

The Effect of Language and Sexual Liberation on Female Subjectivities in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *The Bridge of the Golden Horn**

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Abstract

Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *The Bridge of the Golden Horn* (2007), (*Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, 1998) tells the story of a young woman, whose life vacillates between her homeland Turkey and Germany- the country she goes to as a guest worker with an ultimate aim of studying theatre there. The unnamed protagonist moves to Germany in search of finding a psychic space where she can achieve her subjectivity. In her becoming process all the grand narratives aiming at fixing one's identity such as nationalism, gender binary, bourgeois and Marxism are problematized through her ironic narration. The protagonist is also the first person narrator and her diverse experiences both in Germany and Turkey are narrated in her unique employment of language. Her ability to create a unique language of her own allows her to free herself of patriarchal oppression, which is most explicitly reflected in reaching sexual liberation. This article attempts to demonstrate how the unnamed protagonist of *The Bridge of the Golden Horn*, thanks to her dexterity to create her own language and achieve sexual liberation, becomes an active agent who can freely grasp the power of her own subjectivity despite the restrictive discourses she is exposed to in her formation process. To observe her becoming processes, Rosi Braidotti's understanding of nomadic phi-

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losophy and subjectivity will be visited as the protagonist can achieve her subjectivity thanks to being constantly on the move between countries and cities.

Key Words: becoming, nomadic subjectivity, female subjectivity, sexual liberation, language

Emine Sevgi Özdamar'ın *Haliçli Köprü* Romanında Dil ve Cinsel Özgürleşmenin Kadın Öznelliğine Etkisi

Öz

Emine Sevgi Özdamar'ın *Haliçli Köprü* (2008) (*Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, 1998) romanı, hayatı anavatanı Türkiye ve nihai olarak tiyatro öğrenme hedefi ile misafir işçi olarak gittiği Almanya arasında geçen genç bir kadının hikâyesini anlatıyor. İsimsiz ana karakter Almanya'ya kendi öznelliğini yaşayabileceği ruhsal bir alan bulmak üzere gidiyor. Ulusçuluk, ikili cinsiyet, burjuvazi ve Marksizm gibi insan kimliğini sınırlandırmaya çalışan büyük anlatılar karakterin oluş süreçleri içinde sorunsallaştırılıyor. Ana karakter aynı zamanda birinci şahıs anlatıcı ve onun Türkiye ve Almanya'daki çeşitli deneyimleri kendine özgü yarattığı dil aracılığı ile anlatılıyor. Ana karakteri, en açık şekilde cinsel özgürlüğe ulaşma sürecinde görülen ataerkil baskılardan kendi dilini yaratabilme yeteneği kurtarıyor. Bu makale, kendi dilini yaratma ve cinsel özgürlüğe ulaşma becerisi sayesinde, *Haliçli Köprü*'nün ana karakterinin oluşum sürecinde maruz kaldığı sınırlayıcı söylemlere rağmen, kendi hayatının öznelliğini kavrayan etkin eyleyeni olduğunu göstermeyi hedefliyor. Ana karakter öznelliğini ülkeler ve şehirler arasındaki harekete borçlu olduğu için, onun oluş süreçlerini incelerken Rosi Braidotti'nin göçebe felsefesi ve öznelliği kavramlarına başvurulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: oluş, göçebe öznellik, kadın öznelliği, cinsel özgürleşme, dil

Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *The Bridge of the Golden Horn* tells the story of a young woman, whose life vacillates between her homeland Turkey and Germany- the country she goes to as a guest worker with an ultimate aim of studying theatre. The unnamed protagonist's quest is interwoven with the stories of other guest workers, students living in Germany, her family in İstanbul, her leftist friends

and the theatre groups she works with in Germany and Turkey. The multiplicity of different locations and discourses she is exposed to plays a role in her becoming process by enriching her inner energy and providing her with the chances of becoming who she wants to become. The novel problematizes all the grand narratives such as nationalism, gender binary and boundaries, religion, bourgeois and Marxism through the protagonist's transformation. Her diverse experiences both in Germany and Turkey are reflected in her employment of language and her ability to create a unique language of her own allows her to free herself of patriarchal oppression, which is most explicitly reflected in reaching sexual liberation. This article attempts to demonstrate how the unnamed protagonist of *The Bridge of the Golden Horn*, thanks to her dexterity to create her own language and achieve sexual liberation, becomes an active agent who can freely grasp the power of her own subjectivity despite the restrictive discourses she is exposed to in her formation process. To observe her becoming processes, Rosi Braidotti's understanding of nomadic philosophy and subjectivity will be visited as the protagonist can achieve her subjectivity thanks to being constantly on the move between countries and cities.

Rosi Braidotti (2011) in her *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti* defines nomadic philosophy as "a discursive practice" akin to "mobility of intelligence" since it is "both physical, material and yet speculative and ethereal" (p.3). She believes "[p]hilosophical thought is structurally nomadic" (p.3). She highlights that her philosophy does not discuss nomad thought as an idea from nowhere. As she states "nomadic thought stresses the idea of embodiment and the embodied and embedded material structure of what we commonly call thinking" (p.2). Nomad thought is an escape from identity which is "bounded, ego-indexed habit of fixing and capitalizing on one's selfhood" (p.4). The unnamed protagonist of the novel goes through a literal nomadic experience with her migration from Turkey to Germany and although it is not explicitly stated in the novel the reason why she migrates to Germany is to escape the limitations imposed by patriarchal power in Turkey. She wants to be an actress instead of continuing her high school education and Germany is the

place where she looks for theatre education, which will help her create a unique language. *The Bridge* is a sequel to *Life is a Caravanserai: Has Two Doors, I Came in One, I Went out the Other*, which relates the protagonist's childhood during which she has always acted against gender-norms and has always been after freeing herself from patriarchal constraints. Braidotti's theory presents ways for women to liberate themselves from all grand narratives and defy fixed identity markers and the protagonist of *The Bridge* presents a fictionalized version of a female subject in a process of gaining empowering agency through creating a unique language and liberating herself from sexual constraints imposed on Turkish women.

As Zeina Al Azmeh (2014) acknowledges Braidotti presents a path to escape "phallogentric vision of the subject" (p.99) on the "premise that nomadism entails a total dissolution of the notion of a centre and consequently of imaginary sites of authentic identities." Braidotti (2007) firmly states:

Identity is not understood as a fixed, God-given essence - of the biological, psychic or historical kind. On the contrary, identity is a process: it is constructed in the very gesture that posits it as the anchoring point for certain social and discursive practices. Consequently, the question is no longer the essentialist one: what is national or ethnic identity?, but rather a critical and genealogical one: how is identity constructed? by whom? under which conditions? for which aims? As Stuart Hall put it: who is entitled to claim an ethnic or national identity? who has the right to claim that legacy, to speak on its behalf and turn it into a policy-making platform? These are questions about entitlement, agency and subjectivity which rotate around the issue of cultural identity. ("Difference" para.15)

Braidotti's definition of identity signals a constant process of becoming and the questions she raises about identity and subjectivity can be taken as a starting point to see how her work explains ways to overcome stasis "through a subjectivity that is heterogeneous, transgressive, deterritorialized, performative and affirmative" (Al Azmeh, 2014, p.99). In Braidotti's sense, nomadic state creates new possibilities "for life and thought, especially for women" (1994, p.8). Thus, her theory becomes a useful tool to explain how the protagonist of *The Bridge* engages in becoming processes by welcoming different

possibilities to experiment. However, while talking about nomadic thinking one should realize that it is not an idea coming out of nowhere instead it occurs “in the transitions between potentially contradictory positions.” (Braidotti, 2006, p.29). Nomadic subject or the subject in transition is not pushed out of location, history or time. Braidotti (2006) defines location as “an embedded and embodied memory” (p.29) and explains further:

It is a set of counter-memories, which are activated by the resisting thinker against the grain of the dominant representations of subjectivity. A location is a materialist temporal and spatial site of co-production of the subject, and thus anything but an instance of relativism. Locations provide the ground for accountability. (p.29)

The locality of the protagonist of *The Bridge* inevitably shapes her becoming and she changes, chooses and appropriates different localities as she engages in different becoming processes. Braidotti (2003) believes “‘location’ is not a self-appointed and self-designed subject position. It is a collectively shared and constructed, jointly occupied spatio-temporal territory” (p.197). Therefore, there needs to be a political awakening (Grewal and Kaplan, 1994) and the intervention of others for the production of politics of location. Braidotti (2011) in her *Nomadic Subjects* states that: “Politics of locations’ are cartographies of power that rest on a form of self-criticism, a critical, genealogical self-narrative; they are relational and outside directed. This means that ‘embodied’ accounts illuminate and transform our knowledge of ourselves and of the world” (p.16). The protagonist of *The Bridge* wants to escape her home country to relieve herself from patriarchal constraints. However, living the physical location does not easily result in her liberation from the restrictions of the locality she is born into. She is still embedded to Turkish culture and history but as Braidotti states this embeddedness does not finalise her chances of becoming. They become the point of departure against which she performs her embodied and unique subjectivity. Thus, the novel can be taken as a product of counter-memory, which works against the official histories and offers alternative personal stories written against the limiting grand narratives.

The protagonist does not even know a word of German after migrating to Germany; as a necessity of survival she needs to express herself and she finds alternatives ways of doing so. She tries to communicate through gestures and uses onomatopoeic words at first. On her first days in Berlin together with three girls she wants to do some shopping:

We were three girls, wanted to buy sugar, salt, eggs, toilet paper and toothpaste at Hertie. We didn't know the words. Sugar, salt. In order to describe sugar, we mimed coffee-drinking to a sales assistant, then we said shak shak. In order to describe salt, we spat on Hertie's floor and said 'Eeeh.' In order to describe eggs, we turned our backs to the assistant, wiggled our backsides and said: 'Clack, clack, clack.' We got sugar, salt and eggs, but it didn't work with toothpaste. We got bathroom cleaning liquid. So my first German words were shak shak, eeeh, clack clack clack. (Özdamar, 2007, p.9)

Before she acquires German, she brings her own linguistic reservoir to Germany through onomatopoeic words and her corporeal explanations. She takes these onomatopoeic words as part of German language and she extends the limits of German and displays an example for appropriating the host language and making it her own. Her first interaction with a German is through mimicking and using her body. Throughout the novel, the protagonist uses a corporeal language, a language growing out of female body and experience which empowers female subjectivity. Rosi Braidotti (1994) highlights the function and importance of corporeal language:

The starting point for most feminist redefinitions of subjectivity is a new form of materialism, one that develops the notion of corporeal materiality by emphasizing the embodied and therefore sexually differentiated structure of the speaking subject. Consequently, rethinking the bodily roots of subjectivity is the starting point for the epistemological project of nomadism ... The body, or the embodiment, of the subject is to be understood as neither a biological nor a sociological category but rather as a point of overlapping between the physical, the symbolic, and the sociological. (p.3-4)

The protagonist of *The Bridge* thanks to her experience in theatre in Turkey is able to use her body to express herself and this ability

will develop as she participates in new theatre groups and gets to know various teachers following multiple theatre conventions such as Brechtian or surrealist theatre. However, it takes time for her to fully acquire a language created through her bodily experience.

Memorizing newspaper headings is the protagonist's first attempt to learn German words and sentences. The headings of German newspapers bring the official history into narration but the hegemony of official history is disrupted as she strips the meaning off the newspaper headings. She memorizes them without having access to their meaning. She uses her first German sentence from a newspaper headline "hewasnoangel" (Özdamar, 2007, 15) and receives a response: "Morningmorning" from the porter in the factory she works for. Thus, at the very beginning of the novel, the narrator who is also the protagonist hints at how she will use a language of her own created against the dominant languages or the instruments of hegemonic power. Her narration is a product of countermemory, which is embedded in the official history but written against it with an embodied language.

Although the protagonist is on her way to create her own language, the language of the father is dominantly present in the novel. The narrator does not explicitly state that she has escaped the patriarchal limitations which she has faced in her home country, but the way she describes how men, who are physically absent in Germany, affect women's lives implies how she is disturbed by patriarchal expectations of the society. She has two single roommates who are sisters and who live as if their brothers were with them: "When one of the two wept or didn't finish food or caught a cold, the others said to her: 'Your brothers mustn't hear about that. If your brothers hear that!'" (Özdamar, 2007, p.9). Likewise, the women who has lost their way and come late to the hostel say: "It is a good thing that no man is waiting for me at home'... Another woman practiced walking back on an escalator: she also thinks that: '[i]t's a good thing that [she] do[esn't] have a husband, if he could see [her] like this, he would pull out [her] hair.' Every story ended with a husband." (Özdamar, 2007, p.46) By giving examples for contexts in which women talk about men, the protagonist shows how threatening men are in those women's lives:

One woman said: 'I've burned the meat again, it's turned to charcoal. But it doesn't matter, I don't have a husband who shouts at me because of it.' Overcooked macaroni, too much salt in the food, too many pounds on the body, uncombed hair, a torn bra under her clothes – everything always ended with: 'I have, may Allah be thanked, no man who can see it.' When a glass or plate fell and broke, a woman said: 'It's a good thing that the men can't see it.' (Özdamar, 2007, p.46-7)

The narrator does not condemn the Turkish men; however, by portraying how women mention their husbands, fathers or brothers demonstrates that women's lives are tyrannically controlled by men. They do not live in this hostel but even their absence functions in those women's lives and sentences: "But each sentence, whether it began with 'good' or 'unfortunately', as always gave birth to a man, a husband. The word 'husband' was like a piece of a chewing gum, which they chewed together" (Özdamar, 2007, p.47) The protagonist in a humorous way states how "[she] began to be afraid of their brothers and of [her] father" (Özdamar, 2007, p.20) since their roommates always talked about their fathers and brothers. Not all of the women but some of them are willing to get rid of this oppression and engage in new identity formation processes in a new psychic space. Indeed, some of them create a psychic space which will free them of the constraints inscribed to their lives by the dominant patriarchal society. As Bala Venkat Mani (2001) believes:

These women look alike on the surface, but are individuals with characteristic traits. There is Rezzan, the first person narrator's roommate, whose reading list includes Shakespeare and Tennessee Williams, Chekhov and Harold Pinter. There is the 'Hoover Girl', the only one who can speak a little English, and spends her evenings vacuum cleaning her room, there are the sisters who live their lives as if their brothers were leading them, and two lesbian cousins in a sado-masochistic relationship. (p.82)

In contrast to the young women who are eager to transform themselves, there are some women who criticize them as the continuation of homeland's oppressive discourse. However, even their attempts to fix their identities fail. Only Turkish women live in the hostel and they start to form camps as Frank Krause (2000) explains:

'Sugar' (the women who call each other 'sugar' love the hostel warden), 'Donkeys' (the women who do not call each other 'sugar' form the group of 'donkeys'), 'Whores' (the women who go or seem to go out at night), and 'Kids' (the women who get excited about the 'whores' and whom the warden tries to calm down). (p.83)

These camps prove that there is stratification in Turkish woman community who dwell in the same hostel and immigrants' experience cannot be stereotyped. The women's desire to form groups is an attempt to fix their identities, but paradoxically they cannot achieve it.

After a conflict among women, the hostel warden gathers them in the hall and redistributes the women in the rooms, "now the children live with children, sugars with sugars, donkeys with donkeys, whores with whores" (Özdamar, 2007, p.28). However, this stratification does not survive long and the groups inevitably interact and merge with each other.

On the first evenings no woman left her room. In all rooms they talked about the women in the other rooms. The children in their rooms mimicked the sugars and donkeys and whores in their rooms mimicked the children. All the women mimicked the expressions, the gestures and the dialects of the others, they made fun of the way they walked, the way they ate, and so at some point the women began to look like one another again. Their faces and bodies and mouths absorbed the faces and bodies and dialects of the others, became accustomed to them. Sugars now lived inside children. Children lived in whores and donkeys, and they came together again. In the bus they sat mixed up together again, in the hostel kitchen they passed pots and pans from hand to hand, without asking themselves whether these hands belonged to the sugars or donkeys or children or whores. Now everyone got to know the half-chicken at Wienerwald and the pea soup in the Aschinger restaurant. (Özdamar, 2007, p.28)

The novel displays the failure of each discourse to limit the becoming processes of women. The different viewpoints and dialects of women in the hostel and how they affect each other is an example for that. Özdamar's charming narration shows despite their willingness to stabilize their becoming processes and belong to a group, the women cannot help changing. The naïve voice of the narrator tells us about how sugars, donkeys and whores interact and interming-

le with each other. As Maria Mayr (2010) claims: “Even though the women do not speak the same idiolects, their meaningless imitation effectively allows them to co-exist among and next to each other. They temporarily take the others in, try on their costumes and thus no longer fear their differences from one another” (p.327). Krause (2000) also believes: “The division between the camps is finally overcome not by means of discussion leading to an agreement, but through the creative power of aesthetically meaningful role-play in everyday-life” (p.83). The dissolution of groups highlights the impossibility of ending becoming processes. Rather than insisting on freezing one’s identity by exclusionary practices, the novel presents evolving subjectivities.

The importance of language is obvious in frequent references to other literary sources as they become part of the narration. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, plays by Tennessee Williams and Harold Pinter and Chekhov, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are some of the great canonical works shaping both the protagonist’s and her friends’ lives. As the protagonist meets new people, new discourses are introduced to her. The communist hostel warden and his friend Ataman share their books including Marx’s and Engels’s with them. Likewise, Madam Gutsio, the hostel warden in her second arrival to Germany, shares her Kafka books with the protagonist. Thus, she has access to different discourses, which present diverse ways of using language and create the polyphony of the narrator’s language. As Braidotti (2011) writes in her *Nomadic Subjects*:

Feminists need to become fluent in a variety of styles, disciplinary angles and in many different dialects, jargons, languages, thereby relinquishing the image of sisterhood in the sense of a global similarity of all women qua second sex, in favor of the recognition of the complexity of the semiotic and material conditions in which women operate. (p.36)

The protagonist has the chance not only to contact with German language but also with different discourses such as the canonical literary works, Marxism and Brechtian theatre. During her theatre performances she gets to learn the language of people from different segments of the society. Various discourses present new languages

for her. The way she discovers her femininity and her education in politics are presented with a witty tone, which critically highlights how a naive and an ignorant little girl gradually develops into an intellectual young adult woman. Özdamar does not glorify the skills, the intelligence, the wit and the charm of this young woman but creates a character who is after her adventure of becoming. Her entrance into a new discourse generally starts with superficial imitation but as she engages with the new languages, she appropriates them to create her own voice.

The importance of learning a language is stated by her father and mother too. She ends her first year in Germany as a guest worker and her family welcomes her in İstanbul. Her father gives ride to a woman who is waiting for the bus and they talk about the protagonist's experience in Germany. Realising that the protagonist has not learned German yet, the woman states the importance and necessity of learning the language. Her father agrees with this woman and sends her back to Germany to a language school. Besides learning German, she wants to go away to have first sexual experience, which she thinks will be easier when she does not need to face her mother and father at home. She turns back to Turkey having learned German and having had sexual experience. Her mother is proud of her daughter as she can speak in German: "She has learned German. A language is like a person, two languages are like two people." (Özdamar, 2007, p.136). Her mother repeats a Turkish proverb, which suggests speaking various languages results in being more than one person, and this proverb relates to the protagonist's status as she gains new subjectivities in the course of learning languages. Her mother is aware of liberating effect of speaking more than one language. When the protagonist shares her decision of not getting married to her schizophrenic childhood friend on the phone with her mother, her mother agrees with her: "You can speak German, why do you want to get married?" (Özdamar, 2007, p.147) Even her traditional mother accepts that ability to move between languages increases one's possibilities to become.

The communist hostel warden and Ataman want these young women to be liberated from the constraints of patriarchal society

and try to help them by sharing their books and ideas with them. The protagonist and her friends learn about Marxism and Brecht thanks to them. Thus, they help in the protagonist's language formation process. These people encourage the young women to make love by emphasizing the importance of having sexual intercourse to become better actresses. However, in their attempt to guide them towards freedom they recreate a patriarchal language by using the metaphor of "diamond" for virginity. The focus is not about gaining ownership of their bodily pleasure and getting to know themselves better. They only talk about the importance of losing virginity. Meanwhile a new Turkish girl, Angel, arrives at the hostel and joins their group. She makes love with Ataman becoming the first to have sexual experience. So as to symbolize her liberation she decides to move out of the hostel together with the protagonist. However, they realize that they have not met with the real Berlin yet and they are not mature enough to be alone in this still foreign city. The narrator speaks in remorse:

We had run away from the herd and now we wept for the herd... One of the 40 watt light bulbs flickered, went on and off. This was Berlin. This Berlin had not existed for us yet. We had our hossel and hossel was not Berlin. Berlin began only when we left the hossel, just as one goes to the cinema, sees a film and comes back on the bus and tells the others the story of the film, but the image had frozen, had come to a stop. No one knocked, no one stood up and opened the door. We lay on the beds in our clothes and coats, wept in the darkness and before the dew fell we went back with our not yet opened suitcases to our women's hossel. (Özdamar, 2007, p.44)

Sexual intercourse, in contrast to Ataman always claims, does not easily bring consciousness and liberation. They go back to the hostel but this does not mean that they close their lives to new possibilities. They only need to get more mature and experienced.

The protagonist, Rezzan and Gül do not their limit their life with work and the hostel but continue going out at night and some of the other women condemn them: "You have cut yourselves off from your mothers and fathers. Your fathers and mothers should tie you to them with ropes. You will lose your diamonds" (Özdamar, 2007,

p.63). In fact, these girls want to experience sexuality as a sign of freeing themselves from the constraints of patriarchal society. To achieve subjectivity, they need to gain the ownership of their bodies and pleasure. However, leaving the constraints of the patriarchal society they have been raised in is not easy. The protagonist and her friends Gül and Rezzan encounter with the life outside the hostel with their visit to Turkish Workers' Association. Their interaction with men comically create the fear of losing their virginity; that night the three young girls see their mothers in their dream and they decide to stop going there. Instead, they take a walk in the familiar streets but they still feel patriarchal domination. The narrator relates:

We took our diamonds for a walk and stamped loudly outside the telephone booth, so that our parents could hear us in İstanbul. We walked around on the plot of land of the offended station, as if we had our father's breath at our backs. Even Rezzan, who didn't have a father any more, felt the fathers' breath at her back... We walked along the Berlin streets, our fathers' breath at our backs. (Özdamar, 2007, p.38-39)

The fear of patriarchal figures is repeatedly mentioned by the protagonist. While the young women bring this limiting feeling with them, they are still open to experiment and change. For example, the protagonist can only overcome the fear of patriarchal power figures by reading *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

As the protagonist wants to be an actress and Ataman and the communist hostel warden have made her believe that sexual intercourse is important for being a good actress she becomes obsessed with experiencing sexuality. However, in her quest to get rid of her virginity ironic situations occur as she is too young to know about sexuality. As Beverly M. Weber (2010) puts it: "the man's attitude to her is consistently supportive and patronising, encouraging her intellectual and professional development, but always in the voice of a father" (p.51). Their discourse reproduces patriarchal norms as they call virginity "diamond". Yorgi, who temporarily looks after the hostel instead of Madam Gutsio has intimate moments with the protagonist by the lake. They hug and kiss and the protagonist wants to make love with him but she does not know how to do that. She

wishes Madam Gutsio was there to teach her how to make love. Yorgi realizes that she is too young and not ready for her first sexual experience. In contrast to Ataman and the communist hostel warden, Yorgi does not turn making love into a task to be fulfilled. The protagonist asks whether she should be ashamed of not having been able to get rid of her virginity and Yorgi states there is no reason to feel ashamed and she will experience it only when she feels ready (Özdamar, 2007, p.89).

Despite the fictional Marxist characters' claims of liberation and consciousness through sexual activity, the protagonist cannot easily achieve this liberation which requires the ownership of one's body and pleasure. She has her first sexual experience in Paris, where she has gone to study theatre with Madam Gutsio's help. There, she meets a Spanish boy Jordi with whom she falls in love. While narrating her intimate moments with Jordi, the narration turns to third person and she focalizes her own experience as an outsider. They make love but she is too inexperienced to realize she has had her first sexual relationship. Thus, Özdamar ironically disrupts the fictional Marxists' claims on the relationship between making love and consciousness raising.

On her way from Paris to Berlin, she feels remorse about not having had her first sexual experience with Jordi. Back in Berlin, she is more determined to make love and chooses a man who people call the limping socialist for having sexual intercourse since she believes a socialist will not force her into marriage. The limping socialist does not want to sleep with her as he fears a virgin might force him into marriage but realizing that none of them want to get married they make love. After making love, he realizes that the protagonist has already had sex before. Neither the first one with Jordi nor the second one with the limping socialist makes her more conscious in any sense and she does not achieve an orgasm. Many instances of sexual intercourse do not involve pleasure but she uses her chance to make love as she believes it is necessary to be a creative actress. Rather than joy, her sexuality brings a big problem to her life as she becomes pregnant. On her father's call about her mother's health, she turns back to Turkey from Germany with the burden of being

pregnant. She terminates the pregnancy in İstanbul with her schizophrenic childhood friend's help and refuses to get married to him choosing limitless alternatives to experiment her subjectivity instead of fixing it by getting married and having a settled life. At this part of the story, the narration again slips into third person and the protagonist focalizes herself as an outsider. As Maria Mayr (2010) puts it:

Significantly, it is the actress within the protagonist who makes the important decision not to marry and to terminate her pregnancy. In order to pursue her dream of the theatre, her potential future self (that is, the actress) rejects her alternative self as wife and mother. Realizing that she is free to choose the role she wants to adopt and thus carries full responsibility for her actions, she liberates herself from the unwanted pregnancy in the space opening up on the Sea where nothing is fixed and determined and thus everything is changeable. (p.328)

When she makes up her mind about going on her life without the baby and unmarried, she goes back to first person narration. The actress within herself enables the protagonist to make a liberating choice.

The protagonist has her first orgasm with the leftist man whom they call Owl and who she meets in the midst of political talks, which she has almost no understanding of. The protagonist is the only woman among these men and being very young she is not apt in using and understanding their political language. The issues of language and sexuality meet once again. Owl is the first one to ask what she thinks about their discussion. She gets nervous and does not how to answer but she wants to sleep with this man and has her first orgasm with him. His attempt to give voice to her thoughts might be the reason why she has her first orgasm with him. She tries to discover her bodily pleasures and at the same time reading leftist publications to acquire their language. However, it is the men's language and it takes time for her to have access to this language and to make it her own.

Towards the end of the novel different discourses the protagonist have gained and her sexual consciousness empower her with the agency to decide what to do with her life. In fact, her early encounter with Marxist thought and sexual experience has been at a superficial level. She cannot immediately internalize the political discourses

se and she does not have the ownership of her body and pleasure. Mimicry is enhanced when she falls in love with Kerim, a cinema student, who forces the protagonist to act in certain ways. In her every action, the protagonist wants to attract Kerim and she ceases her inner charge and choses to do what she thinks will please Kerim. She performs being a socialist, a lover and she performs orgasm. She starts by imitating different discourses and manners but then these imitations become part of her subjectivity enabling her to make her own decisions at the end of the novel. She realizes that she does not laugh with Kerim. She has a gratified misperception of him. After the protagonist and Kerim have been arrested by the police and released with the protagonist's father's attempt, Kerim turns his tongue to bourgeois. The protagonist's friend Haydar with whom she has visited eastern Anatolia has already predicted the essence of Kerim's bourgeois tendencies. She is alienated from him when she hears Kerim saying: "It is time to gather up bourgeois culture and to read new books and to listen to different music. ... Don't talk this slogan language. Take off the green army parka. Dress like a woman" (Özdamar, 2007, p.254). She does not like Kerim's new language and she no longer wants to sleep with him. After having visited Eastern Turkey with Haydar when Kerim has been in Ankara for fulfilling his military service, the protagonist writes about the living conditions of Eastern people in a politically charged language and she is no longer the inexperienced young woman whose choices are shaped by the men in her life. Leaving Kerim behind, she decides to go back to Germany. Thus, what she has moulded up to that moment enables her to make her own decisions at the end of the novel. She gets rid of the pain she is going through by taking a volume of poetry by Brecht and singing in German. As Silke Schade (2010) claims: "the German language itself functions as a space that Özdamar's protagonist engages with, modifies, and claims as her own. Like physical and sociocultural space, linguistic space is both personal and abstract, both real and imagined, both mapable and metaphorical" (p.326). Considering the fact that the narrator relates her story in German, not in her mother tongue Turkish is a proof for Silke's ideas. Singing in German encourages her for going back to Germany and she feels

relieved. The heart-breaking experiences she has gone through in Turkey will be cured in Germany with German language.

In conclusion, the protagonist, Gül, Rezzan, Angel, and the other unnamed women in the novel have problematic relationship with the patriarch. Although some of them, especially the unnamed women, may seem to support the continuation of patriarchal norms they cannot help acquiring the traits of emancipated women whom they call whores. The impossibility to talk about a homogenous identity in the women's hostel where only the Turkish women live demonstrate that identity is never nation or gender bound but it is an outcome of performance and personal choices. Language and sexual liberation play a vital part in the female characters' lives and add up to their becoming. This novel presents how different women find different ways to engage in endless subjectivity processes.

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