Dystopia: A Natural History*, "Britain was the first machine-based society" since it invented the first steam engine (313). People who owned these invented machines were rarely affected by their adverse effects:

> Modernity seemingly came to embody many of the qualities of mechanism itself. Nationalism and socialism could easily be accommodated to, even driven by, the machine. All the great symbols of progress, the steam engine, the steamship, the railway, the tractor, automatic weapons, the telegraph, the internal combustion engine, the airplane, electricity, radiation, refrigeration, the radio, the telephone, and numerous domestic appliances, and—that perfect symbol of modernity, the equalizing machine, the handgun—were produced by science and technology. All implied complexity, control, organization, integration, discipline, subordination—in a word, efficiency (271).

On the other hand, the working class of the rural areas were skeptical of these new inventions when they began to come to industrial locations. As a result of the gradual obsession with mechanization, human beings became nothing more than agents of production. Since the machines required less muscle power, the fact that women and children started working in the factory caused both the inclusion of the concept of family in the factory and the increase in child mortality due to the search for cheap labor. These caused humans to become an extension of machinery. Writers such as Samuel Butler, for instance, discuss in their works that machines have begun to have a higher form than humans and that this should be stopped as soon as possible.

Ildney Cavalcanti argues that feminist dystopia is innately a *critical* genre (48). After appearing at the turn of the twentieth century, the dystopian genre gained a feminist twist in works like Katherine Burdekin's *Swastika Nights* (1937). Utopian writing briefly re-emerged during the 1960s and 1970s; however, in the 1980s, both writers and readers' preferences shifted to dystopia once again. Several writers such as Lessing, Winterson, Le Guin, and Octavia E. Butler have addressed gender stereotypes, sexuality, and the female body by focusing on women's identity. Furthermore, as Baccolini mentions in "The Persistence of Hope in Dystopian Science Fiction," these feminist writers' works have "become the preferred form for an expression of struggle and resistance" (520). Women dystopian writers use this

genre to oppose and criticize the patriarchy and the prevalent order of society to show the damages it causes both to its people and nature. Baccolini explains why their perseverance in opposing any oppressive regime makes these novels sites of resistance by underlining their ability to blend different genre conventions:

> Drawing on the feminist criticism of universalist assumptions, singularity, and neutral and objective knowledge and acknowledging the importance of difference, multiplicity, complexity, situated knowledges, and hybridity, recent dystopian fiction by women resists genre purity in favor of a hybrid text that renovates dystopian science fiction by making it politically and formally oppositional. (520)

Therefore, dystopian and utopian genres have long been crucial and useful for enabling women to resist the hegemony of the Anglo-American world, which has stayed profoundly patriarchal despite notable political transitions over time.

Additionally, the terms “ecology” and “dystopia” were first made-up from their Greek origins in the mid-nineteenth century (Stableford 259). Beginning from the second half of the twentieth century, concerns about environmental pollution and, consequently, global warming began to increase due to the increase in population, factories, smoke emissions, and radioactive wastes. Anxieties about the destruction of nature have become one of the most common themes in dystopian narratives. These narratives seek to warn humanity that if they do not change the way they treat nature, they will eventually face the world’s destruction. While some narratives, such as Winterson’s *The Stone Gods*, blame patriarchal governments for damages done to the environment, others accuse the gradual mechanization of everyday life and people’s indifference as the reasons for the deterioration of nature.

1.2. Dystopia in Turkish Literature

Considering the works written by new authors as well as well-known authors of Turkish literature in recent years, we can observe that the dystopic works produced in this genre have increased. Canbaz-Yumuşak suggests that works from the dystopian genre, which we see very few examples of in our literature, began to be published after the 1960s (60). On the other hand, works written in this genre increased over time, especially after the 2000s.

Adam (Aleaddin) Şenel is one of the first writers to produce works in Turkish dystopian literature. In his *Teleandregenos Ütopyasında Evlilik Hayatı* (1968), Şenel criticizes gender inequality, the institution of marriage, and stereotypical traditions through dystopia. *Teleandregenos Ütopyasında Evlilik Hayatı* takes place in an imaginary society, as in classical utopia, and engages in subjects like family and gender. Due to these specific topics, the novella does not dwell on society on a broader spectrum. Whether the work is a utopia or a dystopia depends on the reader. Unlike classical utopias, the novella does not propose any change. Şenel does not mention how a better society should be; instead, he only focuses on the flaws of his fictional community. The work frequently emphasizes that patriarchal society situates women within a specific position in the name of love. In this imaginary community, people have never achieved freedom, as individuals have always been forced to live within certain boundaries since their childhood. Considering all these, the novella is closer to a dystopia than a utopia.

Çetin Altan creates a morally corrupt future in his novel, *2027 Yılının Anıları* (1982). Similar to Şenel's work, the classification of this fictionalized universe as a utopia or dystopia depends on the reader's views. The work has futuristic content based on change and development. Altan has constructed his dystopian universe through binary oppositions such as intellectual-ignorant, urban-rural, and secular-conservative (Korkmaz 5). This work, in which reproduction can also be done in special tubes, presents the changes in the country, starting from Istanbul, and then in the world, within the framework of space, social life, science, ethical values, and economy.

Dystopian works written after the year 2000 depict darker worlds. Considering the first works of this genre in Turkish literature, the works written in the last twenty years do not require the reader to ask questions while deciding which genre they belong to because their dystopic contents make it easy to categorize them. For instance, *Uykusuzlar*, written by an anonymous writer called Dr., is written to criticize a possible Islamic state of the future. In the novel, people experience various pleasures, especially sexuality, using a device called "imajinatör," which provides virtual happiness. These devices are given to the public by the state. In this future, working is mandatory, and if people do not work, the state takes their "imajinatör" and punishes both the individual and all family members.

In *Topaç* (2004), Gülayşe Koçak delivers messages to society through setting. The events take place in an imaginary place called Evropistan. In this country, pollution is at the highest level. Furthermore, people are forced to abide by the regulations regarding social distance. The space people can leave between them while walking

side by side is determined according to their blood ties. Only two people from each family can walk side by side. Tahsin Yücel's *Gökdelen* (2006), on the other hand, presents Istanbul in 2073 and explains what may happen if people do not take action to prevent the existing world order fed by capitalism.

Last but not least, Ayşe Kulin's *Tutsak Güneş* (2015) and Defne Suman's *Yağmur'dan Sonra* (2020) are other dystopian works written after the 2000s. Dictators, police, and religious figures have enslaved Kulin's dystopian country, and people have been divided into classes. Middle-aged people are made to forget their past, and their freedom is taken away by the authorities through chemical substances. Women of this country are expected to give birth to at least three children, and if they fail, they are considered defective. Kulin gives the reader a sense of familiarity because she aims to warn the reader that if they do not take the necessary precautions, the future will not be different from the one in the book.

Defne Suman's novel *Yağmur'dan Sonra* (2020), begins just before the end of the world. The novel's protagonist, Kaya, loses the woman he loves due to an epidemic, and he writes his life full of trauma and loss in his memoir in an isolated village where he stays for seven years. Similar to Kulin, Suman also criticizes totalitarianism from a feminist perspective. Suman admits in an interview that a careful reader may find pieces from Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) in her novel (Suman). Even though Suman's book is a fictional dystopia, it seems to describe events that are too real to be called fiction. Themes such as memory loss and annihilation of the archives, which is frequently encountered in dystopian literature, are also present in *Yağmur'dan Sonra*.

Furthermore, a pandemic named the “Third Pandemic” becomes the metaphor for a real-life dystopia. The people affected by this pandemic gradually lose all their senses, and their life ends after a vegetative state. In a way, the gradual collapse of modern society is narrated through the human body. In short, Suman’s dystopia tells the story of the end of humanity in a world that has witnessed epidemics, earthquakes, wars, and many similar disasters.

CHAPTER 2

GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY DYSTOPIAN NOVELS

Jeanette Winterson is one of the most influential names in today's literature[7]. The writer has not only overturned the masculine language of the male-dominated order that has been going on for thousands of years but has also eradicated social and cultural gender codes with her writings. Using the power of literature, she has waged war against the prevailing understanding that reduces sexuality to a simple duality such as masculinity-femininity and challenges the mindset that favors heterosexuality that ignores, belittles, or marginalizes same-sex relationships. When we look at her writing, we see that the protagonists of her novels are usually gay or bisexual people. More importantly, sometimes her characters do not even have a gender. Like other marginalized voices of literature, she defies the traditional hero prototype and patriarchy by presenting unusual and androgynous characters. In her essay collection, *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery* (1995), Winterson demonstrates that she does not like to be referred to as a lesbian author. Instead, she would like to be

[7] In order to understand her literary persona, some essential biographical information about the author should be mentioned. Winterson comes from a religious family, and as an author who writes controversial pieces now, she used to be a preacher at twelve. She fought to get an education and eventually got into the English Program at the University of Oxford, St. Catherine's College. After her graduation, she worked in a theatre in London. During her employment there, she continued to write. In 2013, she became a professor of Creative Writing at the University of Manchester. She has been offered many awards for her contribution to literature, including E.M. Forster Award, BAFTA, Prix d'argent Best Script, and Commonwealth Writers Prize, and she was also honored with an OBE and a CBE by the British Royal Family.

called “a writer” as she explains why a writer’s sex or sexuality should be separated from their literary persona:

> I see no reason to read into Woolf’s work the physical difficulties of her life. If I said to you that a reading of John Keats must entertain his tuberculosis and the fact that he was common and short, you would ignore me. You should ignore me; a writer’s work is not a chart of their sex, sexuality, sanity and physical health. (97)

Just as a male writer defines himself only as a writer, Winterson prefers to be addressed only as a writer. She does not accept any distinctive descriptions that come before the noun “writer”.

In her study named *Jeanette Winterson* (2006), Susana Onega reveals that Winterson has refused to call her literary works “novels” (10). Onega claims that this is not because of Winterson’s hostility to the genre or novelists but rather due to her dislike of Victorians’ perspectives regarding art. Therefore, “the banality of the Victorian attitude to art, what [Winterson] describes as the absurd attempt of Victorian writers to transform art into ‘a version of everyday reality,’” is what upsets Winterson concerning the genre (10). On the same page, Onega also mentions the writer’s reliance on the “stories within stories” technique. The example of *The Stone Gods,* which I will analyze in the following pages, confirms the author’s inclination to use this method. As she presents multiple interconnected stories in *The Stone Gods,* she displays how humanity makes the same mistakes repeatedly and goes into an infinite cycle every time. Overall, as the above-mentioned work of Winterson will also exhibit, strict definitions like gender have no place in Winterson’s novels, which often puts her works under the category of queer literature[8].

[8] In her article where she discusses *The Stone Gods* as a queer novel, Sophie Wennerscheid (2018) warns us that when we think about queerness, we should not forget that the term queer had a pejorative meaning for a long time. However, recently, it has been used by “gender activists and

In *Jeanette Winterson*, Susana Onega compares several British writers who produced works in the late 1970s and 1980s. She concludes that British literature's prominent authors, such as Jeanette Winterson, Salman Rushie, and Angela Carter, share some similarities in their writings. Ultimately, Onega asserts that these authors adhere to a literary stance that associates irony and parody with fantasy. They then link this adherence to "a literature whose subversiveness lies in its tendency to dissolve structures, both towards an ideal of entropic *undifferentiation*" that exceeds the bounds that detach "self from other, man from woman, human from animal, organic from inorganic objects, and towards constant metamorphosis" (2). By explaining Winterson's approach to writing, Onega displays that Winterson is indeed an "experimentalist" and a postmodernist. *The Stone Gods* is a valid example that supports this attribution. As I will demonstrate in the coming pages, Winterson separates dualities around gender, species, and objects from each other in *The Stone Gods* by offering a perspective that favors genderlessness and a world without boundaries.

There have been a substantial number of academic studies on Winterson's novel *The Stone Gods*. For instance, Aslı Değirmenci Altın (2021) analyzes how the two main characters, one human and the other robot, react to the ecological slaughter as posthuman subjects through queer ecofeminism. Watkins (2012) focuses on the

theorists who strongly reject dichotomized categories of sex and gender and revaluate gender nonconformity as desirable" (389). Additionally, in *Cruising Utopia: the Then and There of Queer Futurity* (2009), José Esteban Muñoz depicts queerness as a utopia. He states that "[q]ueerness is not here yet. Queerness is an ideality" (1). Furthermore, Muñoz discusses queerness as a concept that rejects the objective reality and the orders that come with it (126).

apocalyptic fictions of contemporary women writers and explores why these women writers write apocalyptic fiction and what their narratives have in common. Additionally, Jennifer H. Johnston's thesis (2013) argues that *The Stone Gods* acts as a metaphor that defies social norms and the cycle that these norms generate, thereby allowing queer and alternative identities to exist. Justin Omar Johnston (2019) approaches the novel from a different angle and examines how the dystopian and apocalyptic fiction traditions work together in global disaster narratives by analyzing various contemporary novels. While Hope Jennings (2010) explores the ingrained threats of repeating histories through Winterson's novel, Luna Dolezal (2015) comments on the gender conflicts occurring due to medical biotechnologies and how this is related to neoliberalism. As a result, while the ideas and analyses of these scholars resonate in this study, the idea that Winterson's novel has a kinship to a novel from another literary tradition is also discussed in this thesis.

Unfortunately, Cem Akaş is a writer who is not as well-known as Winterson and has not yet crossed the borders of national literature. Therefore, the number of academic studies about Akaş is quite limited. Despite this, Akaş has written important works for Turkish literature in the dystopia genre, starting from *Olgunluk Çağı Üçlemesi's* first book, *Balığın Esir Düştüğü Yer,* which was first published in 2001. The second book *Sönmemiş Kireç* and the last book *Oyun İmparatorluğu* were published in 2003. *Gitmeyecekler İçin Urbino* followed this trilogy in 2007, and finally, the dystopian novel *Y* was publicized in 2018.

As one of the first dystopian examples in Turkish literature, *Olgunluk Çağı Üçlemesi* is an important set of books. Through this trilogy, the author has established

postmodern dystopian worlds and depicted the world's future by presenting intertwined story plots. The trilogy portrays a world shared by corporations that are ruled by political authorities and narrate people's struggles to survive in a world where oppression and poverty prevail. The books deal with issues such as the search for justice, civil war, sexuality, and class differences while examining the individual's inner world through a postmodern narrative. Ultimately, Akaş has written the story of searching for a better world through dystopic themes where fantasy and science fiction elements are mixed from time to time.

There were dystopian novels written before Cem Akaş; however, the subject Akaş deals with in *Y* is more specific and controversial. For instance, in his dystopia *Ku-De-Ta* (1985), Cüneyt Arcayürek satirizes Turkey's socio-political environment by articulating the intense censorship and oppression of the period under Kenan Evren. Similarly, Tayfun Pirselimoğlu in *Şehrin Kuleleri* (2005) presents a political dystopia by talking about coups, authoritarianism, and oppressive regimes and focuses on Turkey after a coup. On the other hand, Tahsin Yücel criticizes globalization through architecture and discusses the way urban life eliminates equality between people in his *Gökdelen* (2006). Although the last example is different in terms of its subject matter, all of these dystopias make their criticisms through conventional topics and focus more on the political fluctuations in Turkey. However, Akaş's *Y* differs from these dystopias as he deals with sex and sexuality in his novel.

Despite belonging to different geographies, Winterson and Akaş examine the concepts of sex, sexuality, and gender in a grim projection of the future in their literary works *The Stone Gods* and *Y*, respectively. While Winterson presents queer

elements in her novel, she also tries to offer a genderless narrative. Akaş, on the other hand, sticks to the definitions of traditional gender roles. Thus, the following sections will analyze the works separately at first and attempt to determine whether the texts have any similarities in terms of narrative and themes.

2.1. Repeating the Same Mistakes in a Cyborg Story: Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods*

In her article "Future Shock," Susan Watkins analyzes apocalypse fiction written by contemporary women writers while claiming that there are specific differences between men and women science fiction (SF) and dystopia writers. She demonstrates that women writers of these genres "focus on the defamiliarization of the body, gender, and sexuality in order to question patriarchal assumptions about their institutionalization in heterosexuality, marriage, and the nuclear family" (120). As she continues her analysis, Watkins underlines that women writers, who produce feminist works that belong to the genres of SF and dystopia, see science and technology as part of the patriarchy (120). Considering the narratives written by women that display the damages of scientific and technological improvements to the female body and the environment, Watkins offers a credible argument. Since *The Stone Gods* also challenges patriarchal beliefs and practices as well as traditional norms of heterosexuality, this chapter examines how Jeanette Winterson attempts to break gender binaries by exploring topics such as climate change, biotechnology, and posthumanism. Furthermore, since patriarchy dominates both nature and women for its own gain, I also examine how Winterson portrays this similarity in her text.

The novel consists of four chapters set in different times and spaces. Even though there are three stories and three different narrators, each storyline mirrors one another. For instance, the pair of the protagonist of each story engage in a same-sex relationship in all stories. Moreover, the main characters are introduced with similar names throughout the text even though the plot lines are different: Billie and Spike in chapters one, three, and four become Billy and Spikker in the second chapter.

The first chapter's beginning presents the reader with a planet named Orbus, whose ecosystem has been severely damaged and "has a projected remaining lifespan of around fifty years" (32). Due to the destruction of their planet, humanity seeks to take refuge in a newly discovered planet, Planet Blue. In the first storyline, we learn that Billie and Spike, a Robo *sapiens*, travel to Planet Blue with other team members to examine whether the planet is inhabitable. In the second story, the female narrator of the first chapter, Billie, becomes a man named Billy, and he takes the reader to eighteenth-century Easter Island, where he meets and falls in love with Spikkers. The third part's female narrator Billie shows an apocalyptic vision of Earth's future after World War III. Lastly, even though it sets in the same setting as the previous story, the final chapter takes place in another part of the city, where pollution and anarchy prevail.

I argue that the novel blurs the boundaries between human and non-human life by displaying the effects of environmental destruction on both species. Due to this purpose, the author portrays the Robo *sapiens* Spike/Spikkers as Billie/Billy's companion. The characters who represent the destructive nature of humankind in all four stories are obsessed with finding a way to colonize other planets to stay alive, as

their current planet is dying as a result of the damage they cause to the environment. Through these stories, where humans repeatedly make the same mistakes, the reader observes the deterioration the anthropocentric mindset causes for humans and non-human beings to the same degree. Since humanity does not comprehend the adverse effects of impairing non-human life, namely the environment, they do not see that these damages will eventually lead to the damnation of their own lives. As Winterson intends to show in her text, only the rich will benefit from the search for new habitable places to live in by leaning on transhumanism[9].

In each of the stories, therefore, Winterson presents dystopian worlds to raise the topic of environmental carnage. In the technologically advanced world of Orbus, habitable conditions are decreasing day by day. Wildlife is destroyed in this technologically developed world, farming is no longer practiced, pets have become robots, and people consume lab-produced meat (Winterson 8). Brian Stableford demonstrates that "farming is, in essence, a matter of creating, sustaining and improving artificial ecosystems," thus, the fact that agriculture is no longer practiced in Winterson's novel is evidence of the demeaning importance given to the ecosystem (259). Since people rely on fossil fuels, the planet's ecosystem suffers from heavy pollution and climate change. People's contact with natural life is quite limited because the government does not encourage agriculture. In short, people do not realize how dependent they have become on the government, or they are not even afraid that the end of the world is coming because they know that there is a new planet to colonize and a new opportunity to start over. At the beginning of the first

[9] *Collins English Dictionary* defines transhumanism as "the proposed use of technology to allow human beings to develop beyond their natural capacities."

chapter, the President of Central Power says that the government intends to "humanely" destroy indigenous life forms on the new planet, such as dinosaurs and other "monsters": "New colonizing mission being made ready. Monsters will be humanely destroyed, with the possible exception of scientific capture of one or two types for the Zooeum" (Winterson 5). Since the citizens of Orbus destroy their planet for their benefit, Winterson's critique of these people cannot be detached from the anthropocentric ideology that some of the characters present. According to A. C. Grayling, the term anthropocentrism is simply:

> to think that nothing has greater value than human beings, and that everything else can legitimately be bent to the service, use or interest of humanity, [anthropocentrism] is to place humankind at the pinnacle of value in the world, and to privilege human existence over other kinds. (27)

In line with this definition, the Robo *sapiens* Spike suggests, "[t]here are many kinds of life, ... [h]umans always assumed that theirs was the only kind that mattered," and she enunciates that this is why they have destroyed their planet (Winterson 65-6). Furthermore, Orbus becomes an unlovable planet when it loses its habitability. It is treated as a victim of an abusive relationship. When Billie confronts her boss, Manfred, about the presentation where she has to convince Orbus citizens to move onto the new planet, the reader witnesses their quarrel when Billie says Orbus is dying. Manfred insists that the planet is not dying; instead, it is "evolving in a way that is hostile to human life," and in response to her boss' hypocrisy, Billie says, "[o]k, so it's the planet's fault. We didn't do anything, did we? Just fucked it to death and kicked it when it wouldn't get up" (7). Manfred's politically correct interpretation is not unexpected because, throughout the novel, we see that all the people the government has manipulated and deceived share this point of view.

Since the new planet is already discovered in the first chapter, Winterson presents a vital question that will be asked in the other chapters, too: will humanity make the same mistakes again? Even though the President of Central Power is confident that they will never repeat the past mistakes, he still gives the order to send an asteroid to "humanely" kill the dinosaurs of Planet Blue (4-5). Hence, even though they have not fully discovered the planet yet, they are determined to ruin its ecosystem with human-made asteroid collisions. When the crew arrives at Planet Blue, Pink is attacked by a fish-like creature, and what she says after the attack summarizes the viewpoint of other people who justify humanity's control over nature:

> Nature's unpredictable — that's why we had to tame her. Maybe we went too far, but in the principle we made the right decision. I want to be able to go out for a drink without getting hassled by some gawp-eyed museum-quality cod. (72)

Ironically, however, at the end of the first chapter, the narrator reveals that the crew's head miscalculates data and accidentally sends the new planet into an ice age. Thus, Planet Blue becomes uninhabitable for the people of Orbus. Even if they disrupt the nature of Planet Blue, humanity's desire to control nature and their anthropocentric perspective prevent them from using another planet for their benefit.

Even though all four chapters of the novel are about environmental disasters and human/nature relations, the last chapter, "Wreck City," shows the consequences of human-made devastations most clearly. The chapter focuses on a post-nuclear city named Wreck City. The city is simply a "bomb wreckage," and, furthermore, it is defined as a "No-Zone" because there is "no insurance, no assistance, no welfare, no police" (151). Winterson displays a binary opposition between the city set in the third chapter, Tech City and Wreck City by portraying a city destroyed by male

greed. The hierarchical structure between the rich and technologically advanced city and the city that is treated as an outsider shows the hegemonic power relations among societies. Wreck City is known for its anarchic philosophy and lawlessness. The inhabitants of this city are excluded from the wealthy and so-called civilized citizens of Tech City because they challenge the established system of Tech City. Alienating people who oppose their destructive regime, Tech City leaves these people on their own. In one sense, Wreck City citizens are free from all the oppression coming from the totalitarian Tech City. However, these people are not the only group of people Tech City has left alone and disregarded. As the novel progresses, Billie reveals that people affected by the radiation after the nuclear war are detained in a deserted forest named the Dead Forest and are treated like monsters (161). After finding the Dead Forest accidentally and encountering two children affected by the radiation, Billie describes it as "a petrified forest of blackened and shocked trees, silent, like a haunted house" (161). Later Friday reveals that those children Billie saw in the forest are "toxic radioactive mutants," and he explains what happened to them:

> 'They won't live long. It's Tech City's big secret, one of them anyway. The incurables and the freaks are all in there. They feed them by helicopter. A lot of women gave birth just after the War finished. No one knew what would happen to the babies — well, now we do. Those are kids from nuclear families'
> 'But there are hospitals,' [Billie] said. 'I've visited them.'
> 'That's the clean shiny version. The Dead Forest is the rest.' (171)

Through this nuclear slaughter, we not only see the damage that the natural world has suffered, but we also witness the long-term toxic effects of atomic radiation on humans. In short, by drawing an analogy between the real-life holocaust and nuclear cleansing, Winterson displays the consequences of selfish human actions.

The analysis I provided above is about the damage humans cause to nature. Although this chapter initially examines *The Stone Gods* from the perspectives of gender and sexuality, I believe it was crucial to draw attention to the environmental disasters narrated in the book before delving deeper into these subjects. In line with this, the second half of the analysis will mainly focus on the treatment of the female body and indicates that patriarchy treats women the same way it treats the environment.

Winterson's feminist cyborg narrative examines how biotechnology is practiced to strengthen the influence of androcentrism on social norms. In the novel, reproduction can be carried out outside the womb due to biotechnological developments. This puts the future of women in danger because, as Billie states, women will no longer be needed (22). In societies where men define women either as mothers or commodities for male satisfaction, the artificialization of reproduction methods may pressure them more as the likelihood of women being perceived as sexual objects would increase. Hence, if social expectations of motherhood and the notion of altruism do not conform to traditional domestic expectations due to the detachment of sexuality and reproduction, the current androcentric sex/gender dichotomy will introduce more severe forms of heteronormative pressure, according to Winterson (Johnston 142).

For instance, like altering nature for the benefit of humanity, women are also reshaped to satisfy the male gaze in *The Stone Gods*. The most conspicuous example of this would be the gendered practice of genetic fixing on the planet Orbus. Genetic fixing and extensive cosmetic surgery methods that the Orbus citizens practice reveal people's tendencies toward androcentrism. In the first chapter, Billie's resistance to genetic fixing is apparent. When she investigates a woman named Pink, Billie learns

that Pink wants to be genetically reversed to twelve years old just to satisfy her husband. This mindset disturbs Billie because she believes that people's obsession with fixing themselves at a certain age reveals how pedophilia is normalized in people's minds.

Furthermore, the narrator notes that people no longer celebrate their birthdays because "[birthdays] mark the passing years". Instead, people celebrate their "G" day now, the day they genetically fixed themselves (15). Pink claims that her husband is not interested in her anymore because he is after younger girls. Billie deciphers this as follows: "Now that everyone is young and beautiful, a lot of men are chasing girls who are just kids. They want something different when everything has become the same" (17). In a world where concepts like age, death, and getting old lose their meanings, the government restrains people with advanced technology to keep them ignorant and discourage them from questioning the system. Women, like nature, are affected by this artificiality that technology constructs. The fact that women feel obliged to keep themselves young and beautiful proves how much they have internalized the patriarchal system's expectations. Citizens cannot see how the regime manipulates them because they are so busy thinking only about their appearances. Billie's revelation summarizes people's mindset:

> [W]e're all perverts now. By that I mean that making everyone young and beautiful also made us all bored to death with sex. All men are hung like whales. All women are tight as clams below and inflated like lifebuoys above. Jaws are square, skin is tanned, muscles are toned, and no one gets turned on. It's a global crisis. At least, it's a crisis among the cities of the Central Power. The Eastern Caliphate has banned Genetic Fixing, and the SinoMosco Pact does not make it available to all its citizens, only to members of the ruling party and their favourites. That way the leaders look like star-gods and the rest look like shit-shovellers … We look alike, except for rich people and celebrities, who look better. (19)

Thus, the normalization of technology to change bodies leads people to adopt a standard beauty idea developed by the male gaze. Pink internalizes the heteronormative expectations and is willing to change everything about herself for her husband. As Luna Dolezal demonstrates, "[b]iotechnologies do in fact often reproduce and reinforce negative heterosexual patriarchal dynamics, where women are figured as passive, receptive, and dominated, while men are active, self-determining, and productive" (99-100). In the first chapter, Handsome "accuses" women of being sentimental and claims that due to their sentimentality women cannot be world leaders (Winterson 57). According to his perspective then, women are emotional, and this makes them worthless in the patriarchal world. However, as Billie suggests, since men often ignore their emotionality, no world is left to lead anymore (57).

In addition to the medicalization of age through the female body, I argue that Winterson also questions the possibility of a posthuman future by presenting an interspecies homosexual love story. Through the female robot Spike, Winterson interrogates the notion of humanness. Hence, she provides a critique of the posthuman theory.

Donna Haraway offers two perspectives regarding a cyborg world in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (1991). According to the first view, the cyborg world is about the imposition of extreme control on the planet, an abstract perception embodied in waging a "Star Wars apocalypse" under the name of defense, and lastly, about the appropriation of women's bodies in a masculine war realm. In the second perspective, she suggests that "a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily

realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints" (154). Additionally, Haraway argues that cyborgs are the illegitimate children of "militarism and patriarchal capitalism, [and in some cases] state socialism" and that those illegitimate children are "unfaithful" to their roots because their fathers are irrelevant (151). Haraway's argument does not indicate that cyborgs are superior to humans. Instead, it demonstrates that cyborgs have fragmented identities and, therefore, have hybrid status. Winterson also presents Spike as a child of the androcentric capitalist order, and the reader witnesses the system's desire to eliminate her when she no longer serves the state's interests.

However, Spike harbors queer emotions. Spike's deviation from the purpose of her design disturbs her creators. During their interview, Billie demonstrates that Robo *sapiens* were programmed to evolve, and Spike reminds her that they were allowed to evolve within limits. However, Spike then emphasizes that "[Robo *sapiens*] have broken those limits" now (29). Despite being designed as a beautiful heterosexual woman, Spike believes that gender is just a human concept and a pointless notion. Spike's view indicates that Robo *sapiens* have begun to evolve to the point that they have become conscious entities.

In "A Cyborg Manifesto," Donna Haraway articulates dualisms such as "self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive" (2062) and she claims that a cyborg is a "cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (2044). Haraway's interpretation of cyborgs in feminist science fiction portrays various "possibilities

and limits from those proposed by the mundane fiction of Man and Woman" (2063). Through Spike, Winterson demolishes traditional gender definitions in *The Stone Gods*. As a Robo *sapiens*, Spike perceives gender as a human concept and claims that she is genderless (63). Billie's resistance toward homosexuality gradually disappears as she realizes the end of the world is coming. She starts to distance herself from traditionally defined concepts as she accepts that humans brought the end of the world themselves. As her faith in humanity slowly withers, she becomes resistant to the masculinist perception of sexuality. Furthermore, Spike also has resistance not only to masculinity but also to heteronormativity (Johns-Putra 115). Since Haraway claims that "the cyborg privileges multiplicity of identity and rejects essentialism," through Billie and Spike, Winterson complicates the traditional gender norms (Johns-Putra 115).

Winterson continues to attack heterosexual norms in the second chapter as well. However, this time Spike of the first chapter becomes a male human called Spikkers, and Billie becomes a man named Billy. I would suggest that Winterson changes narrators and their sex in each chapter to create a confusion that forces the reader to question the binaries. Moreover, the second chapter is set in the eighteenth century on Easter Island. In this story, Billy and Spikkers' relationship gradually becomes more intimate and turns into mutual affection. Through these characters' understanding of the concept of love, the defined features of heterosexual love are broken, and thus, Winterson displays a love story that is genderless and universal. We see that socially constructed gender identities are disrupted as the characters start to realize their affection for one another: "[t]ruth tell, anywhere is life, once there is a

love" (114). After Spikkers gets hurt and about to die, Billy shows his affection toward him by declaring his love openly:

> [I] laid his body beside it and felt where the bones were broken in his back and chest and legs and licked the blood from his mouth and tried to give him my breath and I would have given him one of my legs and one of my arms and one of my kidneys and half of my liver and four pints of my blood and all easy for I had already given him my heart. (115)

As a half-Dutch and a half-native man, Spikkers' hybrid identity and Billy's love for him demonstrate the disruption of heteronormativity because this time, the strictly defined expectations of the colonial Easter Island of the eighteenth century is also broken. Overall, both Billie and Spike's and Billy and Spikkers' relationships end with death. However, all of the characters recognize the ambiguity of gender norms and embrace the notion of queerness.

As a result, traditional patriarchal ideology does not only inscribe its expectations on human subjects. Machines like Spike are also dominated and controlled regarding their physical appearances. Billie of the first chapter defines Spike as a "drop-dead gorgeous robot" (28) who has "green eyes, dark hair, olive skin" (51). Earlier in the chapter, Spike explains to Billie why she was designed as a female Robo *sapiens*, and she displays that she was designed this perfect because "[she] would be good for the boys on the mission" (28). Her creators thought that when she travels to discover the new planet, she would be useful to satisfy the male crew's sexual needs. Even though interspecies sexual intercourse is forbidden on Orbus, this rule seems to be disregarded for space missions. When Billie remarks on the fact that Spike is the most advanced crew member, Spike only says she is still a woman (p. 28). Therefore, Winterson's criticism regarding anthropocentrism and androcentrism merges in this instance as Spike is subjugated both as a woman and a non-human by the male-

oriented ideology. Theoretically, then, Spike is created as a slave who is expected to serve her master/s. Overall, Spike's existence highlights what Winterson asserts as a problem with the patriarchal mindset and its intention to use biotechnology: objectifying and controlling the female body and autonomy. Through forming a connection between women and their duty to serve the male subjects of society, Winterson urges us to question technology-related practices. However, she does not entirely offer a future without technology. Her imagination of Spike and her desire to explore the possibility of a posthuman future refute the previous idea. Instead of creating technophobia, she urges her readers to be cautious toward patriarchal expectations. As Hope Jennings suggests, "*The Stone Gods* employs these tactics in order to resist oversimplifying the dangers and promises of science, using technology at the level of parody in order to demonstrate how our fantasized utopias concerning the benefits of science often leads to dystopian futures or worlds" (138). Therefore, according to Winterson, the extensive reliance on technology may be the primary reason why humanity makes the same mistakes repeatedly and systematically inflicts violence on their "others".

2.2. The Story of Being the Only Man Alive: Cem Akaş's *Y*

Cem Akaş is one of the authors who has written successful examples in the post-2000s dystopian literature. Contrary to *The Stone Gods*, Akaş's *Y* establishes its dystopic world solely on gender relations. The novel's narrator indicates that the Y chromosome has been wiped out due to a virus spreading worldwide. Akaş replaces the typical patriarchy with a matriarchal society. Furthermore, this new system kills all remaining men, including male homosexuals, to prevent the patriarchal system from coming back.

In *Y's* universe, where the last man was born one-hundred eighty-nine years ago, a baby boy is born and left at the door of a married couple. Despite contemplating going to the police when they realize the baby is a boy, the couple decides that this situation would cause worldwide upheaval. They adopt the boy, raising him like a girl and naming him Constantine. The novel consists of three parts. In the first chapter, the Prologue, the narrator informs the reader about this new matriarchal system and how the protagonist's mothers raise him. In the second part, the Analogue, the reader witnesses the protagonist's life as a 10-year-old boy in the world of women. Lastly, in the final chapter, the Epilogue, we witness Constantine's process of self-discovery after learning that he is not a woman but the only man alive. Even though Constantine first acknowledges himself as a girl, he gradually realizes that he is different from the other girls around him. At first, he tries to keep up with the rules of the society he lives in, but he ultimately starts to defy these rules and establishes his identity as a man.

Constantine's middle-aged mothers, Iliada and Arendi, do not religiously support the system. They used to be an ordinary couple who had committed no crimes against the system until they found Constantine at their doorstep. Contrary to his mothers, Constantine's grandmother Zelda is a fierce supporter of the matriarchal society. According to Zelda, the new system is the world's savior because she believes that the male sex brought nothing but unrest, chaos, and war. She once tells Constantine that why she hates men, and her perspective also summarizes the viewpoints of all the women who support the women-dominated order:

> Hayatım boyunca erkeklerden nefret ettim, … Bize böyle öğretildiği için değil, gerçekten varlıklarından, tarihte yaptıklarından, düşünce biçimlerinden, küstahlıklarından, dünyanın sahibi olduklarını sanmalarından, her şeylerinden tiksindiğim için. Hayatımın büyük kısmını onların izlerini silmeye adadım, erkeklerin yazdığı kitaplardan hangilerinin tamamen yok edilmesi gerektiğine dair raporlar hazırladım, korunması gereken kitaplardan bazılarını kadınlaştırıp yeniden düzene uygun hale getirerek yeniden yazdım, hatta kadınların yazdığı bazı önemli kitaplardaki erkek karakterleri yok edip yerlerine kadınları koydum. Dünyada erkek olmaması fikri beni hep mutlu etti[10]. (143)

Zelda's attitude toward men indicates that many problems attributed to men still exist in the system run by women. The oppressions formerly exerted by men on women are now performed by women against men, ultimately leading to the men's extinction. Arendi and Illiada are the first individuals to rebel against the system. They are significant characters in the novel because they represent the system's breaking point.

The transition to the female-dominated world in the novel is called the Rectification Period[11]. The periods when men ruled are called the dark ages in history books. Women define the dreadful incidents men have caused throughout history by stressing men's abhorrent nature. Various characters accentuate on different occasions that women do not want to return to those times ever again. The narrator displays throughout the novel that women are united for this purpose and do everything they can to avoid returning to the dark ages. For this reason, Constantine's mothers believe they would never be able to explain that they found

[10] "I have hated men throughout my life, …not because we were taught so, but rather because of their very existence, what they had done throughout history, their way of thinking, their impudence, their thinking of themselves as the masters of the world, of everything associated with them. I have dedicated a large part of my life to erasing the signs of their existence, I have prepared reports on which books written by men ought to be eradicated in their totality, I have rewritten some of the books which needed to be protected by feminizing them and making them compatible with the new order, and I even removed some male characters from some important books written by women and substituted them with women. The idea of there being no men on Earth always made me happy."
[11] "Rektifikasyon Dönemi" (Akaş 14).

him at their door to the government. They even think that if the press hears about this, it would cause chaos and spread fear both among individuals and states. Thus, Arendi and Illiada know that if they hand over the baby to the government, they will be sending him to inevitable death.

Time passes as his mothers raise Constantine as a beautiful and intelligent daughter. Even Constantine has been unaware that he is different from other children for many years. When Constantine gets older and reaches puberty, he realizes he is different from his other friends but tells his family only a few years later that he knows. When Constantine confronts his mothers about why they hide him being a man, Arendi says that people have suffered so much under men's rule throughout history, which is why people see all men as evil creatures (42). In response, Constantine asks why they never took him to the doctor and why they did not ask anyone why he was born as a man. Arendi says that scientists would conduct tests to study if people discover that he was born with a phallus. Moreover, she declares that they would force him to leave his family and the life he knows and that the state would lock him in a research center to conduct more experiments (43). Due to the burden of learning that he is the only man in the world, Constantine becomes a rebellious and aggressive child.

The narrator often emphasizes that women are unified to destroy everything created by men. Although they did everything they could to keep the male sex extinct, Constantine proves that men can still exist. Furthermore, the narrator informs the reader that women continue to perform the vicious behaviors attributed to men in this new world order. Considering these, I argue that alienation plays a significant role as a theme in Akaş's dystopian work. In a world where only women exist, the world's

only man is alienated both from himself and from the world, and the world is alienated from this man in return.

The novel presents the separation of the world and the individual through Constantine's deep loneliness and exclusion from society. For instance, he was started on hormone therapy by his mother to hide his assigned sex from society. Since he is unaware that he has been receiving hormone treatment, he has no control over his body and, therefore, is alienated from himself. In this example, the individual's inability to make decisions regarding his body is associated with the desire to conceal his sex. In this context, the example is alarming and threatening to the extent that it alienates the individual even from his body. The individual has had to distance himself from himself in order to be alienated from the outside world. Hiding the gender and not being able to act as oneself are among the most crucial reasons that alienate the individual from the outside world. Since the individual cannot be himself, he is alienated from himself, and because he cannot act like himself, he is alienated from the outside world. As in all dystopias, this alienation is based on fear.

Additionally, there is a fragmentation of individual identity caused by this alienation experienced by the person in the novel. In *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1992), Fredric Jameson discusses the individual's relationship with the past. His analysis explains the possibility of fragmentation in one's identity in case of a detachment from one's past and history. Jameson presents a dystopic image while discussing the postmodern condition. According to him, the obsession with the present causes us to lose our connection to the past (xii). He claims that in order to

find meaning in the present, one should seek assistance from past experiences. In Constantine's case, people's desire to manipulate history either by completely destroying the works written by men or rewriting them as if women wrote them leads to a disconnection between the past and the present and consequently results in the individual's separation from his past. Society's detachment from its past forces Constantine to hide his gender from society. Not being able to make decisions about himself as he wishes and being forced to suppress the person he really is, causes fragmentations in Constantine's identity and, consequently, drives him to lead a life in-between. As a man in a world full of women, Constantine is forced to act like a woman for a while; thus, he has to abandon his own desires and act to have a different identity. His mother's portrayal of the aftermath of the conversation about his true gender reveals Constantine's struggles with his identity:

> … uzun bir süre erkeklik konusu bir daha açılmadı, Constantine gerçekten de tehlikeyi anlamış ve kendini korumayı içselleştirmiş gibiydi, kendi kendine bazı riskleri hesapladığını, sorun çıkabilecek durumları öngörüp baştan önlem almaya çalıştığını görüyordum[12]. (44)

In the example above, after learning he was born as a boy, he starts to act like a woman because of the dangers that society might expose to him. However, imitating women forces him to face a dilemma, and his identity becomes fragmented. As a result, society's refusal to face its past and disregarding its history causes fragmentations in the protagonist's identity, eventually leading him into loneliness and detachment from the outside world.

[12] "...for a while the topic of manhood was not broached, Constantine seemed as though he had truly understood the danger and had internalized protecting himself, I was seeing him calculating some risks on his own, predicting situations which could cause problems and taking precautions preemptively."

In addition to causing damage to his identity, Constantine's upbringing as a girl also generates resistance, which is a common feature of dystopian works. Constantine, who is trying to survive in a world where only women exist, creates an unexpected dichotomy:

> Onu tam bir kız çocuğu gibi yetiştirmeye çalışıyorduk … Bazen bir bakışı, bir sözü, eliyle koluyla yaptığı bir hareket o kadar yabancı, o kadar erkeksi geliyordu ki … donup kalıyordum. Ne yapıyoruz biz? diye için için söyleniyordum. On binlerce yıllık bir tahakküm ve gerilik döneminden sonra insanlık nihayet gerçek uygarlık ve ilerleme yoluna girmişken, bu düzenin dinamitini kendi ellerimizle mi büyütüyorduk[13]?

Constantine's mother's self-inquiry displays how the dichotomy and oppression created by gender lead both the protagonist and his family to resist. Whether this resistance is against the system or the characters' personal ideologies, the resistance caused by difference turns into a revolt against the world. Therefore, I argue that Cem Akaş's replacement of patriarchy with a matriarchal system indicates that the author seeks to emphasize the deficiencies he sees in his own society. Even if the events Akaş describes in *Y* are not biologically possible, we may infer that he criticizes a society that harbors misogynistic tendencies by reversing the situation and presenting a confrontational fictional story.

Additionally, the conflicts the reader encounters in the novel mainly present themselves through social, traditional, and psychological disputes. The first confrontation that stands out the most is the gender conflict offered through Constantine. The baby Arendi and Illiada find at their doorstep constitute a great

[13] "We were trying to raise him precisely like a girl…sometimes a glance, a word, a gesture he made with his hands seemed so foreign, so male…that I froze in place. What are we doing? I said, over and over again. After humanity had finally entered a path to true civilization and progress following tens of thousands of years of dominance and regression, were we nurturing the end of this order by our own hands?"

danger to the female-dominated world. He cannot accept his actual gender because he grew up hearing that being a man is a disease. Nevertheless, he eventually begins to think that this is a dogma insisted on by the state and that it is not a reasonable judgment to hold men responsible for the immoral things that had happened to the world. Another example of resistance is shown through Constantine's mothers. Even though they are nonreligious, his mothers are people who grew up with stories that illustrate the greatness of the system, and they were brought up as women committed to traditions. However, they make a decision against the system's expectations by not reporting the baby boy they find at their door to the government. In the end, even if it is a boy, they see him only as a human being. Rather than handing him over to the government, they think he deserves to live and raise him as their own. The desire to resist the ideas they were taught as they grow up causes these characters to have inner conflicts. They, like Constantine, fight for their personalities. Caught between whom they want to be and whom society expects them to be, Arendi and Illiada eventually defy social impositions.

In terms of context, Akaş's novel is similar to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915). However, the most significant difference between these works is that while Gilman presents the idea of a society where only women live as a utopia, Akaş conveys this idea as a dystopia. In Gilman's utopia, several male explorers find a community that only women inhabit. Disasters such as diseases or wars do not exist in this society. This is because men do not live in this secluded land composed entirely of women. We also encounter the utopian ideas Gilman describes in Akaş's novel. However, these utopian visions are specific only to women. As a man,

Constantine's experiences in the society he lives in put him in a mentality full of contradictions, and he tries to convince himself to be like other people.

As I indicated in the first chapter, according to various scholars, one of the reasons behind producing dystopian works is to prevent societies from experiencing the alarming events described in dystopian works. However, this does not necessarily mean that Cem Akaş believes women will destroy the Y chromosome if they take power. On the contrary, although today's world is suffering from patriarchy's attempts to control women and other sexualities, Akaş shows that it is easy to oppress people regardless of gender, race, and ethnicity. Akaş's dystopia displays how easily people can be manipulated by authority and reveals that the dominant view can effortlessly eradicate different beliefs. In an interview with Betül Memiş, Cem Akaş explains why he wrote *Y*:

> *Y*'deki derdim, yalnız kadınların yaşadığı bir dünyanın nasıl olacağını irdeleyeceğim bir ütopya ya da distopya yazmak değildi[14] … Bugünkünden farklı ama bugünküne benzer yanları da olan, yalnızca iyi ya da topyekûn kötü olmayan bir dünya olması gerektiğini, statik değil dinamik olması gerektiğini düşündüm; … asıl anlatmak istediğim, Constantine'in "insan olma" macerasıydı. Burada insan olmayı, Pinokyo'nun bir odun parçasından kuklaya, oradan da insan olmaya ulaşan macerasını düşünerek kullanıyorum. Böyle bakıldığında, çok yabancı bir dünyada geçse de aslında çok tanıdık bir hikayeyle karşı karşıya olduğumuzu görebiliriz[15]. (Akaş)

[14] Furthermore, the author also notes that he struggled with the feeling of helplessness during the process of *Y*'s writing. He states that the ongoing news about male violence and oppression made it impossible to ignore problems caused by men, creating a sense of despair for him. Akaş admits that these feelings also affected the way he wrote his dystopia.

[15] "My concern when writing *Y* was not to write an utopia or a dystopia in which I would consider what a world in which only women lived would look like…I thought that this world would need to be different from our own, while having similarities, a world without purely good or purely evil, not static but dynamic; …what I truly wanted to show was Constantine's journey toward becoming 'a human'. I use 'becoming human' with Pinocchio's journey of becoming a puppet from wood, then becoming human from a puppet in mind. When looked at from such a perspective, we can see that even though it takes place in a very foreign world, we are face to face with a familiar story."

Akaş's explanation demonstrates that *Y* is based on the idea of being different from everyone else. He essentially narrates the problems he has experienced in his society, and by inserting his observation into a storyline, he undertakes the mission of informing his society.

2.3. Matriarchy vs. Patriarchy: Same Oppressions - Different Oppressors

As mentioned in the first chapter, the land of Cokaygne represents abundance and satisfaction, and this myth has inspired many utopian narratives since the mid-fourteenth century. In *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Romanında Ütopya (1923-1950)*, Necla Dağ defines Cokaygne as a men's paradise (31). She demonstrates that while women are known for their appeal, men are always young in Cokaygne. Men are fixed at the age of thirty and are sexually insatiable beings. Furthermore, Dağ indicates that social conflicts are not resolved by conferring with collective methods but by considering men's pleasure that men receive from a specific conflict. Dağ's definition of Cokaygne and her comment on the importance of male pleasure in this land draws attention to a similarity between the land of Cokaygne and Winterson's dystopia.

In *The Stone Gods*, happiness for both men and women is defined through male pleasure. For example, women fix their age to satisfy men, try to look more and more like teenage girls, and compete with other women who seem younger than themselves. While men depend on the things women do to satisfy them, women's happiness is based on how much they satisfy men. For this reason, people who seek happiness in earthly and sexual matters in Winterson's novel have no concern

regarding social matters, as in the narratives inspired by the myth of Cokaygne. While the feeling of satisfaction promised by Cokaygne is considered a feature of utopia by other utopian narratives, male pleasure appears as a dystopia in *The Stone Gods*. Since most people prioritize their individual happiness, they damage their relationships with each other while also causing extensive environmental disasters.

On the other hand, in the female-dominated society of Akaş's *Y,* personal pleasure is not essential, and women's happiness is detached from men's needs. Therefore, through the presentation of different approaches regarding the concept of pleasure described in Winterson's and Akaş's novels, we can make the following inference. While Winterson reveals the utopian side of masculine pleasure by showing the consequences of this mentality, Akaş deals with women's hatred generated from men's expectations and women's desire to retrieve the right to be happy without men's interruption. In short, while Winterson discusses the concept's use in utopian thought, Akaş displays the damage men's desire causes to women by presenting a dystopic picture. As Akaş reveals the consequences of the exploitation of women through the extinction of the Y chromosome, Winterson portrays how patriarchy damages not only women but also the ecosystem.

I wanted to examine these two works under the same title because while Winterson writes a dystopia of the male-dominated world, Akaş reverses this and offers a dystopia where women are on the oppressing side. Considering the geographies in which the novels were written and their authors' genders, I believe it is worth examining the fact that they belong to the same literary genre yet reach different conclusions. However, aside from the gender of the author, both novels display the

damage human greed might do to the world and explain that people are likely to face dire consequences if they are not careful.

In *The Stone Gods*, Winterson glorifies the cooperation and integration among genders and creates a balance between sexes by rejecting stereotypical dualisms such as man/woman, nature/culture, and spirit/mind. Instead, she develops an androgynous character who carries the characteristics of both genders. Contrary to Winterson, Akaş reinforces the man/woman dualism. According to his interview with Betül Memiş, Akaş never intended to write a misogynist dystopia. Perhaps, he may have aimed to emphasize the violence against women today by depicting a misandrist society and demonstrating the possible outcomes of this brutality. It is debatable in many ways whether a male author should write such a novel and claim that he did not write it out of misogynist feelings. Additionally, unlike Winterson's text, Akaş's dystopia draws a sharp line between genders and defines them strictly. Without offering any alternatives to this distinction, he portrays all the adverse features of both women and men and conveys the damage humanity has inflicted on the world with a critique made without prioritizing gender. In other words, while Winterson examines the possibility of a genderless, post-human future, Akaş offers a dystopia highlighting gender differences.

Another distinct difference between *The Stone Gods* and *Y* is their settings. While *The Stone Gods* takes place in different times and spaces, *Y* has a one-dimensional structure of time and space. Hence, Winterson's novel envisions a technologically advanced world in which interplanetary colonization is possible. *Y*, on the other hand, uses real settings like Istanbul, the United States, and Vienna. Considering this,

we may argue that *Y* is more realistic[16] in terms of locations. Even though it is not scientifically possible for the Y chromosome to be erased, Akaş narrates this impossible vision through extremely realistic places. Therefore, he implicitly alleviates the attention on the biologically impossible situation.

Additionally, both writers draw attention to the problems originating in traditional gender roles. Winterson explains this through topics such as patriarchy, sexuality, and the end of the physical world. Akaş, on the other hand, is primarily interested in being a human. By creating a women-only world, he brings the reader's attention to the inflexibility of power structures and their urge to differentiate even the most similar people from each other. While explaining how alienation and othering occur, he emphasizes throughout *Y* that people's desire to discriminate stems from the fear of the different. As the only man in the world, Constantine is feared and marginalized wherever he goes. He is ostracised because he is different, and other people cannot understand him or his expectations as a man.

On the other hand, Winterson presents a same-sex interspecies love story and narrates the reasons behind the Earth's destruction in the same context. Through Billie and Spike, the writer resists heteronormativity and the Anthropocene simultaneously. Furthermore, as I have demonstrated earlier, *The Stone Gods* harbors queer elements, and what makes it queer is the fact that Winterson's resistance to

[16] I mention several times throughout this thesis that dystopias are linked to realism. They can be seen as the most problematic literary genre to be associated with realism in terms of context at first glance. However, if we consider that utopias and dystopias take the subjects they criticize or want to emphasize from real events and situations, I argue that this genre generally feeds on reality. Despite speculative events and narratives, the world in dystopia is portrayed as it is through extreme metaphors. In other words, it would not be wrong to claim that by transferring their experiences to a fictional space, dystopian authors generate a balance between reality and fiction.

these notions. Billie and Spike's same-sex relationship in all chapters of the novel is the most apparent reason that makes the novel queer. In *Y*, on the other hand, we do not encounter queer elements as we do in Winterson's dystopia. Winterson's avant-garde characters, settings, and plots consolidate her openness to queer possibilities, and like her other writings, *The Stone Gods* has its share of her willingness to experiment with unorthodox ideas.

Although Akaş wrote a novel in which gender roles predominate, he uses the dystopian genre as a tool for the search for a world where the individual is free. In his interview with Betül Memiş, the author states that he wrote the novel *Y* to examine an individual's self-actualization experience[17]. Traditional dystopias wage war on individuality, and it is possible to see some of the prominent examples of this genre also criticize individualism's harmful effects on society. İpek Demir demonstrates in her thesis that postmodernism enables the development of dystopias because it also problematizes the centrality of the individual. In this respect, dystopias perceive the attitude individuals take towards society as a problem (21). However, Akaş's dystopia disagrees with this notion. His novel shows us that the individual's freedom to define themselves freely and individualism, in general, can actually be beneficial for the whole society because the process of individualization would automatically lead to a society that is free from oppression.

[17] "çok yabancı bir dünyada geçse de aslında çok tanıdık bir hikayeyle karşı karşıya olduğumuzu görebiliriz. Farklı kapsamlarda olsa da hemen hepimiz buna benzer bir deneyim yaşamışızdır, yaşayan birini tanıyoruzdur. Nedir o deneyim? Kendini var etme deneyimi. Özünde diretme, öz olmayanda uzlaşma, özünü doğru tanımlama deneyimi" (Akaş)

Similarly, Winterson offers in *The Stone Gods* the possibility of a world where individuals are free to define themselves through a genderless character. In her *Art Objects*, she claims that we define and understand ourselves through others (59). Since we constantly interact with the people around us, we cannot avoid defining ourselves by the opinions of others. That is why Winterson proposes that we should be careful not to live in a state of constant self-censorship, and instead, we need to try to understand whom we want to be. Additionally, in his article, "Conflict between the Individual and Society in Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*," Emrah Atasoy argues that Winterson rebels against the oppressive society through a lesbian individual. Therefore, Atasoy demonstrates that Winterson presents a narrative that does not conform to established rules and expectations by prioritizing her character's sexual identity (3). Considering *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) and *The Stone Gods*, Winterson also aims to prove that individuals' freedom to determine their social and sexual identities leads to the possibility of a better society.

Even though Akaş and Winterson's protagonists' sexual orientations are different, both authors emphasize the importance of individual freedom by discussing characters' right to have a say in their individual preferences. Therefore, both authors situate their characters in their novel by addressing the concept of individualism that dystopian authors generally criticize. They claim that people need to be free while making personal decisions because those decisions affect how they define themselves. Consequently, the authors assert that people's self-actualization process will ultimately benefit everyone living in their society only if they go through the process in an oppression-free environment. Akaş and Winterson then take a stand

against traditional dystopias and propose a new perspective concerning individuality through their dystopias.

Additionally, as mentioned various times, both writers construct their dystopias on gender, sex, and sexuality. However, they also attribute the dystopic nature of the worlds they create to authorities as well as individuals. Both *The Stone Gods* and *Y* present seemingly just and democratic governments. Yet, behind their non-discriminatory and fair facade is oppressive and manipulative systems. For example, in *The Stone Gods*, Billie mentions that "[n]obody reads and writes anymore" because people think they do not need those basic skills (8). It is made clear in the novel that the state willingly keeps its citizens ignorant. Due to the state's efforts to keep individuals ignorant, people are compelled to depend on the system to fulfill their every need. As an effect of this, citizens of Orbus do not question the system, as expected. All these enable the state to control its inhabitants through manipulation. Billie comments on the state's attempts to keep people ignorant by revealing that "we have no need for brains so our brains are shrinking. Not all brains, just most people's brains -- it's an inevitable part of progress" (14).

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Another point of connection in the novels of these two authors is related to the works' points of view. For example, three different narrators exist both in *The Stone Gods* and *Y*. The change of perspectives between the chapters allows the writers to express what they want to tell more thoroughly. For this reason, I argue that both Winterson and Akaş queer the narrative of their works. Moreover, the fact that the reader witnesses occurrences from different perspectives allows them to make a connection between the characters of the two works or enables them to match the characters. As I have demonstrated earlier, Constantine is a character who is constantly alienated from society and labeled as different in *Y*. Similarly, since she is a robot, Spike of *The Stone Gods* is also an estranged character, and her distinctions from humans are repeatedly highlighted by people who believes that humans are the most valuable entity in the universe. Based on this match between Spike and Constantine, it is possible to see that the writers convey the flaws of their societies through othered characters. Additionally, there is a match between Constantine's mothers and Billie as well. In terms of character development, the reader may see that the mothers of Constantine and Billie are the most developed characters in both novels. We see that these characters begin to recognize the deficiencies and errors of their societies and gradually become conscious of resisting the system through alienated characters. Considering these, the fluidity and queerness in viewpoints enable the reader to match the characters and establish a parallel between the two novels.

In addition to the similarities in the themes and structures, an even more significant feature unites these two authors. In *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time,* Wai Chee Dimock argues that "[l]iterary genres are ... as old, as widely dispersed, and as unpredictable as human beings themselves" (78). She

claims that literary genres like novels and epic form a bridge between antiquity and modernity, and all of them emerge in every environment where human beings exist. These make genres part of a process that will never be completed. The fact that they are part of a never-ending and constantly changing process causes literary forms to have similar traits, no matter how different they are. In accordance with this, Dimock proposes that there is a kinship among literary genres, and it is possible to discuss the kinship between other literary texts, genres, and even authors. Therefore, based on Dimock's kinship argument, I assert that there is a kinship between Akaş and Winterson over the dystopian genre. Dystopia is also a part of a mechanism that will never be completed like other literary genres. As a part of that mechanism, it interacts with the other components and becomes a member of an endless network. We can conclude that Akaş and Winterson are also part of this network, and as a result of this, there is an intangible but unmistakable relationship between the two authors, and it is possible to define this relationship as kinship.

CHAPTER 3

ECO-DYSTOPIAS BY WOMEN WRITERS

In the previous chapter, I mentioned that there is a kinship between Cem Akaş and Jeanette Winterson. At the end of this chapter, I will also discuss the notion of kinship; however, this time, the discussion will be on Doris Lessing and Oya Baydar. I believe that the kinship between Lessing and Baydar transcends the idea of kinship through genre and that theirs is on a more personal level. That is why, in the following pages, I will both closely read the works of these two authors and argue that the authors are kins by highlighting the parallels in their personal lives.

After the second half of the twentieth century, even though the effects of the world wars were still discernible, the awareness of the damage caused by human activities to the climate has gradually increased due to technological and scientific developments[18]. As seen in the example of J.G Ballard's *The Drowned World* (1962), writers have begun to express their concerns regarding the predicaments caused by climate change. These authors have demonstrated in their works that global warming is increasing due to collective mistakes and ignorance. While individuals are blamed for failing to persuade states to take precautions and ignoring environmental problems, states are also condemned for considering their own interests and not

[18] Additional information can be found in Robert Markley's article called "Literature, Climate, and Time: Between History and Story."

being sensitive enough to the harm their decisions cause to nature. As the damage to nature is becoming more and more apparent, newspapers and academic studies have started to talk about how collective activities and decisions increase our shares in the climate crisis. Scientific findings showing the harm caused to nature have generated anxiety and distress among societies and governments. The increase in the disaster scenarios that mention climate crises has given way to the expansion of futuristic narratives. Accordingly, early twentieth-century fictions that offer dystopic visions through dictatorships have started to be replaced by ecological dystopias. Consequently, in this chapter, I analyze the eco-dystopian texts of Doris Lessing and Oya Baydar, who inform the reader about the environmental damages caused by wars, political greed, and people's irresponsibility.

The eco-dystopian narrative maintains its popularity among audiences with influences from YA dystopian bestselling and movie series such as *The Hunger Games* (2008-2010) by Suzanne Collins, *Divergent* (2011-2013) by Veronica Roth, and *Leviathan* (2016) by Saul W. Tanpepper. These eco-dystopian stories generally depict post-apocalyptic societies where some ecological catastrophe has occurred, including scarce natural resources and a damaged agricultural system. Rowland Hugh and Pat Wheeler (2013) demonstrate in their article where they discuss the connection between nature and dystopian vision that there has been an increase in the literary commentaries on climate change and its consequences on the environment in recent years (2). As we have previously seen in Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods*, most contemporary dystopias perceive technological advancements as both a progressive activity and a movement that damages the ecosystem.

Additionally, Dori Griffin (2019) suggests in her article "Visualizing Eco-Dystopia" that contrary to post-apocalyptic fiction, eco-dystopias do not only focus on a single catastrophic event; instead, they highlight "the consequences of everyday human behaviors enacted repeatedly over protracted periods of time" (273). Put differently, while the risk of catastrophe is inherent in all fictional representations of climate change, dystopian fiction provides a vital platform to initiate the discussions on how to prevent ecological catastrophes caused by climate change and how to prevent it. While the genre of dystopia in general exhibits a nightmarish futuristic vision mostly focusing on the political and cultural variables, eco-dystopias go beyond this perception. Rather than prioritizing predicting the world's future from a political view, they focus on the possible problems the disruption in the ecosystem would cause.

Various scholars claim that eco-dystopia has become a subgenre that tends to be associated with feminism, and texts that are produced under this subgenre "should be understood as ecofeminist fictions whether or not their authors perceived them as such" (Murphy 2). Moreover, Patrick D. Murhpy states that eco-dystopian narratives should be regarded as feminist because women severely suffer beneath the gender hierarchy in the works that convey such natural disasters (2). Within this framework, I believe giving background information regarding the personal and political views of Doris Lessing and Oya Baydar is essential. I assert that it is possible to trace both women's activist identities and political thoughts in their works because their ideological backgrounds cultivate their criticism of the current world's conditions.

Doris Lessing was notably political[19], particularly at the beginning of her career. In *Walking in the Shade* (1997), the second volume of her autobiography where she covers her years between 1949 and 1962, Lessing confirms that she was politically active in Southern Rhodesia and took part in a communist party they[20] invented (24-5). After coming to England, she officially became a Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) member between 1952 and 1956. Although she had disagreements with the party, being an active figure in a political environment was reflected in her works. For instance, in her first novel, *The Grass is Singing* (1950), Lessing exhibits the viciousness of colonialism. The book was detested in her home country, South Africa, and Southern Rhodesia (26), where she was consequently banned from[21]. In *Walking in the Shade*, she states that joining the CPGB was "probably the most neurotic act of [her] life" (57). Based on the autobiographical information Lessing provides, even though she used to be a part of the Communist Party, she had always been skeptical of party politics and had doubts. Over the years, Lessing had seen that political views could turn into radical obsessions and eventually lead to lunacy:

> [it] is hard from present perspectives to make sense of a way of thinking I now think was lunatic. Does it matter if one woman succumbed to lunacy? No. But I am talking of a generation, and we were part of some kind of social psychosis or mass self-hypnosis. I am not trying to justify it when I say that I now believe all mass movements – religious, political – are a kind of mass hysteria and, a

[19] The meaning of "politics" is broad. Here, the term refers to dealings with a given established order, with a society and rules. Politics is the means by which this society is constructed, maintained, and changed, often through collective action. Therefore, criticism of a given order is necessarily political in this context.

[20] In the section where she reveals her conversations with the communists in England, she uses the following phrase: "When I protested that I had been a member of communist party invented by us in Southern Rhodesia, which any real Communist Party would have dismissed with contempt, they did not care -- or perhaps they did not hear" (24-5). However, it is not clear who she means by "us".

[21]More information can be found about Doris Lessing's political views in Dan Kellum's article titled "The Political Doris Lessing".

> generation or so later, people must say, But how could you believe ... whatever it was? (58)

Her confession demonstrates that she considered that ideological thinking had the potential to turn into a passionate religious mindset, and communism also had become a sacred practice for some. In the light of all these, we can infer that, according to Lessing, having an excessive commitment to a radical idea is susceptible to corruption. Her argument inherently manifests itself in her literary productions through her criticisms of racism, patriarchy, and anthropocentrism.

Likewise, it is possible to see critiques of the current political order in Oya Baydar's works. Baydar played a quite active role in the political movements in her youth. She was arrested in the 1971 Turkish military memorandum because of her socialist identity as a member of the Workers' Party of Turkey. During her studies at Istanbul University, her doctoral thesis on ''The Birth of the Working Class in Turkey'' was rejected twice, and consequently, the students occupied the university to protest the injustice. Baydar reminisces this incident in *Bir Dönem İki Kadın: Birbirimizin Aynası* (2011) with Melek Ulagay as follows:

> Doktora tezimin ikinci kez reddi, öğrencilerin rektörlüğü işgal etmeleri, benim atılmamak için acele istifa edip üniversiteden ayrılmam, 1968'in son günleridir. O günlerin kabına sığmayan kıpır kıpır Türkiyesi gibi hayatımın da çalkantılı, hareketli, karmakarışık bir dönemiydi. İstanbul Üniversitesi'nde sosyoloji asistanıydım ama akademik kariyerim kesintiye uğramıştı. Türkiye İşçi Partisi üyesiydim ama parti içindeki ayrışmalarda yalpalayıp duruyordum ... [tezimde] "Türkiye İşçi Sınıfının Doğuşu"nu araştırmıştım ... Sorun tez çalışmasında değil, tezin konusunda ve benim siyasal kimliğimdeydi ... Ben işgalden hemen önce sosyoloji bölümünde son dersimi vermiştim ... Ders bitti; sloganlar, alkışlar arasında amfiden çıkıp odama geldim. İçeri yeni girmiştim ki kapı vuruldu, kapıda uzun boylu, yakışıklı bir delikanlı. "Ben Deniz

> Gezmiş'im[22], teziniz reddedildiği için rektörlüğü işgale gidiyoruz," dedi.[23] (20-1)

Baydar's recollection of the event is important in terms of seeing both the political environment of her youth in Turkey and her associations with the active and well-known political figures of the period. Moreover, she was arrested in the 1971 Turkish military memorandum because of her socialist identity as a member of the Workers' Party of Turkey. Years later, she fled the country during the 1980 Turkish coup d'état and lived abroad for twelve years until the 1992 amnesty (Aydemir 12). As a writer who has witnessed the sufferings of Turkey's 1968 generation, Baydar includes the individuals of this generation in her works. She conveys their loneliness and sorrow, articulating their efforts to hold onto life. Moreover, she exhibits the experiences of exiled individuals in her works because she personally knows the difficulties of being in exile. She demonstrates that an individual's exile eventually becomes permanent even if they return to their home. Therefore, the characters become alienated from the outside world and feel they belong nowhere. As a result, melancholia prevails throughout her novels, and her characters are generally pessimistic about the future.

[22] Deniz Gezmiş was a Marxist-Leninist political activist during the late 1960s. He was executed alongside Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan on 6 May 1972 under the 1971 Turkish military memorandum.

[23] "The last days of 1968 were the rejection of my doctoral dissertation for the second time, the students occupying the rectorate, and my rushed resignation from my post and leaving the university in order to not be fired. Just like the Turkey of those days, unrestrained and active, it was also a period of my life which was tumultuous, dynamic, and confusing. I was a sociology assistant at Istanbul University but my academic career had been interrupted. I was a member of the Workers' Party of Turkey but I was wobbling with intra-party divisions…[in my thesis] I had researched the 'Birth of the Turkish Working Class' …the problem was not with my research, but rather with the topic of the research and my political identity…I had given my last lecture in the sociology department just before the occupation…the lecture ended; I left the amphitheater in the midst of slogans and applause and went to my office. I had only just entered when the door was knocked, a tall and handsome young man at the door. 'I am Deniz Gezmiş, we are going to occupy the rectorate because your thesis was rejected,' he said."

More than only being two women dystopian writers, Lessing and Baydar are similar in terms of their critiques of the existing order and their urge to question the system. Both narrate their personal experiences to inform the reader and assemble their fiction in line with reality. Despite belonging to different countries and cultures, Lessing and Baydar underline the significance of the individual experience. They explain the social issues they discuss in their works with political, cultural, and individual experiences they have observed in their real lives. For instance, in her conversations with Ulagay, Baydar states that she never considered joining a political organization after returning to Turkey after the exile. She expresses that she thinks the organization should consider making severe criticism, even self-criticism to itself, just like the current system should also make (267). Moreover, she condemns all generations in Turkey and the world, including the generations before and after hers, for always avoiding criticizing themselves and questioning their actions and decisions. This is why she claims that the left has always been and will always be defeated.

Similarly, Lessing had also advocated that the system and the political organization she used to be a part of should have questioned themselves and accepted the mistakes they made. Furthermore, she also used her literary works to critique the system. For instance, we see in *The Golden Notebook* (1962) that she criticizes communist parties through the Communist International[24] (157). She "mocks the obsession of [The Communist International] with treachery and betrayal by revealing the paranoia in the Communist Party in the 1950s over potential traitors to communism and those

[24] It was an organization in the Soviets founded by Lenin that advocated the notion of global communism.

who might really be capitalist spies" (Bağlama 19). Overall, we can say that both Lessing and Baydar convey their critiques against the prevailing systems of their times and countries through their literature.

3.1. A Turkish Eco-Dystopia: Oya Baydar's *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi*

Humanity transforms and destroys the environment for various reasons, and due to this carnage, some changes occur in nature. The nature-human conflict comes into play with the developments in the industry. Instead of making agricultural areas a priority, factories have gained more importance over the years. The acceleration in the production of motor vehicles, mindless consumption, and unplanned population growth have all initiated the destruction of the environment. As the primary source of the problem, humans also try to find a solution to this crisis. In parallel with this pursuit, we see that the need to minimize environmental damage appears in various fields such as sociology, politics, philosophy, arts, and literature. The function of literature is undeniably crucial in the studies carried out to minimize the losses caused by the destruction of natural resources. I argue that literary pieces written with eco-sensitivity can directly impact a reader's feelings and thoughts. Literary texts allow writers to offer environmental awareness by displaying ecological problems and possible solutions in their works. In the light of all these, this section makes an ecocritical reading of Oya Baydar's dystopian novel, *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* (2019), as it depicts a pessimistic vision of the future based on a worldwide ecological disaster.

The publisher of the book, Can Yayınları, emphasizes on its cover that *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* may be the first eco-dystopia in Turkish literature. An unnamed character narrates an unnamed country and Earth's struggles with a climate catastrophe that takes place in the near future. In the novel, governments fail to handle the environmental crisis, as the studies on renewable energy and developments in this field, the Paris Agreement, the Kyoto Protocol, and efforts to protect plant and animal diversity remain insufficient. Therefore, nations cannot prevent the collapse of ecology because they have started to take action too late. Baydar aims to increase the reader's awareness regarding climate change and inform them by voicing her concerns about the future through a narration of an ecological disaster scenario. The story is narrated through "Kadın,[25]" "Adam,[26]" and a third-person omniscient narrator. Even though there are two main characters in the novel, we do not know their names. While the protagonist is called "Kadın," her partner is referred to as "Adam". Due to the changes in narration, the reader can learn about the problems faced by humanity both before and after the climate crisis.

In the novel, the narrator informs the reader that water wars had occurred between countries due to the drought that lasted for ten years, and people obtained water through water rationing. However, when the drought ends in Kadın's present, continuous rains, floods, and typhoons turn people's world into hell this time. Kadın describes this catastrophe as follows:

> Ülkenin batısında her yer sular altında, barajlar çöktü, nehirler taştı, çağlayanlar gibi akan sel suları insanları, hayvanları, binaları, her şeyi

[25] "Kadın" means woman in Turkish.

[26] In Turkish, "adam" is a noun that indicates whether a person is male. However, it is unclear in the novel whether the character's real name is Adam, as he is a citizen of a Northern European country, or whether it is used as a pseudonym.

> sürükleyip götürdü. Sadece yüksek yerler, bir de şehirlerdeki gökdelenlerin, plazaların, yüksek kulelerin en üst katları kaldı suların üstünde. En kötümser ekoloji uzmanlarının tahminlerini aşan, iddialı distopyaların inandırıcılığına gölge düşüren, bilimsel açıdan kuşkulu bir durum. Ama gerçek işte…[27] (16-7)

Kadın claims that this worldwide disaster casts a shadow on even the most ambitious dystopias. She says that America's infrastructure has collapsed, and deserts that had not seen rain for centuries are underwater now from Central Asia to Africa due to floods. Moreover, the narrator describes the flood as "Nuh Tufan'ından da büyük bir tufan. Bölgesel değil, küresel felaket sanki…" (18). The common feature of the flood narratives is the punishment of humanity and the need for a new world order, where only the good remains by being purified from its evils. In Baydar's novel, the narrator demonstrates that people destroy natural life and ruin the ecosystem. As a consequence of this destruction, nature punishes humanity in return. Even if they realize that they have been preparing for their own demise, they see it is too late now to make things right. However, according to Adam, the destruction that the flood brings represents a rebirth:

> Adam'ın yorumuna göre dinî metinlerde de mitolojik anlatılarda, efsanelerde de, insanlığın tufanla yıkılışını yeni bir kavmin doğuşu, insanlığın yeni bir aşamaya geçmesi izlemekteydi. Tufan bir toptan yok oluş efsanesi değil evrimin sürekliliğine, evrenin ve insanlığın kendini sürekli yenilemesine atıftı[28]. (20)

In short, as in the flood narratives, those who harm nature will be wiped out from the face of the earth, and people who do not see nature as a consumption material will

[27] "In the West of the country, everything is under water, dams have collapsed, rivers have flooded, and flood waters flowing like waterfalls have taken people, animals, buildings, everything with them. Only high places, and the highest floors of skyscrapers, plazas, and spires in the cities have remained above water. A situation which exceeded the expectations of the most pessimistic ecological experts, which cast doubt upon the plausibility of the most assertive of dystopias, a scientifically questionable one. Yet, it is the truth…"

[28] "According to Adam's interpretation, in both religious texts and mythological tales, and in legends, the advancement of humanity into a new stage and the birth of a new society followed the destruction of humanity by floods. The floods were not legends of complete annihilation, but rather references to the constant renewal of the universe and humanity."

participate in constructing the new world. However, Kadın does not share Adam's naïve set of mind. Adam claims that life will continue despite tragedies, but Kadın has no faith in her society. While he believes that "the future will reemerge from the innocence of the victims," Kadın argues that the once oppressed become cruel when they seize power and make others endure the same distress they once experienced (58). Furthermore, Kadın does not perceive this ecological disaster as a divine punishment. Instead, she blames the anthropocentric and consumption-oriented capitalist system and people's indifference toward this world order (223).

Baydar draws attention to the climate crisis by mentioning real-life events and organizations such as School Strike for Climate led by Swedish Greta Thunberg and Doctors Without Borders. Polar bears are losing their habitat due to melting glaciers in the novel, just as they are on the verge of extinction in the real world. In other words, Baydar places the novel's plot in a realistic, up-to-date setting. Thus, the realization concerning the frightening future hits the reader because the events seem too real. Considering all these, Baydar wrote a novel based on the mistakes in today's world, and she composed a dystopia of an already dystopian society.

In the novel, Kadın mentions that there were already environmental problems even before the drought and flood disasters. However, people took every scientific warning for granted instead of finding solutions. Kadın reveals that the governments also ignored the warnings and denied taking precautions until they could no longer ignore what was happening to the climate. Furthermore, she states that rather than accepting climate change, her country's President claims that what is happening in their country is "a conspiracy of foreign powers":

> Tek elden yönetilen medya ülkenin milli kaynaklarının zenginliğini, su zengini ülke olduğunu, bölge ülkelerinin topraklarımıza bu nedenle göz diktiklerini sürekli tekrarlıyor, Başkan her gün yaptığı halka seslenişlerde, iç ve dış düşmanların propagandasına kapılınmaması için uyarıyor, çevre felaketi senaryolarını yayanların emperyalistlerin ajanları olduğunu, su kaynaklarını sabote ettiklerini, dış güçlerin ülkeye komplo kurduğunu, hainlerin cezalarını çekeceklerini bildiriyordu.[29] (191)

The language of the President, his choice of words, and his tendency to blame others cannot be overlooked as they illustrate a lot about Turkey's current reality. In *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi*, Baydar displays the problems of the society she lives in almost exactly and puts them at the center of her fiction. The author emphasizes many times in her novel that it is crucial for the future that each individual must fulfill their responsibilities. In one sense, she wants people to acknowledge not only the environmental crisis but also the political problems already experienced in today's Turkey.

In terms of the continuation of humankind, the conclusion Baydar reaches is more realistic when we compare *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* to Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods*. As I discuss in the second chapter, people in Winterson's novel find a solution to the collapse of the world by colonizing other planets. Baydar, on the other hand, believes that the only way for humanity to survive is through children. As mentioned earlier, Kadın does not believe that humanity will/should continue. However, Adam tries to reason with her doubts by often stating that "çocukların simgelediği [iyilik]" will be the reason for the continuation of humanity (239). It would not be wrong to say

[29] "The media, controlled by a monopoly, constantly repeated the country's bountiful natural resources, how it was a water-rich country, and that this was why regional countries had designs upon our lands; the President, in his daily addresses to the people, warned them not to take heed of enemy propaganda, both within and outside of the country, informing them that those who spread around scenarios of environmental disasters were imperialist agents, that they were sabotaging water supplies, that foreign powers were conspiring against the nation, and that traitors would be punished."

that Baydar also shares Adam's views. The novel displays two different groups that the children assemble: Köpekli Çocuklar[30] and İklim Çocukları[31]. İklim Çocukları are children aged between twelve and fourteen living in Western and educated countries. While their "[a]nneleri, babaları, abileri ablaları, bizim kuşaklar iktidarlara, diktatörlere, siyasetçilere karşı eşitlik, adalet, özgürlük için siyasal eylemlere katılırken," İklim Çocukları aim to prevent environmental disasters without mentioning all these as they believe that climate change is a problem that transcends notions like politics and dictatorships (231). Just as the protests that started with Greta Thunberg in 2018, and circulated worldwide, gradually lost their impact, İklim Çocukları of the novel are somewhat silenced by the governments.

While İklim Çocukları are brought up in better conditions, Köpekli Çocuklar consists of refugees, homeless children, and their stray dogs. Therefore, these other groups of children constitute a different pillar of the resistance. Protected by stray dogs, these children represent the youth that people often ignore and perceive as "the other". Similar to İklim Çocukları, these children also organize activities to prevent climate change and try to raise awareness among their generations. Through the presentation of Köpekli Çocuklar, Baydar emphasizes that instead of separating people by marginalizing, othering, or dividing them, resisting together as a whole is necessary for the survival of humankind. Through refugee children, Baydar makes a social criticism and connects this to ecocriticism. In line with what she experiences in her society, she includes sorrowful events that lose their impact after a while. For instance, the narrator mentions one specific incident based on Baydar's real-life experiences.

[30] Children with Dogs.
[31] Children of the Climate.

While Kadın comments on the devastation of wars and their unnamed victims, she also talks about a piece of news she came across on television years ago: the body of a child whose body washed up on a shore on the Aegean coast:

> Ekranlarda adsız bir kadın, adsız bir çocuk… Sadece bir görüntü, savaşın dehşetinin simgesi. Tıpkı yıllar önce Ege'de batan kaçak mülteci teknesinin minik yolcusunun kumsala vurmuş cesedi gibi… Blucin pantolonu, kırmızı tişörtüyle kumsalın üstüne uzanmış uyuyordu. Dünya ağladı ama, o sistemin törpülediği vicdanımızın, duyarsızlığımızın kurbanı ölü bir çocuk değildi, bir simgeydi. İyi olduklarını, vicdanlı, duyarlı olduklarını sanan, belki de gerçekten öyle olan insanların yüreklerini hafifletmek, vicdanlarını yıkamak için ihtiyaç duydukları gıdaydı[32]. (162)

Without revealing his name, the author refers to Alan Kurdi, who drowned while trying to flee to the island of Kos in an inflatable boat, and countless other children who died in wars. This real-life incident is another proof that *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* is a dystopia of a dystopian society. Moreover, Baydar's dystopia questions the increase in dystopian works in the world literature market. The narrator mentions that "geleceğe dair umutlu, iyimser projeksiyonların geçerliliğini yitirdiğini," and in addition to the best-selling classical dystopias, there has been a considerable increase in ecological dystopias (140). This statement is crucial because many dystopian writers depict the world as it is in their dystopias. All four writers whose works have been examined in this thesis project social events through art and literature and, thus, inform their readers about the impairments of their societies. Ultimately, this shows that dystopian fiction and reality are inseparable.

[32] "A nameless woman, a nameless child on the screen…Only a frame, a symbol of the horrors of war. Just like the corpse of the tiny passenger of an illegal refugee boat sinking in the Aegean…Sleeping on the beach with his blue jeans and red t-shirt. The world cried, but the victim of our dulled conscience and our insensitivity was not the child; it was a symbol. It was the nourishment those who thought they were, or perhaps those who truly were good, conscionable, or sensitive needed to lighten their hearts, or to absolve their consciences."

As environmental destruction becomes global, new political borders emerge due to governments' needs for self-preservation: "Diktatörlüklerin duvarlarını, savaş bölgelerinin sınırlarını, iletişim engellerini aşmak neredeyse imkansızdı" (33). In this chaotic environment, "[s]akıncalı sayılmak için siyasi kimlik gerekmiyor artık, çevrecilik sisteme yönelik en büyük tehdit kabul ediliyor" (44). In addition, the narrator also notes that the environmental disaster and the political chaos that followed it had cultivated each other since the beginning. Following this, those who predicted this tragedy and rebelled against the capitalist system of their time began to be referred to as criminals by governments. In other words, the government in the novel considers any threat as a danger to its existence. Due to this mentality, the meanings of good and evil have altered. The narrator compares the political environment of her country to George Orwell's *1984*:

> … [s]özcükler, dil tersine döndürülmüştü. Barış demek suç, savaş demek erdemdi, çevre için mücadele etmek suç, çevreyi mahvetmek vatanseverlikti. Bunu görüyorduk, seziyorduk, kendi aramızda konuşuyor hatta yazıp çiziyorduk ama sisteme karşı güçlü bir duruş gösteremiyorduk, kitlesel bir mücadele veremiyorduk. Sistemin efendilerinin ne sınıf mücadelesinden ne emekçiden ne kamuoyundan korkuları kalmıştı. Hepsini sindirmiş, teslim almış, peşlerine takmışlardı. Demin siyasi kimliği olmayanlardan, barışçılardan, çevrecilerden neden rahatsız olduklarını sormuştu ya… Çünkü savaş çarkına taş koymanın, çevrenin tahribatına karşı çıkmanın, gerçekleri yaymanın sistemi sarsacağının farkındaydılar[33]. (45)

The narrator's views project the fearful environment of the novel's fictional country and Baydar's own country. Kadın's description of her country indicates that the political authorities cause the main destruction in the society and the ecosystem.

[33] "...words, the language had been reversed. Saying peace was a crime, saying war was a virtue, struggling for the environment was a crime, destroying nature was patriotism. We could see this, sense this, speak of it between ourselves and even write it down, but not put up a strong fight against the system, we could not offer mass resistance. The masters of the system had no fear of class struggle or of workers or of public opinion. They had repressed all of them, co-opted them, or bought them. He'd asked about why they were bothered by those without a political identity, from pacifists, from environmentalists…because they were aware that blocking the gears of war, standing up against the destruction of nature, and spreading the truth would shake the foundations of the system. "

Therefore, the system produces so-called “others” as its enemies and fights them to ensure its continuity, while in truth, making the destruction it causes irreversible. In such an environment, while the activities of Köpekli Çocuklar and those who take action for the sake of the ecosystem are limited, they still manage to disseminate the truth about the dimensions of global climate changes to the masses. This is why children are associated with hope and the continuation of life throughout the novel.

In terms of structure, the events in Baydar’s novel do not follow a chronological order. For instance, Kadın constantly returns to the past as she has internal conflicts. Heroes constantly return to the past as they experience internal reckoning. As the novel’s heroine tries to find the meaning of life, she feels helpless, and when she reminisces about her past, her reckoning becomes inadequate to answer her innate questions. In her thesis titled *Oya Baydar’ın Romanlarında Sosyal Kurgular* Esra Aydemir states that Baydar’s novels are generally set between the years 1960 and 2000. Moreover, she claims that while the author fictionalizes her characters in these years, she also deals with the critical social and political events that Turkey experienced between these years, and she desires to show the effects of these events on the novel’s heroes (Aydemir 212). In an interview with Seval Şahin, Baydar explains that the fear and despair that danger generates are also projected on art and literature (2:54-2:57). As the events take place nearly thirty years later than today, the characters in the book are modern-day people:

> O insanların gündelik yaşamları üzerinden gidiyor [olay örgüsü]: Aşkları, çocuklarıyla bağları, üzüntüleri, sevinçleri, dostlukları üzerinden giden bir süreç. Ve birden o insanlar kendilerini bir sonla karşı karşıya buluyorlar ve o

> sonda kendileriyle, düşünceleriyle, çevreleriyle, geçmişleriyle, aşklarıyla … her şeyleriyle hesaplaşmak zorunda kalıyorlar sonu yaşarken[34]. (4:30 - 5:09)

In other words, disasters in the novel urge people to question their existence. By putting one of the most critical problems of our time in the middle of her narrative, Baydar informs the reader about the social and political issues that people in the twenty-first century have to deal with and displays their effects on people's personal lives. The characters' self-inquiries in the face of catastrophes mirror the real-life experiences of individuals who are contemporaries of Baydar.

In her interview, Baydar also explains why she wrote a dystopia in the first place. According to the author, ecological problems today transcend any other issue, and she emphasizes that it is an issue that the world needs to prioritize (1:20-2:13). Furthermore, since people have lost hope for the future and utopias are the product of an age of hope, the writer admits that today's literature can only exist with dystopias (2:18-2:55). The concepts of dystopia and utopia often conflict with each other in the novel. This conflict is presented through Kadın and Adam's opposite opinions concerning the future. For instance, in *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi*, Kadın claims that all religious and secular utopias have collapsed, dragging humanity's hope for the future with them. Adam, on the other hand, demonstrates that ample destructions and disasters such as wars, oppressions, mass migrations, and genocides have occurred in every age. Nevertheless, he always emphasizes that there are always those who sacrifice themselves for the hope of a world without war, cruelty, and exploitation.

[34] "[The plot] works off of the daily lives of those people: their love, their attachment to their children, their sadness, their happiness, a process that moves with their friendship. And suddenly those people find themselves face to face with an ending, and in that ending they are forced to reckon with themselves, their thoughts, their surroundings, their pasts, their loves…everything, as they live through that end."

Even though these people have always been defeated in the end, he claims that there will always be someone who devotes themselves to the possibility of a utopian future. Adam believes that human beings never accept defeat, and they will always continue to fight with struggles (152). Adam's desire to convince Kadın that human life will continue shows that Adam has a more optimistic perception of the future than Kadın.

Kadın and Adam encounter each other at a conference before the flood period. Kadın claims that authors used to dream of better worlds and happier societies; instead, novelists compose dystopias now. Adam objects to Kadın's words by stating that "[ü]topya daha iyi bir yer, daha iyi bir yaşam demektir; insanın umudunu tüketen o kadar kötü zamanlar yaşıyoruz ki ütopyalar hayal edilemiyor. Ama şöyle de düşünebiliriz: Bugünün distopyası yarının ütopyası olabilir" (175). Furthermore, Adam believes that new species will generate in response to the change in environment and adapt to these changes, as they did in previous ages (178). He then demonstrates that İklim Çocukları and Köpekli Çocuklar will save the future of the earth (179). Here, the author does not only present the reader a dystopian fiction, she also explores the concepts of utopia and dystopia through Kadın and Adam's perspectives.

In his study, *Ecocriticism* (2004), Greg Garrard claims that "[o]nly if we imagine that the planet has a future, ..., are we likely to take responsibility for it" (107). In accordance with his argument, I argue that the "hope" emphasized throughout *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* demonstrates that literature has a responsibility for raising ecological awareness. Hence, Baydar's novel offers an ecocritical perspective and

urges its reader to become conscious in the face of a possible environmental collapse. The novel aims to generate hope through the ideas and actions of ordinary people. The events in the book demonstrate that the political actors are the culprits of ecological destruction, and they do not offer anything viable in the face of catastrophes. In this respect, even if people's shortcomings are mentioned frequently in the novel, the existence of hope is always emphasized.

3.2. A World without Civilization: Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann: An Adventure*

Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann: An Adventure* (1999) narrates the struggles of two orphaned siblings in the distant future. The narrator of Lessing's picaresque dystopia articulates that Yerrup, a fictional name for Europe, has been covered with ice, and a continent named Ifrik[35] is in ruin due to drought and wars. The southern and northern hemispheres' struggles with different environmental disasters mirror the predictions Lessing made when she glanced into the future from the time she lived. The novel provides a glimpse into the inevitable ecological catastrophes that humanity will ultimately face in the future. In other words, it discloses the potential consequences of the anthropocentric mindset of modern civilizations.

The novel argues that human irresponsibility toward climate triggers a set of events. It first causes anthropogenic global warming, triggering the Ice age and eventually causing modern civilizations to collapse. Even though the novel attempts to give a

[35]In the "Author's Note," Lessing demonstrates that Ifrik is Africa (vii).

sense of the environmental disaster originating from human activities, the Ice age setting causes global warming to be perceived as a remote possibility. These foretellings about the future are embedded in the novel's setting. Aside from the narrator recounting events, the reader sees glimpses of the siblings' surroundings during their journey and observes the effects of the climate crisis on the setting.

Even though the catastrophes described in the novel resemble the twenty-first century, the novel's events take place in an imaginary place called Ifrik in the distant future. Lessing states that "*Mara and Dann* is an attempt to imagine what some of the consequences might be when ice returns and life must retreat to the middle and southern latitudes" (viii). As we have seen in Winterson, Akaş, and Baydar's novels, writers put their observations into their stories' plots and narrate them with unsettling portraits of dilapidated settings in their novels. Lessing depicts the possible consequences of human interference in the ecosystem through a drought and ice age. Furthermore, she takes her characters on a long journey to find water, food, and a safer place. On this expedition, the characters face the world's current situation and realize the damage humanity has caused to the environment.

Throughout the novel, the audience follows Mara. Even though the novel's title suggests two names, instead of following the events through Dann, we witness everything by observing Mara's experiences. In line with this, the novel begins by explaining how Mara and Dann, two Mahondi children, deal with the adversities of a landscape that is in constant change. They first appear as children in a town called Rustam. A man, the head of the people who killed their parents, takes Mara and Dann to an old woman. The man entrusts them to this woman, Daima, and leaves.

Since they are the last members of the Royal House of Mahondi people, they have to change their names to hide their true identities. So Shahana and Shahmand become Mara and Dann. After being adopted by Daima, Mara and her younger brother try hard to get along with the natives of the village, the Rock People. Mahondi People, or the People, and the Rock People have many differences. While the Rock People are depicted as brown-skinned, short, and rude, the People are light-skinned, slender, and tall. It is later revealed that Mahondi People are the descendants of modern people. At one point, Dann calls the Rock People "stupid rock rabbits" and reveals that "[the Mahondis] knew everything. They knew about the stars. They knew ... They could talk to each other through the air, miles away ... [T]hey had machines that could carry a hundred people at a time" (88).

Most traditional science fiction and dystopian narratives usually stress the scientific or technological marvels of the future. However, contrary to most narratives of the future, Lessing's novel portrays a world where technological advancement has vanished due to climate change. Instead, she presents a world with primitive survival methods -- pot-cooking, drawing water from wells, eating the roots of plants, and crossing lands on foot. Knowledge in this world is transmitted through several books found in "sand libraries" and ancient museums. The remaining books exhibit how remarkable ancient civilizations were to a relatively powerless present. What is distinguishing about the narrative of the novel is its dependence on storytelling. Characters constantly tell stories to one another, and their stories are quite similar to fairy tales. "[T]he time is a variation of 'once upon a time'—'once, long ago' and the possibility of truth or fact is ruled out by the constant resorting to '[t]hey say' or 'it is said'/ '[i]t is known that'" (Kuznetski 55-6). As the characters cannot be sure of the

accuracy of things they have been told, they start to question everything. While this drives Mara into further questioning, Dann goes into a process where he physically moves around the world to acquire the truth. In "Arabian Nights Fairy-tale Turned Postcolonial Parable: Narrative Manoeuvres in Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann,*" Lamia Tayeb examines Lessing's novel by determining its connection to fairy tales as a criticism of colonialism. Tayeb suggests that the novel "soon testifies to Doris Lessing's continuing critical preoccupation with Western imperialism and its late twentieth century ramifications. By weaving the thread of the journey into her narrative, Lessing suggests contemporary postcolonial migrations" (18). In the light of this argument, I suggest that by emphasizing the importance of historical knowledge, Lessing also provides a prophetic picture of a future destroyed by a worldwide ecological disaster. Even though she takes reality to extremes, her visions are still viable. Especially in the last several decades, countries in different parts of the world have been fighting drought:

> A fourth season of failed rains is causing one of the worst droughts East Africa has seen in decades, and this village, which is home to 3,600 families, is one of the areas hardest hit. The land is dry, dusty and barren. The remaining livestock eat the withered, grey shrubs which cover the land. The people eat whatever they can find, often not very much. (Etutu & Ostasiewicz**)**

The above May 2022 BBC report displays the destruction that the drought has caused in East Africa. The effects of the drought presented in the BBC news are almost identical to Lessing's depiction of drought. The climate crisis is the central source of the continuation of global hunger and contributes to increasing natural disasters such as drought and floods. For instance, the wars and environmental distortions in Africa caused a refugee crisis in 2015, and the main reason behind this mass movement was because, as "the first rule of ecology, everything is connected to everything else" (Kuznetski 57). Hence, every event narrated in *Mara and Dann* provides us with a

mirror image of our present ecological, sociopolitical, and economic conditions. Lessing's explanations of today's problems and the possibilities arising from their combination suggest that drought and glacial disasters will prevail even in the face of hierarchical order.

Like other dystopian writers, Lessing also highlights people's indifference to climate change and their constant ignorance of the warning signals. In the "Author's Note," Lessing describes the form of her novel as "revoking of a very old tale, and it is found not only in Europe but in most cultures in the world" (vii). This tale she is referring to is the story of how humanity had been blind to see what was about to happen. Therefore, through an ecocide narrative, the author presents a piece of insight information regarding the errors of humans:

> '… But everything here will last forever, and it's so ugly, I can't bear it.'
> 'Didn't the People ever want the things that last forever?'
> 'They were invented long before there were People.'
> 'Invented?'
> 'You don't know the word because nothing is invented now. Once, long ago, there was a civilisation … that invented all kinds of new things. They had science … and they kept making new machines and metals… No one knows why all that came to an end. They say that there were so many wars because of those machines that everyone all over the world decided to smash them.' (37)

Dann's explanation of the ancient civilizations to Mara shows that the idea of progress has changed until the year 12,000. Through this "old" story, which implies that today's carelessness prepares for the disaster of the future, Lessing shows that the past developments of humanity were interrupted by their negligence. Thus, through the post-industrial setting, the novel conveys to the reader that the misuse and exploitation of knowledge and progress will eventually cause humanity to degrade a technologically primitive condition.

The importance of community is frequently emphasized throughout the novel. Different communities stand together for safety reasons, and people believe they should stick together if they want to survive. Even though Mara and Dann are Mahondis, they try to get along with the Rock People. They realize that they cannot stay alive if they do not form strong communication with other people in the village. The narrator informs the reader that village folk moves together to ensure their safety. For instance, when they need water, they go to the river altogether in case of unexpected danger (39). However, we also see that a community kidnaps Mahondi women for reproduction. Hence, even though Mahondis are slaves in Chelops, they are allowed to control and distribute water in return. There is a nonverbal agreement between Mahondis and their owner (144-5). What this unsettling agreement displays, however, Lessing demonstrates that power relations prevail with or without modern civilizations.

Unlike traditional science fiction novels, in *Mara and Dann*, we see that the concept of civilization focuses on Africa. Although worldwide destruction occurs, Lessing presents Africa as the only place where humanity survives. While European cities have been buried under ice, Ifrik still fights against the changes in the ecology. As Europe has collapsed and civilizations have vanished, Africa has survived: "Everything changed: rivers moved, disappeared, ran again; trees died -- hills were full of dry forests -- and insects, even scorpions, changed their natures," however, Ifrik and its people have been adapting to these alterations of nature (67). Furthermore, these changes also apply to character developments. While Mara and Dann are naïve children at the beginning, the siblings become more profound and solid individuals as they gain knowledge of what happened to the world. In other

words, the changes in the environment cause a change in characters and make them more conscious of the ecosystem.

Mara and Dann's awareness makes the relationship between past, present, and future even more conspicuous. While Lessing portrays a traditional society through Ifrik, she also inserts features of a technologically advanced civilization and displays the conflict by combining them. The reader never learns when things have started to go wrong. Candace informs Mara that everything was once normal, but she does not know precisely when the world was free from excessive heat or ice: "[t]hat is how the world was once -- they say about twenty thousand years ago, but perhaps it was more -- there was no ice or snow here ... It was warm. All of this ... was free of ice, and there were cities and very large numbers of people" (199). Later, she says that "then the climate changed, and the ice came down and covered all this space" (199). Since the characters were born into a post-apocalyptic age, the world is nothing but ice to them. As Carl Death states in "Climate Fiction, Climate Theory: Decolonising Imaginations of Global Futures," characters are stalked by madness and threatened to be overwhelmed by them, and they are eventually consumed by trauma (450).

Similar to Jeanette Winterson, Lessing also focuses on the connection between the changing environment and the oppression of women through Mara. To put it differently, the cyclic exploitation of the ecosystem develops a control mechanism that takes advantage of women and controls their sexuality. For instance, in one instance, a man named Olec wants Mara to be her concubine and produce children for him and his community (182). Later, toward the novel's end, we also see that Dann offers Mara to someone else while gambling, which results in Mara and

Dann's separation (308-10). It is not only in Bilma but in all places that Mara has been present that we see men's desire to take control of women. Throughout the novel, the narrator shows that women's social status is defined by their relations with men. After Dann gambles her away, Mara is forced to marry a man she does not know. Even though it is later revealed that that man has been trying to save Mara, she has no say in this marriage:

> In a few minutes Mara was married to Daulis, with Leta as the witness, by expedient law ... She was given a leather disc, on a thong, to hang around her neck, so the world would know she was married and the property of a man. And for this time she was pleased to have the protection. (329-30)

It may provide protection to Mara, but her marriage to Daulis only confirms that women are seen as creatures who only belong to men and can only be safe if they are under the wings of men. Therefore, I argue that the androcentric ideology enables men's progress as they have access to sources that women do not, and this condition allows them to control the environment, implicitly entitles them to manipulate female minds and bodies.

3.3. Different Geographies - Same Problem

Oya Baydar and Doris Lessing are two women writers who grew up in different geographies and at different periods. Both are activists and environmentally conscious women who participated in political activities in their youth. Despite being raised in different parts of the world, both narrate distinct yet similar issues in their literary productions. While Lessing narrates her observations regarding the world's future through the effects of colonialism and Africa, Baydar focuses on Turkey and its political struggles. However, they concentrate their narratives on a common issue: ecological destruction.

I have described Lessing and Baydar's dystopias as examples of ecocriticism. Each novel explores a location where a particular event subjugates daily life. Despite their geographical and historical differences, the two works resemble each other in terms of their context. While Baydar's novel takes place in Turkey, she criticizes people's irresponsibility and selfishness toward the ecosystem, as Lessing also does.

In both novels, the obsessive domination of nature affects all beings and causes an environmental catastrophe. Ecocriticism, in general, enables the exploration of ecological problems through literary works. As literature has a direct influence on society, it functions as a valuable tool for raising eco-awareness in public. In relation to this, both Baydar and Lessing use the dystopian genre to warn the reader about the magnitude of the ecological crisis. In other words, both women resist the man-made disruptions in nature through dystopian fiction.

Oya Baydar brings the reader's attention to the current ecological crisis by offering a pessimistic vision of the future. She both uses fictional elements and real-life events to highlight the reality of the situation. Her narrative reveals possibilities concerning what may happen to the world in the future if measures are not taken to protect nature. Doris Lessing, on the other hand, uses more fictional elements in her dystopia and offers a distant future narrative through two siblings. While she articulates the relationship between humans and nature, she also focuses on people's survival in a world full of environmental damage. Baydar and Lessing both oppose the mindset that claims man's superiority over nature. Hence, they disagree with the idea that "man is the only and most valuable being in nature."

Moreover, in both novels, there is a parallel between the system becoming dysfunctional and protecting itself as ecological destruction approaches. As the system monopolizes science and technology as its own devices, the authoritative powers in both dystopias refuse to help people in the face of the collapse of the institutions, states, and societies. Furthermore, new epidemics become inevitable as the system gets more and more defective, and unknown viruses arise. In *Mara and Dann*, female reproduction stops, and the population decreases. The unavailability of health services is why the current world orders no longer provide this service. While the chaotic environment caused by the ecological disaster causes technological and scientific progress to stop, humanity becomes defenseless and powerless. Epidemics and pandemics are widely used in dystopian narratives. While they sometimes constitute the main reason behind the dystopian scenario, sometimes they are just minor consequences of major problems. In *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* and *Mara and Dann*, diseases are the consequences of ecological destruction that despotic orders both cause and fail to prevent.

Baydar and Lessing both question whether a man is a social or natural being. The novels do not concentrate on whether the evil side of people would subjugate in the case of a possible environmental disaster. Therefore, the narratives do not assume that human beings are inherently evil. The texts aim to show the bond and relationship people have formed over time with the authoritarian order without realizing it. Additionally, they demonstrate that societies built under the values of these orders are doomed to disappear in the face of nature. As humanity's relationship with nature has gradually turned into a relationship of domination over

time, writers try to create and improve environmental awareness by directly giving place to ecological problems and solution proposals in their literary works. In short, they attempt to urge people to abandon their destructive attitude toward nature and adopt a sustainable life in harmony with nature by using the ecocritical approach.

As discussed in the first chapter, traditional dystopias generally suggest that political ideologies eventually evolve into dictatorships and bring humanity under their control. In other words, while they portray the evil done by humans to humans through political and social issues, eco-dystopias deal with this by revealing the damage done to the environment by humanity. Baydar presents a story similar to political dystopias. Lessing, on the other hand, offers a more despairing futuristic post-apocalyptic vision. In her narrative, there is either drought or ice. Thus there is nothing but black and white in Lessing's vision. Contrary to Baydar, she is more pessimistic and does not seek hope in children. While Baydar still believes in the possibility of a better world, Lessing's text demonstrates that she had doubts regarding the world's future.

In a conversation with Doris Lessing, Margarete von Schwarzkopf asks Lessing about the function of the writers of our time. Lessing's answer can be interpreted as a summary of what she and Oya Baydar had in mind while writing their works:

> In my opinion, it is obviously the job of writers, if they take their professions seriously, to place their fingers on the wounds of our time, but that is not enough. Each can find fault in prevailing conditions. That sort of thing can easily become a fashion. In my opinion, the author should be something of a prophet, tracing a thing before it is fully apparent, grasping a subject before it becomes a trend, stretching out one's antennae into the universe to sense its most subtle vibrations. (104-5)

As Lessing and Baydar's dystopias demonstrate, both authors do exactly what Lessing explains while describing the function of a writer. They point out the flawed aspects of society and make them visible by exposing the distortions. They also predict the future through the prevailing conditions, and above all, they warn the reader about what the future will look like if some things don't change. Lessing's answer to the question of what she wants to accomplish as a writer reflects what she and Baydar have in common once again. As Lessing explains later in her conversation, she "stimulate people to think, ... [they can] make them aware of things which in the whirlpool of the everyday they might not see or hear" (106). Esra Aydemir indicates that in order to keep communal history alive, Baydar conveys the social and political events in our recent history in a realistic manner (16).

During her politically active years, Baydar stopped writing literary works until 1990 (Aydemir 13). During her exile in Europe, she witnessed the gradual collapse of the socialist regime. This demoralized her due to the great sacrifices she had made for her ideals, such as being arrested and forced to go into exile. We can presume that this made her write again as she started to publish literary works after 1990. We can suggest that literature is an escape for both Baydar and Lessing. Despite being of different generations, both women witnessed the worst events of their time. While Baydar witnessed, and still witnesses, Turkey's political and social sufferings, such as coups and authoritarian presidents, Lessing "became increasingly aware of the tyrannies imposed by the white colonial powers on the black African communities" during her development as a writer (Maslen 210). Their experiences inherently can be observed in their works. Moreover, since they both have activist and political personalities, they convey their life views in their works through the characters they

create in their novels. They gained personal experience from issues as they witnessed tragic and traumatic problems. In the light of their experiences, they have shared them with their readers after scrutinizing what kind of society they imagine or not through their characters.

Wai Chee Dimock suggests in "Introduction: Genres as Fields of Knowledge" that "[t]he history of genre, like history of media, is above all a reproductive history, which suggests that it is a kinship network" (1380). Kinship here is quite important in terms of understanding Lessing and Baydar's connection. Even though these women have never met, somehow, there is a bond between them. Dimock's suggestion in *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* (2006) demonstrates that this bond comes from the kinship between them. Dimock does not suggest "a genealogical connection" or an organic bond (74). Instead, she asserts that kinship is "a convergence of attributes, issuing from environments roughly similar but widely dispersed" (74). Lineage or family bonds are not important in regard to the connection between Baydar and Lessing. Instead, what constitutes a kinship between two distinct writers is the "contextually induced parallels" (74). Since the conditions in which Baydar and Lessing grew up are more or less similar, and as they also utilize other forms created by similar conditions, both authors join the endless network of kinship. Overall, the authors complement each other in the likeness of the conditions in which they were brought up while forming a unity with their activism and political stances. The fact that they live in exile or their skepticism toward doctrinal ideologies makes both of the writers part of a network.

CONCLUSION

Before the thesis, I had only the concepts of "dystopia" and "Turkey" in my mind as research topics for future academic research. Then I came across Oya Baydar's *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* and Cem Akaş's *Y*. As contemporary dystopias, both novels describe uncanny future environments that are ruined due to human greed. After selecting them as two of the dystopias to be analyzed in this thesis, I decided to compare them to dystopias from English literature, as it harbors prominent examples from this particular genre.

In parallel with this, I analyzed utopia and dystopia as two interconnected literary genres in the first chapter. I came to the conclusion that every culture has produced a utopia and that it is not a genre unique to Western literatures. Furthermore, in the same chapter, I found that utopias started to evolve into dystopias at the beginning of the twentieth century, and a substantial number of literary texts have entered the world literary canon. I then argued that utopia had begun to be written in Turkish literature just before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, defining the newly emerged interest in this genre as literary figures' desires to propose alternatives to the crumbling Ottoman Empire and to provide solutions for society's welfare.

In the second chapter, I compared Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* and Cem Akaş's *Y* from a gender perspective. The idea of comparing writers of different

genders stems from my desire to examine whether there are differences in the way they deal with the dystopian genre, as both writers narrate similar topics. Since I do not want dystopian literature to be a subject discussed only in the East-West dichotomy, comparing novels from writers of different genders has enabled me to situate Turkish literature in the context of world literature through dystopias. Through Cem Akaş, I have argued that he is an unusual name in the dystopian literature tradition in Turkey as he differs from other dystopian writers in terms of his novel *Y*'s subject matter. Contrary to other writers of this genre, Akaş was not politically motivated in the creation of his dystopia. While traditional dystopian writers wage war on individuality, Akaş narrates the story of an individual's formation of his own identity through a thought experiment in *Y*. I believe Akaş is an important figure in Turkish literature's dystopian genre tradition because his novel *Y* offers a new perspective. When we examine Akaş and Winterson together, we see that their dystopias that are quite controversial. While Akaş tells the story of a scientifically impossible condition, Winterson presents an interspecies love story. I think both works contribute greatly to the dystopian tradition because they deal with different subject matters and offer perspectives that allow this tradition to develop more. In many ways, both writers defy the boundaries of conventional thoughts regarding dystopias.

When comparing Akaş and Winterson, I benefited from Wai Chee Dimock's idea of kinship and argued that there is a kinship between these writers through the dystopian genre. Demonstrating the kinship between authors was the most convenient way to analyze how we can read these two authors together. Even structural features such as the fact that their works have fluid narratives and the

possibility to match characters are the similarities that bind the two authors together. Through the parallels between the narratives and the characters, we can see that the two authors have a connection and are part of the network I mentioned earlier in my analysis.

The third chapter examines the relationship between dystopias and ecological disasters through Oya Baydar's *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* and Doris Lessing's *Mara and Dann: An Adventure*. While Lessing narrates her story concerning the world's future through the effects of colonialism and Africa, Baydar focuses on Turkey and its political environment. Although there are almost twenty years between their publications, both novels talk about the possible consequences of global warming and attribute the slow but painful death of the world to people's irresponsibility. In this chapter, I have also mentioned that both writers were political figures and activists who spent some of their lives in exile. From a personal point of view, both of them have different yet very similar backgrounds. While Lessing was a member of CPCB, Baydar was a member of the Workers' Party of Turkey. I have argued that Lessing and Baydar are also quite similar in terms of their critiques of the existing order and their urge to question the system. While analyzing these authors, Wai Chee Dimock's kinship theory has helped me once again as it led me to my conclusion. I have reached the conclusion that since the conditions in which Baydar and Lessing grew up are more or less similar, and as they also utilize other forms created by similar conditions, both authors join the endless network of kinship. Moreover, the fact that they tell their stories through activism is one of the most significant indicators that we can read these authors together and see that they complement each other.

One of the primary aims of this thesis has been to prove that the dystopian genre is not a tradition that only belongs to Western literatures. As I have discussed in the first chapter, scholars like Krishan Kumar claim that utopia is a genre unique to the West and that this genre does not exist in non-Western literatures. Disagreeing with this argument, I have chosen two dystopian novels from Turkish literature. Therefore, through Cem Akaş and Oya Baydar's novels, I have demonstrated that dystopias have also been written in non-Western countries. Even though their approaches in the corpus of Turkish literature are different, both authors have contributed significantly to dystopian writing. As indicated in the second chapter, Akaş takes a slightly different stance from other dystopian writers in Turkish literature. As far as I have seen in my research, most of the works written in this genre in Turkish literature are politically motivated. It is true that gender is also about politics; however, in other dystopian works, the writers are mainly concerned about showing the politically deficient aspects of their country, such as the way the politicians run the country. Therefore, I have argued that Akaş does not aim to alarm his readers in the way other writers do. What he suggests in his dystopia is biologically and scientifically impossible as it is unlikely for men to be wiped out by a virus in the future. However, Oya Baydar's method is more similar to the other dystopian writers in Turkish literature. While Akaş has contributed to the dystopian genre with his *Olgunluk Çağı Üçlemesi* before, *Köpekli Çocuklar Gecesi* is Baydar's first real dystopia. When we look at her other pieces of literature, we see that her other works are closer to literary realism. In this regard, I suggest that Baydar uses the dystopian genre as a tool to express her concerns regarding Turkey, and through this, she aims to show that we indeed live in a dystopic age. In short, as a writer who

does not come from the speculative fiction tradition, Baydar uses dystopia for utilitarian purposes because it is the most suitable genre that can best express the concerns she wants to convey.

Put it another way, I tried to emphasize that all four authors I have discussed in my thesis contribute separately to the dystopian tradition with their similarities and differences. Moreover, since they wrote their works based on the literary traditions written in English and Turkish, I believed that establishing a connection between their works was essential to determine their places in the network mentioned earlier. Additionally, by studying four different writers who were brought up in two different literary traditions, I aimed to show that, contrary to popular belief, the dystopian genre does not belong to the tradition defined as the West, but it actually belongs to the whole world literature.

During my undergraduate studies in English Literature, I observed that dystopia is quite an established genre with numerous examples in English literature. My observations during my education in Turkish literature led me to conclude that the dystopian genre in Turkish literature has fewer literary productions compared to English literature. Therefore, I thought it would be beneficial to conduct a comparative analysis of two literary traditions where one already has established dystopia as a genre and where the other has recently begun to publish more and more works in the dystopian genre.

To sum up, since Oya Baydar is a prominent author in Turkish literature, her dystopia was my first choice during the selection of the literary works I planned to

analyze in this thesis. Considering the similarities in their personal lives, I thought that comparing her with Doris Lessing would be valuable. The reason I considered reading Akaş and Winterson together is a little more complicated. I believe that they represent the two ends of a spectrum. While Akaş examines women as an element of fear in his work, Winterson creates a world to demonstrate distinctions such as male/female and feminine/masculine should not exist. By observing how they use the concepts of gender and sexuality, we can see that both authors present unorthodox plots. As they deal with similar topics from different perspectives, I believe that comparing these authors makes for a compelling argument.

As a result of the research I conducted during my writing process, I observed that there is a gradual increase in the academic studies concerning dystopias, similar to the rise in the dystopias written in Turkish literature. I hope this thesis will also contribute to the studies on dystopian literature as I have tried to show that it is possible for the works discussed in this study could indeed go beyond their national borders and that there is an inherent link between them.

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