



CYPRUS
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY
ULUSLARARASI
KIBRIS
ÜNİVERSİTESİ

DOI: 10.22559/folkloredebiyat.2017.32

folklor/edebiyat, cilt:23, sayı:90, 2017/2

THE SUBLIME AND THE CREATION OF IDENTITY IN MINOR LITERATURE IN A COMPARISON OF “THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA” AND “THE PREY”*

Ozan Eren **

Introduction

The Old Man and the Sea, written ten years before Ernest Hemingway’s suicide and published in 1952, is one of his most important works and exemplary of his ‘Iceberg Theory’***. The novel tells the tale of Santiago, a Cuban fisherman who spends eighty-four days fruitlessly trying to catch a fish. On the eighty-fifth day, after a long struggle, he manages to land a swordfish which he ties to his boat, only to have it devoured by sharks before he reaches shore. *The Prey* is one of twelve short stories by Turkish writer, Bilge Karasu, included in his 1980 collection, *The Garden of Departed Cats*, and is also based around the relationships of the fish, the fisherman and the sea. The story weaves together three different narratives that complete each other. The story begins with a fish a

* The preliminary version of this paper was accepted to be presented at the 1st International Symposium of American Studies to be held at İzmir in April, 2016. In this conference, it was aimed to discuss the idea of the *Sacred* and the *Sublime*. It should be also noted that the first version of this paper was written in Turkish and submitted as one of the assignments. Therefore, in any direct reference to Hemingway’s *İhtiyar Adam ve Deniz* (2013), Karasu’s *Göçmüş Kediler Bahçesi* (2012) and *Yazının da Yırtulverdiği Yer* by Cem İleri (2007), book names and Turkish quotations were translated into English.

** Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Faculty of Science and Letters, Department of Sociology, 34380 İstanbul, Turkey, ozaneren84@hotmail.com

*** This theory, put forth by Hemingway himself, suggests that what is explicitly left out of a text is as important as what the text contains. According to Hemingway, the iceberg is strengthened.

fisherman has caught, snatching his arm, and although we may not be able to categorize this fish-fisherman relationship explicitly, it involves a state that is above and beyond the limits of our senses, a truly transcendental state. This transcendental state can be considered as part of the feeling of the ‘Dynamic Sublime’. The fish and the fisherman, who transcend the subject-object binary to become a single subject, referred to as the ‘creature’, and their affinity with the violent nature of their love, will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

This paper, which suggests a twofold approach, will first examine the fish-fisherman-sea relationship with reference to Kant’s ‘Dynamic Sublime’, in two works with similar subjects, written by two eminent twentieth century authors: Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* and Bilge Karasu’s *The Prey*. Hemingway and Karasu’s works*, published approximately thirty years apart, both recount the stories of fishermen who catch fish, and the fish-fisherman relationship that develops between them. However, when analyzed through the medium of the sea which forms the setting for the subject-object hierarchy of the fish-fisherman relationship, the application of Kant’s ‘Mathematical Sublime’** and ‘Dynamic Sublime’*** theories reveal the differences between the two works. Although the analysis requires the discussion of ‘beauty’ within a theoretical framework, the ‘Mathematical’ and ‘Dynamic Sublime’ form the core of this study.

After the discussion of the ‘Mathematical Sublime’ and the ‘Dynamic Sublime’, the paper will argue that, through analysis of the two works, their constructions of identity, and the workings of the Sublime in major and minor literature, *The Prey* rightly belongs to minor literature****. It will also discuss form, and how the titles, *The Old Man and the Sea*, and *The Prey*, mark Karasu out as a representative of minor literature. Most importantly, this discussion will illustrate that unlike Hemingway’s repetitive and realistic writing style which aims to uphold a tradition in major literature, the story of Karasu is distinguished by its language affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization. This will prove us that the differences in the appearance or manifestations of the ‘Dynamic Sublime’ and the ‘Mathematical Sublime’ in *The Old Man and the Sea* and *The Prey* are also due to literary differences.

* Some questions might legitimately linger in the minds of the readers: Did Karasu read Hemingway? Is there any historical or biographical linkage? Honestly, I couldn’t find any valid resource to answer these questions. However, *the Prey* does make Karasu sound intriguing, since both of the aforementioned books recount the stories of fishermen who catch fish, and the fish-fisherman relationship that develops between them.

** Kant, in *The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* (1911) describes the ‘Mathematically Sublime’ as follows: “*Sublime* is the name given to what is *absolutely great*.” (p. 94) On the other hand: “... in the aesthetic estimate of such an immeasurable whole, the sublime does not lie so much in the greatness of the number, as in the fact that in our onward advance we always arrive at proportionately greater units. The systematic division of the cosmos conduces to this result.” (Ibid., p. 105) At this point, it is important to mention that the sense of greatness of the sublime is impossible to measure with reference to any unit of measurement.

*** Kant (1911), describes the ‘Dynamically Sublime’ as follows: “Nature, considered in an aesthetic judgement as might that has no dominion over us, is *dynamically sublime*”. (p. 109) Kant, by comparing our sensory limitations with nature’s, gives us an opportunity to internalize the ‘Dynamic Sublime’: “In the immeasurableness of nature and the incompetence of our faculty for adopting a standard proportionate to the aesthetic estimation of the magnitude of its *realm*, we found our own limitation.” (Ibid., p. 111)

**** Within the scope of this essay, I will rather focus on the general literary characteristics such as realistic writing style in major literature and deterritorialization in minor literature.

The Sublime and the Beautiful

Kant, in *The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* (1911), talks about two different types of sublime: the ‘Mathematical Sublime’ and the ‘Dynamic Sublime’. The sublime, for Kant, is neither a category nor a concept, but a feeling. But before we consider the types of sublime, it would be better to discuss the feelings of the sublime and the beautiful and their effects upon us.

Kant describes beauty as pleasure without thought of personal interest. According to him, since beauty does not serve a particular end, the feeling of encountering beauty is therefore most importantly one of disinterestedness. Gilles Deleuze, in a series of lectures he gave in 1978, considered the sublime with reference to rhythm and chaos, thereby placing it on a different plane of meaning:

... the sublime, as Kant says, is the formless and the deformed. It is the infinite as encompassing all of space, or the infinite as overturning all of space; if my synthesis of perception is suppressed, this is because my aesthetic comprehension is itself compromised, which is to say: instead of a rhythm, I find myself in chaos. (Deleuze, 1978)

While finding a rhythm, a recognizable structure and a defined form are the goals, chaos brings disorder, uncertainty, formlessness or indefiniteness. When our synthesis of perception is challenged, we are faced with a state that exceeds the boundaries of perception - in other words, chaos. Because of the existence of such a chaos, we can say that the essence of the Sublime represents these various transcendental states.

To return to the concept of beauty, Kant focuses on the pleasure or displeasure that is independent of a knowledge-based judgement. ‘The Beautiful’ is necessarily pleasing, and subjectivity is inescapable in deciding what is pleasurable. However, this is not an individual, but a collective pleasure, and its disinterestedness makes ‘Beauty’ the vehicle of a universal faculty of judgement. At the same time, the differences between the judgement of taste and the cognitive judgement cannot be ignored:

If we wish to discern whether anything is beautiful or not, we do not refer the representation of it to the Object by means of understanding with a view to cognition, but by means of the imagination (acting perhaps in conjunction with understanding) we refer the representation to the Subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure. The judgement of taste, therefore, is not a cognitive judgement, and so not logical, but is aesthetic - which means that it is one whose determining ground cannot be other than subjective. (Kant, 1911, pp. 41 – 42)

Thus Kant draws a correlation between pleasure and beauty such that beauty is not a characteristic of the perception of the object (for example, the colour or form), but of the quality of disinterestedness of the subject’s representation. He defines beauty in its broadest terms as follows: “Taste is the faculty of estimating an object or a mode of representation by means of a delight or aversion apart from any interest. The object of such a delight is called *beautiful*.” (Ibid., p. 50)

Deleuze elaborates on the relation between the beautiful and the sublime: “The beautiful, according to Kant, is... a reflection of the form of the object in the imagination. The sublime is when the imagination is confronted with (*mise en présence de...*) its own limit, it is alarmed.” (Deleuze, 1978). The sublime is beyond the bounds of the synthesis of perception and of imagination, and while we can consider a natural object beautiful because it is complete in form, the sublime is formless.

Despite the differences between the two, Kant sees both the ‘Mathematical’ and the ‘Dynamic Sublime’ as entailing a reflective judgement. “The reflective judgement... is compelled to ascend from the particular in nature to the universal,” (Kant, 1911, p. 18) writes Kant, and: “the object of the Mathematical Sublime is enormous. So enormous that it is inconceivable that it should ever be compared to something larger which would make it look small.” (Ibid.). This enormity is part of the immeasurable category of infinities. The human mind is just as confused and surprised by the ‘Mathematical Sublime’ as it is by the concept of infinity, and this inability to grasp its vastness inevitably leads to its being held in awe and respect. On the other hand, Kant says of the ‘Dynamic Sublime’: “In the Immeasurableness of nature and the incompetence of our faculty for adopting a standard proportionate to the aesthetic estimation of the magnitude of its realm, we found our own limitation.” (Ibid., p. 111)

Deleuze argues that the main difference between the ‘Mathematical’ and the ‘Dynamic Sublime’ is the expansiveness of the former and the intensiveness of the latter:

... the infinite spectacle of the calm sea is the mathematical sublime; the starry celestial vault when the sky is clear is the mathematical sublime; it inspires a sentiment close to respect within me, it’s a dynamical sublime. In this case the infinity of an expanse gives way to the infinity of material forces, the intensive infinity of forces which fill space and time. The dynamical sublime is the tumultuous sea, it’s the avalanche. In this case it’s terror. (Deleuze, 1978)

If the sea is an infinite spectacle, the definition (or the indefinability) of the anger of the infinite spectacle will sweep us into a larger chaos. In this case it can be said that the infinite enormity of matter transcends the infinite expanse.

The Old Man and the Sea

Why did they make birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel? She is kind and very beautiful. But she can be so cruel and it comes so suddenly and such birds that fly, dipping and hunting, with their small sad voices are made too delicately for the sea. (Hemingway, 2013, p. 26)

Near the beginning of the novel the old fisherman, Santiago, describes the sea in these terms of sudden cruelty which suggest the ‘Dynamic Sublime’, thereby beginning with this depiction of the most profound and personal feeling of the sublime, rather than with a ‘Mathematically Sublime’ vision of the expansive vastness of the sea.

Santiago always refers to the sea as the feminine, “*la mar*”. The sea is very beautiful for him, but it is impossible to consider this beauty in the Kantian sense, because the sea is the source of his livelihood, and therefore he is very far from having a disinterested relationship with it: “he always thought of the sea as *la mar* which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her... the old man always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favours...” (Ibid., pp. 26 – 27)

Nevertheless, he respects the sea, and his description of the sea changes from including characteristics of the ‘Dynamic’ to including those pertaining to the ‘Mathematical Sublime’, as the novel progresses. Santiago’s admiration and respect for the first fish he catches after a long eighty-four day wait, is between the respect he feels for the physical size and strength of the fish, and the respect felt when confronted with the ‘Mathematical Sublime’: “Never have I had such a strong fish nor one who acted so strangely... But what a great fish he is...” (Ibid., p. 47)

The fish he is hunting is stronger than any that have previously taken his bait. Its strength is an indication of its immensity, which as yet only hints towards the infinite, limitless, awe-inspiring estimation of the ‘Mathematical Sublime’. “He is two feet longer than the skiff,” says Santiago, of “the biggest fish that he had ever seen and bigger than he had ever heard of...” (Ibid., pp. 63 – 64). Even his comparison of humans with other animals does not approach a definition of the ‘Mathematical Sublime’: “Man is not much beside the great birds and beasts. Still I would rather be that beast down there in the darkness of the sea.” (Ibid., p. 69).

When the fisherman first sees the fish, he is astonished: “‘No,’ he said. ‘He can’t be that big.’... as the fish swam just below the surface the old man could see his huge bulk and the purple stripes that banded him” (Ibid., pp. 92 – 93). The old fisherman faces the limitations of his imagination. While he has long speculated on the size of the fish, when he suddenly sees the creature and sees how it far surpasses anything that he could have imagined, he is filled with awe and respect. It is the fisherman’s conception (or misconception) of the size of the fish, therefore, and not the actual size of the fish, that approaches the ‘Mathematical Sublime’. Deleuze says:

At the moment that Kant says that in the sublime the imagination is taken to its own limit, and by the same stroke panicked, like a panicked compass, it is in the process of imagining what cannot be imagined; well at that moment, Kant says, in the respect of the mathematical sublime, or in the terror of the dynamic sublime, we suffer [éprouvons]. At the same time that my imagination is crushed by its own limit, it is a limit which is like its founding kernel, it is the bottomless [sans fond]. (Deleuze, 1978)

When the fisherman first sees the swordfish he has caught, his imagination - as in the case of the ‘Mathematical Sublime’ - is confronted by its own limits and crushed by them. At the end of the story, the fisherman says, “‘the ocean is very big and a skiff is small and hard to see,’” (Hemingway, 2013, p. 129) describing the sea and its relation to his smallness in terms reminiscent of the ‘Mathematical Sublime’. After analyzing *The*

Prey, the paper will discuss the feeling of the sublime in more detail, with reference to both works.

If we are to return to the subject-object relationship between fisherman and fish, even though the fish may seem like an object belonging to the fisherman at the moment that it is caught, towards the afternoon, fish and fisherman begin to merge into one: “now we are joined together and have been since noon. And no one to help either one of us.” (Ibid., p. 49). Santiago, while he constantly questions the hunter-hunted relationship, also talks to the fish; he tells it: “I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends.” (Ibid., p. 53). For the first time we hear, spoken out loud, the love of the fisherman for the fish. This unity soon changes. “He is my brother. But I must kill him...” (Ibid., p. 59) muses the old fisherman, and a little later brotherhood turns to friendship: “‘The fish is my friend too,’ he said aloud.” (Ibid., p. 76) Later still, the fish is once more addressed as “brother”: “Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me.” (Ibid., p. 95)

Yet one day he becomes confused. He begins to question who killed who, and who is dragging who along. At this point, the fish and the fisherman are lovingly entangled. After the sharks attack the swordfish, there is once again a shift towards a single subject: “He did not like to look at the fish anymore since he had been mutilated. When the fish had been hit it was as though he himself were hit.” (Ibid., p. 106). Santiago loves the fish so much that even its death does not lessen his attachment. Nevertheless, he can only feel “as though he himself were hit”, and only speak of being “joined together”, and fish and fisherman never transcend their bodies and become a new entity, or a whole.

The Prey

Karasu’s story, which begins with Melih Cevdet Anday’s * line, “I am the sea full of sunken loves”, tells the tale that “love, whether symbolically or in reality means nothing more than eating.” (Karasu, 2012, p. 15). The sea that forms the setting of *The Old Man and the Sea*, becomes, in effect, a character in its own right in *The Prey*.

It can be argued that the story begins with a description of the sea that evokes the ‘Mathematical Sublime’: “Because first there is the sea. Carrying the fish inside, and the fisherman on its surface. Because it has incalculable numbers of fingers, it can drag the fish and the fisherman as it wills.” (Ibid.). Here the infinite number of the fingers of the sea recalls the vast, expansive nature of the ‘Mathematical Sublime’. The story continues with a helplessness like that felt before the ‘Mathematical Sublime’:

Because the love of such an inestimable vastness as the sea cannot be contained by human intelligence, the fisherman does the only thing he can: He satisfies himself by seeing the sea before him, as a livelihood (and when the time comes, a deathbed). (Ibid.)

When he first introduces the fisherman, Karasu describes him as “a man who will

* Melih Cevdet Anday is one of the most prominent Turkish poets of the 20th century.

come to know love, if he ever does, in a fish.” (Ibid., p. 16) The relationship that will develop between the fish and the fisherman is thereby established from the earliest point in the story.

The vastness of the sea falls into the background setting as the story progresses, and the fish-fisherman duality takes centre-stage, moving from the expansive ‘Mathematical Sublime’ to the intense experience of the ‘Dynamic Sublime’. The narrative changes the focus from the infinite ocean, to the fish and fisherman who will merge as subject and object and become one body through love. However, before this transition can take place, the fish must snatch the fisherman’s arm, as described in two consecutive, purposefully silent elisions:

The fish will swallow the bait whole, without difficulty, and then pull on the fishing line with all its might and make the fisherman sweat, and after a while it will be defeated, and as it is hauled into the boat, the fisherman’s arm...

It is necessary, that as it is hauled up into the boat it ... the fisherman’s arm (Ibid., pp. 18 – 19).

For two pages these and similar sentences are purposefully cut short, multiplying their meaning and importance until, after these two silences, the event is finally described clearly:

The fisherman does what is never done; he wraps his right arm around the fish and pulls it towards him in a close embrace, and puts his left hand in the fish’s mouth to pull out the bait. The mouth shut. The fish ended somewhere near his elbow. (Ibid., p. 19).

From here on, the story becomes more dynamic. The fish and the fisherman quickly become entangled: “The fish clearly wants to become something more than a friend. As the hours pass, the love between them will turn into passion; it’s happening, it’s turning.” (Ibid., pp. 20 – 21). The relationship which began in the ‘Mathematically Sublime’ sea, with its “incalculable numbers of fingers” turns into love, passion, and further into the indicator of the ‘Dynamic Sublime’: respect. At this point the fish, as if wanting to prove the earlier point that “love, whether symbolically or in reality means nothing more than eating...” (Ibid., p. 15). continues to consume the fisherman’s arm. “The fish, wanting to move past mere friendship, keeps climbing, swallowing his arm bit by bit, nearing the shoulder...” (Ibid., p. 23). This is not an unrequited love, since the fisherman begins to feel a similar affection for the fish: “As the fish grows heavier, the fisherman was realizing that he loved this weight; as he felt the weight increase, in his heart, he could prefer it.” (Ibid.). Fish and fisherman are growing closer, understanding each other better.

When the child brings home his first kill, the elders want to give the child a name, but for whatever reason they can never name him. Thereafter, the fisherman begins to search for a name for himself. It is important to note that at this point the differentiation between the subject and the object disappears: “the fisherman is looking for a name, perhaps for himself, perhaps for the fish, perhaps for the creature that the two of them

form...” (Ibid., pp. 23 - 24). Now fish and fisherman are one subject, and there is a Sublime passion between them that goes beyond love, as indicated by the use of the word, “creature”, and by the violent nature of the passion that cannot be contained by the human intellect. This is, in essence, the ‘Dynamic Sublime’; a state of chaos. “Cézanne tells us that we never look at a landscape, it looks at something, and it is absolute chaos, ‘iridescent chaos’. Cézanne says that it’s like a landslide, a cave-in. At this point I am one with the painting...” (Deleuze, 1978). Both fish and fisherman are ontologically destroyed and what emerges is an unintelligible monster. Now one can no longer look at this monster, or read about it, but only become part of it: “This has no end. One, a hundred, a thousand, many thousands, creatures that writhe in crazy pleasures that stretch shivering extend shrinking widen; the creature, a creature of pleasure constantly multiplied by madness. No end.” (Karasu, 2012, p. 24). Here, the piece creates a break in perspective; as the possibilities of narrative are forced, our imagination as a reader is also forced. Just as in Velázquez’s piece, *Las Meninas* (The Maidens), the paintings within paintings provide different viewpoints, as readers we find ourselves in a place at the border of our imagination and its possibilities, where “neither fisherman, nor fish, nor the sea is present, only the text reshaping itself by itself.” (İleri, 2007, p. 185). At this point, the creature that is the embodiment of the passion, is the reader’s ‘Dynamic Sublime’, not the fish’s or the fisherman’s. Our reader’s senses have been pushed to the limit of their imaginative capacity, and bowed to the effect of the ‘Dynamically Sublime’ monster created by our efforts to synthesize and understand. Falling in love, the fish and the fisherman have become a single subject, and in doing so experienced each other’s violence: “the fish that let me catch it only to swallow me.” (Karasu, 2012, p. 24). We can say that the monster that has taken the places of the fish and the fisherman tries to make us feel the power of the infinity of matter, while the passion that has found form in the monster has become the reader’s ‘Dynamic Sublime’.

This passion will drag the fish, and the fisherman with whom it is united, slowly towards death. The only vastness that can overcome the pain of this death is the sea: “Because the sea seems to see death, which drowns all, above all; it recognizes the measure of greatness and strength wherever it sees it.” (Ibid., p. 28). Therefore, the monster that is the embodiment of the ‘Dynamically Sublime’ passion, and of the fish and the fisherman, will slowly disappear in the ‘Mathematically Sublime’, profound sea: “Beneath, now, the rock of death is slowly parting to welcome the fisherman drifting towards it. The sea, like mothers, will keep its loved ones in its womb, never to birthe them once more.” (Ibid.).

Comparison through the Concept of the Sublime

If we consider the theme of love in *The Old Man and the Sea* as a state that comes close to eradicating the fish-fisherman and object-subject dichotomies, and consider this state as the crossing of the boundaries of our imagination, the insufficiency of our senses, and an approach to the transcendent ‘Dynamic Sublime’, then we notice the waxing and waning of the fisherman’s doubts about his ontological existence, and the ‘Dynamic Sublime’. We can observe this tide in the changes in the fisherman’s addresses to the

fish. The fish and the fisherman, who appear to have become a single body and a single subject at the start, later become friends and brothers. Then they return once again to a single entity, as evidenced by Santiago's feeling that the sharks who bite the fish have taken a bite out of his own flesh.

If we are to study the fish-fisherman relationship in *The Prey*, with regards to the object-subject duality, the fish that begins the story as an object in the possession of the fisherman quickly becomes a single subject. Even though there are hints in *The Old Man and the Sea* that the love the fisherman feels for the fish is close - and only close - to the characteristics of the 'Dynamic Sublime', in *The Prey*, there is a clear sense that the passionate and transcendent state that finds embodiment in the monster from the moment it is created from the fish and the fisherman, and the way in which it forces the limits of our imagination, fall under the definition of the 'Dynamic Sublime'. While in *The Old Man and the Sea* the transition to a single subject is glossed over and in time replaced by epithets such as, "friend," and "brother," in *The Prey*, the transcendent 'Dynamically Sublime' state lasts from the moment the single subject is formed from the fish-fisherman, until the monster's death. It may be helpful to offer a table of comparison to better assess the manifestations of the 'Dynamic' and the 'Mathematical Sublime' in the sea, the fish and the fisherman:

<i>The Old Man and the Sea</i>	<i>The Prey</i>
Sea (Dynamic Sublime)	Sea (Mathematical Sublime)
Fish (Mathematical Sublime)	Sea (Mathematical Sublime)
	Creature/Fisherman-Fish (Dynamic Sublime)
Sea (Mathematical Sublime)	Sea (Mathematical Sublime)

Table 1: A comparison of the 'Dynamic' & 'Mathematical' Sublimes

As can be seen in the table, both works begin and end with the vastness of the sea. However, at the beginning of *The Old Man and the Sea*, the sea's violent and cruel 'Dynamically Sublime' characteristics are noticeable, whereas in *The Prey*, the many-fingered, incalculably large sea is closer to the 'Mathematical Sublime'. In *The Old Man and the Sea*, the fish, which is larger than can be humanly comprehended, is reminiscent of the 'Mathematical Sublime', while in *The Prey*, the monster is presented as a part-human, part-fish creature that transcends human intelligence and is an embodiment of the 'Dynamic Sublime'. Once again, in *The Old Man and the Sea*, the fish and the fisherman love each other without ever merging entirely, whereas in *The Prey*, the passion of the monster inhabits a single body. Both works end with the profound, infinite, and therefore characteristically 'Mathematically Sublime' sea, but while the old man, Santiago, lives on with the pain of losing his swordfish, the monster of *The Prey* is swallowed up by the sea, as the passion of which it is composed, dies.

In *The Old Man and the Sea*, only the fisherman, Santiago's, descriptions of the sea and fish as 'Mathematically' or 'Dynamically Sublime' are reflected to the reader through the old man's consciousness, while *The Prey* allows readers to read the sea as the 'Mathematically Sublime' site of the narrative. The narrative later gives the reader the opportunity to find their own 'Dynamic Sublime' in the fish-fisherman monster, by resorting to their imagination to create a new sensory understanding of the subject.

The Creation of Identity and the Feeling of the Sublime

The differences in the appearance or manifestations of the 'Dynamic Sublime' and the 'Mathematical Sublime' in *The Old Man and the Sea* and *The Prey* are also due to literary differences. For this reason, it's important to also compare the two pieces in terms of their literary characteristics. However, before comparing the two pieces along the lines of the creation of identity through the Sublime, it's necessary to explore their forms. Since Karasu's *The Prey* is the first story of *The Garden of Departed Cats*, the latter can be called a collection of short stories. Cem Ileri, who has studied Karasu's work extensively, writes the following:

We might consider the stories as the vehicles of traditional archetypes that have never become literature, that have stalled between writing and speech, that are almost never read, that are the verbal exchanges that sound dull to the modern ear, that are the untranslatable, silent, strange symbols of another world. (Ileri, 2007, p. 138).

The Garden of Departed Cats also carries some elements of the novel form, whereas Hemingway's work is undeniably a novel; it has been conceived as a novel and delimited by its form, and has been written with the intention of telling a story and reaching a goal. Karasu's story is different:

The work has been written, not to relate something, or to reach a particular place, but to create that sentence: the symbol of "the prey" is interchangeable with the story of "the prey"; this time, for the reader, the struggle to name the symbol within the story becomes the struggle to name the story itself. (Ibid., p. 154)

There is no need for the reader to question the symbol or to name it in *The Old Man and the Sea*, because it relies on the established norms of the novel form; *The Old Man and the Sea* will be related to the reader as its role as a novel dictates. As for the form of Karasu's work, it can be said to reflect the essential characteristics of minor literature: "A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language. But the first characteristic of minor literature in any case is that in its language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization." (Deleuze & Guattari 1986, p. 16). Unfinished sentences such as "it is necessary, that as it is hauled up into the boat it ... the fisherman's arm" (Karasu, 2012, p. 30) in *The Prey* are particularly characteristic of minor literature. On the other hand, we might say that, "because the voices a minor literature repeats are already not its own, it has no sense of belonging." (Colebrook, 2001, p. 120). This repetition will gain meaning when it is

considered in the context of the creation of identity in major and minor literature.

In Hemingway's novel, there is an attempt to express identity, which is one of the characteristics of major literature that is strengthened by repetition. The old Cuban fisherman has a name: Santiago. From start to finish, Santiago is referred to by his name or as the old fisherman. The novel takes place at a specific time, in a specific place, between Santiago, the sea, and the fish. Santiago is an old fisherman who has been fishing in the Gulf Stream, but has not been able to catch a fish for the past eighty-four days. Hemingway says of *The Old Man and the Sea*: "I tried to make a real old man, a real boy, a real sea and a real fish and real sharks." (Baker, 1961, p. 16). Hemingway's realist perspective for his own work also emphasizes its affinity with major literature, because the characters of major literature are described in realistic ways and with particular traits. The name and the geographical location of the sea, which, in *The Old Man and the Sea*, begins as 'Dynamically Sublime', and at the end becomes 'Mathematically Sublime', as well as the Mathematically Sublime fish, are both part of this form.

In contrast to major literature's attempt to express identity, and its characteristic appropriation of the concept of repetition which aims to uphold a tradition, Karasu's story is remarkable for its lack of identity. There is no specific time or place, as there is in *The Old Man and the Sea*. The three stories of *The Prey* appear disparate, yet complete each other, overthrowing major literature's one-sided, utilitarian sense of time, and reshape and repurpose the concept of repetition in major literature. "A minor literature repeats the past and present in order to create a future. It is a transcendental repetition..." (Colebrook, 2001, p. 120). For this reason, the repetitions in minor literature take on a different aim to the traditional repetitions of major literature.

Now that we have discussed these fundamental differences between the two works, we can move on to a brief comparative analysis of the sublime as it relates to the creation of identity in minor literature. First of all, the creature in *The Prey*, that is the amalgamation of the fish-fisherman, that forces the limits of the imagination, that is transcendental, that shows characteristics of the 'Dynamic Sublime', that might be considered the shadow of passion, finds a body through an identity formed of a lack of identity. Now the fish and the fisherman are one physical entity. The lack of identity, and the new identity that is formed in its wake, can be regarded as traits of minor literature, whereas in *The Old Man and the Sea*, everything is distinct in its body and identities are apparent.

On the other hand, in Hemingway, the sea that first shows signs of the 'Dynamic Sublime' and then of the 'Mathematical Sublime', is the Gulf Stream. Hemingway describes the Gulf Stream at the beginning of the novel: "The Gulf Stream is a current of warm water that flows from the Gulf of Mexico, across the Atlantic Ocean and towards England." (Hemingway, 2013, p. 5). Santiago is fishing for swordfish in the Gulf Stream. However, in *The Prey*, the sea is not known and named like the Gulf Stream; it is simply the sea. This sea, which is always 'Mathematically Sublime', is not limited by such characteristics, and therefore allows for a more changeable sense of identity, and gives the reader an opportunity to break free of the boundaries of major literature.

Conclusion

Sticking to a theory's narrow way dictating a certain methodology may sometimes cause us to ignore other interesting or remarkable approaches. For some studies, the objective and scope of the research might be broader than we previously design. This is exactly what I experience in this paper. I believe that the search for ways to improve interdisciplinary approaches might primarily encourage young researchers to look for new methods. In this respect, this paper only proposed an attempt of exploring Kant's sublime using comparative literary examples as a way to make what Kant has to say more explicit.

If we are to return to the subject-object relationship in the two pieces, even though the fish and the fisherman are one for a very short time in *The Old Man and the Sea*, they never experience a transcendental sublime. Instead, there is the love the fisherman feels for the swordfish, which, although it lapses occasionally, endures. For the fisherman, the fish is 'Mathematically Sublime', while the feeling of transcendence is reserved, not for the fish, but for the sea. For this season, the more profound 'Dynamic Sublime' is always associated with the sea.

In *The Prey*, Karasu tells the tale of the passion that surpasses mere love, through the medium of the single body of the fish-fisherman. The sea is the lover who never leaves; the mother, the 'Mathematical Sublime'. The body in which the fish and the fisherman become a single subject, and are later transformed into a monster, can be regarded as the symbol of this passion; it is the 'Dynamic Sublime'. On the other hand, the sublime that is present both before the introduction of the 'Dynamic Sublime', and after the death of the monster in which the passion is embodied, is the vast sea with its incalculable numbers of fingers. The sea, as well as being the site where passions begin and become sublime, is also the carrier of loves that have ended: a 'Mathematical Sublime' "full of sunken loves".

The Prey, although put forth by its author as a short story, moves away from the defined boundaries of major literature due to the fact that it transcends categories. Instead of creating a sense of belonging or identity through the 'Dynamically' and 'Mathematically Sublime' creature and the sea, or time and place, it chooses to create identity through lack of identification. In contrast to the sea-fish-fisherman triad in *The Old Man and the Sea* which is an example of major literature's traditional concept of repetition, which aims to express identity, *The Prey's* concept of the creation of identity and the fulfilment of this process through lack of identification, once again places *The Prey* within the bounds of minor literature.

One legitimate question, however, might be raised by some readers: "Is it possible to compare a novel with a short story?" As mentioned, this essay has rather concentrated on Kant's sublime using comparative literary examples as a way to make what Kant has to say more explicit. It should be also noted that, in this essay, the distinction between major literature and minor literature has been useful for my account only insofar as it enables us to understand the differences in the appearance or manifestations of the 'Dynamic Sublime' and the 'Mathematical Sublime' in *The Old Man and the Sea* and *The Prey*. It is also worth emphasizing that this is just an alternative way of exploring the sublime.

Different researchers may interpret the same data somewhat differently. Therefore, in this essay, a sharp and direct utterance hasn't been the preferred writing style.

Finally, if a reader influenced by Kant were to address humanity through the 'Mathematical' and 'Dynamic Sublime', they might begin in a similar fashion to *The Old Man and the Sea*: Your anger should be as lonely as a desert, sometimes as violent as a hurricane... But it could only express humanity and passion as it is found in *The Prey*: Your passion can be as endless as the sea; but as mortal as a human...

REFERENCES

- Baker, C. (Ed.). (1961). *Hemingway and His Critics: An International Anthology*. New York: Hill and Wang Inc.
- Colebrook, C. (2001). *Gilles Deleuze*, London: Routledge.
- Deleuze, G. (28/03/1978). *Cours Vincennes*. Retrieved March 12, 2016, from <http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=68&groupe=Kant&langue=2>
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1986). *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. trans. Polan, D. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hemingway, E. (2013). *İhtiyar Adam ve Deniz*. trans. Azizoğlu, O. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi.
- İleri, C. (2007). *Yazının da Yırtıliverdiği Yer*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınevi.
- Kant, I. (1911). *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, trans. Meredith, J. C. Oxford, England: the Clarendon Press. Retrieved March 1, 2016, from Internet Archive, Universal Digital Library: <https://archive.org/details/kantscritiqueofa005589mbp>
- Karasu, B. (2012). *Göçmüş Kediler Bahçesi*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınevi.

ABSTRACT

THE SUBLIME AND THE CREATION OF IDENTITY IN MINOR LITERATURE IN A COMPARISON OF "THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA" AND "THE PREY"

This paper, which suggests a twofold approach, will first examine the fish-fisherman-sea relationship with reference to Kant's two different types of sublime, namely the 'Mathematical Sublime' and the 'Dynamic Sublime', in two works with similar subjects, written by two eminent twentieth century authors: Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Bilge Karasu's *The Prey*. This paper also aims to serve as an account of Kant's sublime using comparative literary examples as a way to make what Kant has to say more explicit. In the second part, the paper will argue that, through analysis of the two works, their constructions of identity, and the workings of the Sublime in major and minor literature, *The Prey* rightly belongs to minor literature. However, it should be indicated that a detailed comparison of the two pieces in terms of their literary characteristics is the subject matter of another essay and

beyond the scope of the interests of the discussion here. In other words, in the second part of this essay, it is only attempted to make a brief comparative analysis of the sublime as it relates to the creation of identity in minor literature. It is also worth emphasizing that this is just an alternative way of exploring the sublime.

Keywords: Hemingway, Karasu, Sublime, Minor Literature

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

YÜCE HİSSİ VE MİNÖR EDEBİYATTA KİMLİK OLUŞUMU ÜZERİNDEN “İHTİYAR ADAM VE DENİZ” İLE “AVINDAN EL ALAN” YAPITLARININ KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

Buzdağı Teorisi'nin öncüsü Ernest Hemingway'in, intiharından 10 sene önce yazdığı, 1952'de yayımlanan İhtiyar Adam ve Deniz adlı romanı yazarın önde gelen yapıtlarından biridir. Roman, 84 gündür balık yakalayamayan Kübalı ihtiyar balıkçı Santiago'nun 85. günde yakaladığı kılıç balığını zorlu bir mücadele sonunda sandalının yanına bağlamasını ve balığı evine götürürken balığın köpek balıkları tarafından zalimce yenmesini anlatır. Yine balık – balıkçı – deniz ilişkisi üzerinden kurgusunu oluşturan Bilge Karasu'nun *Avından El Alan* adlı metni ise 1980'de yayımlanan *Göçmüş Kediler Bahçesi* adlı kitabındaki 12 öyküden/masaldan biridir. Metin, birbirini tamamlayan üç farklı anlatı üzerinden örülür. Balıkçının tuttuğu bir balığın, kolunu kapması ile başlayan hikâye boyunca balık – balıkçı ilişkisinin tam olarak adı konulmasa da bu ilişkide algı sınırlarımızın çok üstünde olan bir hal, tam bir aşkınlık hali, söz konusudur.

Çift katmanlı bir analiz öneren bu çalışmada, öncelikle, 20. yüzyılın önde gelen iki farklı yazarı olan Ernest Hemingway ve Bilge Karasu'nun benzer konulu İhtiyar Adam ve Deniz ve *Avından El Alan* yapıtlarındaki av – avcı – deniz ilişkisi Kant'ın 'Yüce' hissine başvurarak karşılaştırılacaktır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, karşılaştırmalı edebiyat örneklerini kullanarak Kant'ın 'Yüce' hissini açıklığa kavuşturmayı hedeflemektedir.

Analizin ikinci aşamasında, benzer kurgulu iki yapıt, yapıtlardaki kimlik oluşumu ve farklı 'Yüce' hislerini tarifte majör edebiyat ve minör edebiyat ayrımı üzerinden değerlendirildiğinde *Avından El Alan* öyküsünün minör edebiyata dâhil edilmesi uygun olacaktır. Türsel olarak bir aidiyete yaslanan İhtiyar Adam ve Deniz romanında imgenin yer değiştirmesi ve bu imgenin adlandırılması çabası içinde yapıtın türünün okur tarafından yeniden sorgulanması söz konusu değildir. İhtiyar Adam ve Deniz anlatılacaktır okura, roman sınırları elverdiğince. Karasu'nun yapıtı içinse, öncelikle türsel özellikleri ile düşünüldüğünde, minör edebiyatın temel özelliklerini yansıttığı söylenebilir. Ancak, belirtmek gerekir ki, edebi özellikleri gözetilerek iki yapıtın detaylı bir karşılaştırılmasının yapılması başka bir çalışmanın konusu olup bu çalışmadaki tartışmanın kapsamının ötesindedir. Diğer bir deyişle, bu çalışmanın

ikinci aşamasında minör edebiyattaki kimlik oluşumuyla ilişkisi açısından sadece özet olarak karşılaştırmalı ‘Yüce’ analizi yapılacaktır. Ayrıca vurgulamak gerekir ki, bu çalışma, ‘Yüce’ hissini yorumlamanın muhtelif yöntemlerinden sadece biridir.

İhtiyar Adam ve Deniz’de işlenen sevgiyi, balık – balıkçı üzerinden özne – nesne ikiliğinin ortadan kalkmaya yaklaştığı bir durum olarak düşünürsek ve bu durumu sevgide hayal gücünün sınırlarının aşılması, algılarımızın yetersiz kalması; aşkın hale yaklaşmadan ötürü ‘Dinamik Yüce’ye yakınlık içerisinde değerlendirirsek, romanda balıkçının ontolojik olarak varoluşunu sorgulaması ile ‘Dinamik Yüce’ arasındaki gelgitler göze çarpar.

Avından El Alan’da özne – nesne ikiliği üzerinden balık – balıkçıyı düşünecek olursak, ilk başta balığın balıkçının nesnesi olması söz konusuysen çok kısa sürede bu durum tek bir özne olma durumuna gider. İhtiyar Adam ve Deniz’de balıkçının balığa duyduğu sevginin zaman zaman ‘Dinamik Yüce’ özelliğine yakınlığı – sadece yakınlığı - vurgulansa da, *Avından El Alan* öyküsünde balıkçı ve orfinoz bir olup canavara dönüştüğü andan itibaren süregelen bir aşk ve aşkınlık durumu ve “aşk”ın vücut bulduğu yaratığın algı sınırlarımızın kapasitesini aşması tam olarak ‘Dinamik Yüce’ özelliklerini yansıtır gibi gözükmektedir.

İhtiyar Adam ve Deniz’de sadece balıkçı Santiago’nun denizi ve balığı ‘Matematik Yüce’ ve ‘Dinamik Yüce’ olarak tasavvuru, ihtiyar balıkçının bilinç akışı üzerinden okura yansıtılırken, *Avından El Alan*’da anlatının geldiği yer denizin ‘Matematik Yüce’ olarak okunması olanağını bize açar. Anlatı, sonrasında, balık ile balıkçının oluşturduğu yaratıkla, okurun – hayal gücüne sıkışarak, yeni bir algı yaratması ile – kendi ‘Dinamik Yüce’sini bulmasına imkân sağlar. Santiago, Gulf Stream’de kılıç balığı avlamaktadır. *Avından El Alan* öyküsünde ise deniz, Gulf Stream akıntısı gibi adı ve belli özellikleri sürekli vurgulanan bir deniz değildir; sadece denizdir. Hep ‘Matematik Yüce’ olan bu denizin İhtiyar Adam ve Deniz romanındaki gibi sürekli belli özelliklerle sınırlandırılmaması da kişiliğinin/kimliğinin devinimli yapısını olanaklı kılar. Bu da, yine majör edebiyatın sınırlandırıcı yapısını kırmaya yönelik bir olanak sunar.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Hemingway, Karasu, Yüce, Minör Edebiyat