Resistance, Loss and Grief: The Implications of Melancholy in Modern Kurdish Novels

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Dedication

In loving memory of my stillborn son Robîn Rênas…

Thesis Abstract

This study aims to highlight the specific uses motifs of loss, grief and melancholy are put to by modern Kurdish novelists of Turkey writing in Kurdish. It draws upon perspectives on mourning and melancholy for a nuanced understanding of the Kurdish novel to contribute to the emerging field of Kurdish literary studies. Subject to specific focus is how melancholic subjectivity is represented and its intersections with the political, social and cultural reality. To this end, it examines four novels: Mehmed Uzun's *Siya Evînê*, İbrahim Seydo Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî* and Firat Cewerî's *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* and *Lehî*.

Alternating between the individual's psychology and the encompassing socio-political reality, these novels offer insights essential to understanding the authentic locale of the Kurdish melancholic subjectivity and its iterations in different novel types, including, respectively, historical, contemporary, crime and metafiction. The study evidences a variegated use by Kurdish novelists: melancholy as an expression of devotion to the ideal of a free homeland and a stubborn attachment to a lost love, as grief for a loved one lost in political struggle, as the source of a criminal act as well as an endless grief for a lost female "honour" in a community beset by patriarchal cultural norms and values.

Following an introductory assessment of readings of melancholy in the Kurdish novel, the study presents an overview of the development of the modern Kurdish novel; it identifies a parallel between the engagement of Kurdish novelists with genuinely realist and modern narrative forms from the mid-1980s and the strategy to process the motif of loss in the framework of melancholic subjectivity, despite its political mediations. The second chapter provides an account of how the motif of melancholy is utilized to represent insistence upon the ideal of a free homeland as well as a love-melancholy in *Siya Evînê*. The following chapter elicits the representation of grief for the loss of a loved one killed in the resistance struggle as the melancholic suffering of the bereaved in *Reş û Spî*. The final chapter presents the violent, self-destructive as well as constructive forms of melancholy in *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* and *Lehî*, demonstrating how melancholy is appropriated as a multi-functional literary device by modern Kurdish novelists to articulate a broad spectrum of subjectivities often mediated by contexts of Kurdish political reality.

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Notes on Translation

All material has been translated from their Kurdish and Turkish originals, which are provided in the footnotes, by the author of this study.

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Introduction

This study investigates the specific uses of the melancholy motif in modern novels of Turkey's Kurds by drawing upon a range of critical perspectives on questions of mourning and melancholy. On the one hand, it attempts to bring psychoanalytic insights to bear upon the domain of literary criticism and studies for an improved understanding the motifs of loss, grief and various forms of melancholic attachment inscribed in modern Kurdish novels; on the other hand, it aims to provide a critical account of the Kurdish "melancholy literature" in which the individual subject is positioned within a loss-oriented grief model wherein "the melancholy condition becomes a sign for complexity of the relationship between self and the world" (Cosgrove & Richards 2012, p.8). Main interests of this study include the relationship between the kinds of melancholy represented and the socio-political conditions of Kurds in Turkey conditioning them as well as the specific textual strategies deployed for descriptions of "melancholic subjectivity", the affective state "that produces a kind of restlessness in which it becomes known, or at least felt, that something has gone missing" (Frosh 2013, p.98). Hence, both the "historicity" of melancholy as "one's affective experience" (Flatley 2008, p.4) in Kurdish socio-political setting as well as the aestheticization of this specific grief form in Kurdish literary setting are subject to critical examination. Dedicating particular attention to the socio-political allusions inscribed in melancholy motifs by the texts, the study highlights the congruity between the socio-political reality of Kurds and the melancholic subjectivities fashioned by their novelists; it proposes connections in between melancholy conceived as a

form of loss-oriented affect and the historical and socio-political reality by attempting to trace these in texts marked with a distinct focus on motifs of loss, grief and melancholy.

The development of modern Kurdish literature and novel is set against a recent history of political and national domination. An important turning point in this history is the onset of the Turkish modernisation project which Turkey's Kurds experienced as loss and annihilation. For Turkey's Kurds, the Kemalist nation-building project meant the beginning of a long history of political pressures, cultural and lingual denial, "systematic persecution, marginalization and humiliation" (Bozarslan 2003-B, p.187). With the establishment of Republic of Turkey in 1923, not only do they lose their limited rights as political subjects enjoyed historically in the periphery of the Ottoman Empire through autonomous principalities and tribal chiefdoms, but, also, their rights of ethnic and cultural subjecthood. In the new regime, "the Kurds were asked to deny their memory, language, history, in short, their identity" (Yeğen 1999-A, p.120). As David McDowall (2004) notes, "all reference to Kurdistan was excised from official materials and Turkish place names began to replace Kurdish ones" (p.192). The Kurds became not only "mountain Turks" (Yeğen 1999-A), but also "as the main element of heterogeneity in the country," were considered as a phenomenon of national security, with their ethnic identity "declared the principal target to be destroyed in the new Republic" (Bozarslan 2003-B, p.187). As a part and instrument of this oppressive policy, the Kurdish language was proscribed in both public and private spheres and those using their native tongue began to be persecuted severely in the new regime; the political oppression of Kurds included a distinct focus on language, in what Joanna Bocheńska (2022) calls a "linguicide" (p.899), "resulting in a significant loss of culture" (Bocheńska 2022, p.900). One of the lasting legacies of this would

prove to be the delay the development of a modern Kurdish literature in Turkey would see for almost seven decades.

With the Turkish state's absolute domination of Kurdish-populated areas by the end of 1930s after a set of failed rebellions, most notably the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925, the Mount Ararat rebellion in 1927–1931 and the Dersim rebellion in 1938 (White 2000; Bozarslan 2003-B; McDowall 2004), Kurdishness turned into an "'invisible" spectre but "had yet to disappear" (Yeğen 2007, p.127). The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a revival of the Kurdish political and cultural activism in Turkey after a "period of silence" (Bozarslan 2003-A). Kurdish political movements remobilized around a set of demands, such as recognition of the Kurdish ethnic and cultural identity and the right to use Kurdish language, and, in the 1970s, for an independent homeland (Gunes 2012). The last four decades that lapsed since have witnessed a persistently continuing Kurdish rebellion initiated by the PKK (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê* – Kurdistan Workers' Party). The continuity of this national question into the present age has not been without repercussions, however. The armed Kurdish resistance and the state's severe military measures to subjugate it resulted in the emergence of what Ramazan Aras (2014) describes as "a nation in pain", loss and grief; the resistance and the state's repression policies to suppress the resistance gave rise to the main socio-political and cultural

parameters in which Kurdishness and Kurdish subjectivity has been shaped in Turkey since early 1980s.[1]

Set against this historical and cultural background, the modern novel of Turkey's Kurds written in Kurdish language emerged as "an articulation of the nation" (Smyth 1997) not at home but in exile (in Sweden), focusing not only on the present struggle, suffering and grief of the nation, but also critically engaging with the legacy of recent Kurdish history, laden with numerous failed rebellion and defeats. Loss, suffering and grief consequently emerge as central motifs in modern Kurdish novels. Unsurprisingly, melancholy figures as a motif prevalently used by Kurdish novelists to describe the mood of the Kurdish political, social and cultural life in Turkey beset by this loss, grief and suffering. The motif lends itself to be appropriated as a multi-functional literary device by modern Kurdish novelists to articulate a broad spectrum of subjectivities mediated by a context of political repression: to signify the loss of the homeland and glorify the Kurdish political agency's melancholic insistence upon the ideal of a free homeland (e.g. Mehmed Uzun's *Siya Evînê*, 1989), to describe the grief about the loss of a loved one killed in the national struggle and the melancholic dilemma of a bereaved survivor for being unable to engage with the political legacy of a "martyr" (e.g.

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[1] In *The Formation of Kurdishness in Turkey: Political Violence, Fear and Pain* (2014), Ramazan Aras provides a convincing analysis of how this process has shaped Kurdishness and Kurdish subjectivity. Focussing particularly on the psychological impacts of the conflict between the Turkish security forces and the PKK guerrillas on Kurdish society, Aras's study highlights how the experiences of violence (both state and counter-violence), pain and suffering have "made, remade and unmade" the Kurdish (political) identity in Turkey in the last three decades (1984–2004). Based on collected personal life stories and testimonials of those (Kurdish) families who lost their loved ones in the conflicts of late 1980s and 1990s, Aras's research illustrates "the state violence, the emotions of fear, and the solidarity and shared experiences of pain" (2014, p.1) which have characterised "the Kurdish world" in Turkey and "have become embedded aspects of Kurdishness as a result of the many acts of political violence [this] community suffered for decades" (2014, p.1).

İbrahim Seydo Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî*, 1999), to represent the devastating legacy of state violence, incarceration and torture and the subject's inability to overcome loss caused by state violence (e.g. Firat Cewerî's *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim*, 2008), to enunciate the legacy of state sexual violence against Kurdish female political subjects and the impossibility of working through loss related to female "honour" in a traditional community where the recovery of the lost female honour emerges not only impossible, but also as a subject of violence against women (e.g. Cewerî's *Lehî*, 2013), or to depict the melancholic insistence of the Kurdish authors to write in a forbidden and unread(able) language and the melancholy of this act itself (e.g. Cewerî's *Lehî*).

José Esteban Muñoz (2013) argues that "melancholia, for blacks, queers or any queers of colour, is not a pathology but integral part of everyday lives" (p.73). As a feeling, melancholy "occupies the minds of the communities under siege" (Muñoz 2013, p.74). Moreover, for Muñoz, in colonial and postcolonial settings, melancholy is not "a self-absorbed mood that inhibits activism. Rather, it is a mechanism that helps us (re)construct identity" (2013, p.74). Modern Kurdish novelists present a diversity in their approach to the instrumentality of this motif as pointed out by Muñoz. Describing loss, suffering and melancholy as an integral part of everyday Kurdish lives, they do not only provide an idiosyncratic example of "politicizing melancholia" (Flatley 2008, p.8) by representing melancholia "not only as a psychological problem but as a social and political one" (Flatley 2008, p.18), but, also, produce an aesthetic melancholy form shaped by the literary narration of the nation's political struggles, losses, grief for its different kinds of losses as well as cultural resistance to recover the losses of a colonial past. Despite this prevalence of motifs of loss and melancholy in modern Kurdish novels, the existing literary scholarship and criticism focusing on the Kurdish novel, as a

nascent critical field of literary study comprising only but a few academic studies, non-academic books and several scholarly articles, has not given due attention to the significance of these particular articulations as informing the modern Kurdish novel in Turkey. With this nascent character as a field of study, it comprises a corpus mainly focussing on imaginings of the Kurdish political struggles and nationalism, homeland, national identity and history accompanied inescapably by constructions of collective memory which determines the focus of the discussion later in this chapter.

Drawing particularly upon Sigmund Freud and Jacques Derrida's approaches to loss, mourning and melancholy, and engaging with the critical works of Judith Butler and Ranjana Khanna's arguments on "colonial melancholia", this study aims to elicit the specific uses of the melancholy motif by modern Kurdish novelists of Turkey writing in Kurdish. The study closely engages with the following questions about the use of melancholy motif: What does the melancholic subjectivity articulated by modern Kurdish novelists involve and in what political, social, cultural and psychological context does it appear in their novels? Does melancholy refer to a specific psychoanalytic category of the individual, or does it represent a multifunctional motif that serves to describe political and social sufferings of the Kurdish people in Turkey in the contexts set by the Kurdish novels? What connotations and themes do the use of melancholy render it a functional motif for modern Kurdish novelists to represent the mood of political, social and cultural life of Kurds in Turkey? What kind of relationship is there between the modernity of these novels and their putative interest in the motifs of loss and melancholy? And further, are modern Kurdish novelists more concerned with the "thematic content" of loss (Clewell 2009, p.6) and descriptions of melancholic suffering (or denial of loss) in their narration of the Kurdish melancholic subjectivity, or are

they also interested in the "formal inflection" of melancholy through a figurative performance of "melancholic dynamics" (Bahun 2014, p.10) like their Western modern counterparts?

Regarded as cultural artefacts that reflect the Kurdish life in Turkey, the present study aims to examine how Kurdish melancholic subjectivity is imagined in the modern Kurdish novels and the intersections of the melancholic subjectivity thus represented with the political, social and cultural realities of the Kurds in Turkey. To this end, it examines four Kurdish novels, consisting of Mehmed Uzun's *Siya Evînê* (1989), İbrahim Seydo Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî* (1999) and Firat Cewerî's *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* (2008) and *Lehî* (2011).

1.1. Rationale for the Selection of Novels

The selection of these particular novels by Uzun, Aydoğan and Cewerî for this survey is due to three interrelated motivations which also account for the scope of the subject of the present study. Firstly, these novels provide an apt ground for the study with the clear intersection they provide between their thematic focuses and the primary objective of the this study to illuminate Kurdish melancholic grief and its authentic political, social and cultural locale as formed by the modern Kurdish novels in various settings; this is true for all the main forms of grief the study undertakes to examine, consisting of an examination of representation of melancholy as an interminable grief for loss of one's homeland, for loss of an abstract political, social or cultural ideal, for loss of a loved one in resistance struggle as well as for loss of a love(r) set as a motif of love separation. A second motivation is provided by the study's concern for artistic articulations of melancholy in different types of novel as well as for highlighting the divergence and convergences between the modern Kurdish novel and its (Western) modern and the postcolonial counterpart especially in relation to forms of

aesthetic of melancholy. A third rationale for the choice of these particular novels is the diverse forms of melancholy offered by these, which, crucially for the study, includes both pathological and non-pathological or progressive forms of melancholy as particular responses to the loss, while also providing apt literary articulations of the political, cultural and artistic motivations determining the particular uses by modern Kurdish novelists.

In terms of their thematic focus, the selected novels offer an opportunity to situate the research topic in a concrete historical, socio-political and socio-cultural setting, facilitating an examination of these authors' use of melancholy motif as a literary enunciation reflecting the social and political reality of the Kurds in Turkey. To put it more clearly, Uzun, Aydoğan and Cewerî's textual strategies in contextualizing melancholy also afford a suitable conceptual basis for this study to engage with the corpus of melancholy not merely as one of psychoanalytic preoccupation with the grief performances of the *ego*, but also as an analytical concept that enables the socio-political analysis of a social reality inscribed in the literary text. Engaging unequivocally with the actual political, social and cultural questions that have dominated the agenda of Turkey's Kurds in their articulations of melancholic subjectivity, the selected novels utilise it in an almost identical thematic framework which also represents the socio-political indices of the last century for Kurds in Turkey: the resistance, loss and various forms of grief (re)enacting and supplanting the lost political struggles, ideals, loved ones, loves, and so on as all these novels inevitably arrive at. Individual novels go a long way to evidence this: Uzun's handling of the importance of the political ideal of a free homeland for the Kurds in *Siya Evînê* renders it especially instrumental in highlighting not only the importance of lost homeland and its lasting impact on modern Kurdish intellectuals and political generations, but also in eliciting the origin of Kurdish melancholic desire for a free

homeland in context as a prevalent literary motif of the Kurdish novel in general, which Hashem Ahmadzadeh (2003) and Özlem Belçim Galip (2015) note in their critical surveys on the subject. The literary setting in which Uzun places the melancholic subjectivity of his character (Memduh Selim Beg) transforms all considerations of this subjectivity into a socio-political inquiry on the meaning of historical loss for the Kurds experienced during early last century: it is the loss of their homeland and the tangible legacy of this loss on the lives of subsequent intellectual and political generations.

Providing a second distinct perspective and despite its aesthetic shortcomings, Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî* is a rare modern Kurdish novel that arguably provides one of the most authentic accounts of the pain and grief experienced by those who have lost their loved ones in the Kurdish political struggle; its thematic focus on a transgenerational form of suffering and experience renders it a convenient literary text to substantiate the actual locale of Kurdish people's melancholic grief for their *martyrs* in Turkey. Further, the novel enables due attention to be paid to the dilemmas of this grief beset not only by state terror and fear, but also by the politicised mourning rituals of the Kurdish community: the novel consummately depicts also the grief model constructed for the martyrs based on a notion of resistance which eternally holds the bereaved relatives in a state limbo and facing a cycle of impossible moral duties.

The focus of Cewerî's *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* and *Lehî* on the destructive legacy of the 12 September 1980 military regime alongside their reiterations of the cultural meaning of literary writing in mother-tongue and the melancholic dilemmas of this act of writing in an unread(able) language complement the diversity of the perspectives presented by the foregoing novels by being rare specimens which directly question the entire purpose of this enterprise itself. As

contemporary and astute examples, these features render the duology instrumental for getting a true sense of the authentic setting of Kurdish political life and the cultural transformations it has been undergoing in the last four decades. But furthermore, these two novels, as forms of literary self-questioning also provide ample ground for understanding the current agenda of Kurdish intellectual life as well as literature (in Kurdish) that has authors but no readers yet in Turkey. Additionally, with his particular focus on the issue of the female "honour" in the Kurdish society, Cewerî's duology also provides a useful basis for examining the actual locale of losses, sufferings, grief and challenging position of the modern Kurdish women in Turkey. This has also allowed the current study to consider briefly the relevant gender dynamics of these frameworks of melancholy.

Fashioning the motif of melancholy within a wider political and cultural setting of a nation in a century-long political struggle for a free homeland and nationhood, the selected novels also offered an ample opportunity to focus on the representation of melancholy in various settings, enabling the presentation of the broader array of the forms melancholy take in palpably different settings in the Kurdish novel. With Uzun's *Siya Evînê*, the discussion provides an examination of the representation of melancholy both as a response to the loss of one's homeland as well as a site of intellectual resistance to keep the political ideal of a free homeland alive; this is complemented by an assessment of a "melancholic lover's fixation" (Wells 2007, p.12) based on the case of a particular individual. The discussion of Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî*, on the other hand, offers an analysis of the representation of melancholy both as an inconsolable grief for the death of a loved one killed in the resistance struggle and an impossible mourning "duty" (Derrida 2001, p.95) for the bereaved survivor. Complementing these, Cewerî's *Ez ê yekî bikujim* and *Lehî* provide an adequate basis for an

examination of three contrasting significations of loss and melancholic response: melancholy as a violent response to loss of a political and cultural ideal emerging in a form of "melancholic murder" (Schipkowensky 1968, p.65); melancholy as a psychic inability to overcome the legacy of state (sexual) violence, enunciating the "ungrievability" (Butler 1999, p.170) of certain losses in the Kurdish socio-cultural setting; and thirdly, melancholy as a creative postcolonial exercise aiming to recover the cultural losses of an oppressed nation through literature, manifesting the cultural and "political potential" (Eng and Kazanjian 2003, p.ix) of certain melancholic attachments in the colonial and postcolonial settings.

The selected novels also enable an examination of the use of the melancholy motif in distinct genres, including as they do historical (*Siya Evînê*), contemporary (*Reş û Spî*), crime (*Ez ê Yekî Bikujim*) and metafiction (*Lehî*) novels to demonstrate how modern Kurdish novelists make use of the melancholy motif beyond its psychoanalytic signification and generally locate melancholic subjectivity in an authentic political, cultural and social context; and this is despite the use of distinct literary modes in the contrasting range of narratives of a character's melancholic response to loss constructed.

As will be presented in more detail in the discussion provided in the Chapter One, this study considers the "Kurdish novel" not only as those novels written in Kurdish, but also those that includes texts written by Kurdish authors in other languages; however, only novels written in Kurdish were chosen as the primary sources for this research. The reason for this is two-fold: the first, as explained above, is mainly related to the suitability of these texts for the aims of this survey; the second is to do with the study's concern for unearthing Kurdish written novels for the broader world readership and for highlighting their cultural importance both in terms of the emergence of a modern Kurdish literature in Turkey but also in relation to the

preservation of Kurdish as a literary language despite all the political oppressions. It can be suggested that modern novel of Turkey's Kurds in Kurdish has come into existence thanks to the *progressive melancholic insistence* of the authors to write in this language that was proscribed for decades and, indeed, is still not allowed to be used as the official educational language in Kurdish-populated areas in Turkey; this is despite the fact that it has been freely used in the press and publishing sector for the last three decades. As the status of Kurdish in Turkey evidence, there is neither a remarkable readership of the Kurdish literary products, nor an ample field of literary criticism in Kurdish that has emerged which could promote and showcase the works of the authors writing in Kurdish to the broader readership. Focusing only on the Kurdish-language novels, this study particularly prioritises the raising of awareness and understanding about the works of Kurdish authors which comprises a distinct cultural activity of recovering a cultural loss (the mother-tongue) for the Kurds. In this way, it goes beyond being solely concerned with the aesthetic content and significance of these novels, and, as such, takes as its basis those novels which have been turned into a site of *melancholic resistance* against the eradication of a national language in the political and cultural setting of Turkey.

In the remainder of this chapter, firstly, a definition of melancholia as a psychoanalytical concept is provided and its use as a critical concept in critical, cultural, postcolonial and gender studies is reviewed; then, Freud and Derrida's concepts of melancholic subjectivity and melancholy, deployed as basic models of the analysis in the selected novels, are presented. Following this, an overview of literary studies focussing on the representation of mourning and melancholy in the modern novel is provided with the purpose of identifying the points of intersection and divergence between the modern Kurdish novel and its modern

(Western) counterpart with respect to the representation of loss, grief and melancholy. Third, the modes of construction and aesthetic representation of melancholy in the modern Kurdish novel are presented. To complement this discussion, as a fourth element, the reading method adopted by this study for the analysis of motif of melancholy in Kurdish novels is elaborated. Finally, an overview of the central questions of Kurdish literary studies and criticism is presented with the aim of highlighting both their importance for the emerging field of literary studies and criticism as well as the topics and motifs that this corpus has widely focused on in the last two decades. Drawing from this account of the state of research about the subject, the conclusionary discussion to this section will help contextualise the gaps this study aims to redress.

1.2. A Definition of Melancholia as a Psychoanalytical Concept

The term melancholy, in its simplest definition, articulates the inability to break away from a lost object of love and an undiminished focus on this object of love; in its modern use, it connotes an interminable and inconsolable grief that the individual performs for an object of love he or she has lost. As Martin Middeke and Christina Ward have noted, "melancholia always emanates from (or, in some cases, is accompanied by) a sense of loss" (2011, p.3). In modern psychoanalysis, the term implies a form of lasting mourning emerging as one's psychic reaction to the "loss of a love-object" (Freud 1917, p.250), from which one cannot detach. The term is used to describe the inability to mourn one's losses, be it concrete or abstract. It denotes "an emotional response to loss that reconfigures the subject's personality" (Clewell 2013, p.6) and a complicated process of internalization of a lost love object.

In his seminal essay 'Mourning and Melancholia', Freud addressed the issue of melancholic temperament as an affect by delineating a general psychic mechanism of melancholic attachments to loss in distinct settings: as a "reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal and so on" (1917, p.243). Comparing mourning with melancholia, Freud (1917) argues that, "although mourning involves grave departures from the normal attitude to life, it never occurs to us to regard it as a pathological condition […] We rely on its being overcome after certain lapse of time" (pp.243–244). Going further, Freud (1917) defines melancholia as an interminable and, thus, "pathological mourning" (p.250): a restless psychic condition in which the subject resists accepting the "reality" that "the loved object no longer exists" (p.244). The subject's "loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love" (1917, p.244) and "dissatisfaction with the ego on moral grounds" (1917, p.248) are described as two distinguishing features of the melancholic subjectivity. According to Freud (1917), the psychic failure of the subject in "reality-testing" produces "melancholia instead of mourning and we consequently suspect them of a pathological disposition" (p.243).

As Jennifer Radden (2009) has noted, the modern framing of melancholia, in which the "connotations of loss" (p.158) emerges as a key theme, owes a great debt to Freud's writings on the work of melancholia:

> Through its emphasis on the theme of loss and self-critical attitudes, Freud's writing on melancholia may be seen to have *reconstructed* melancholia states. From a condition of humoral imbalance and a mood of despondency, melancholia has become a frame of mind characterized by a loss of something – and also by self-critical attitudes. As the result of Freud's work, the latter aspects of

melancholic subjectivity, hitherto granted little importance, become attenuated,

elaborated and central. (2009, p.158)

1.3. Use of Melancholia as a Critical Concept

The centrality of the theme of loss for the contemporary notions of melancholia renders it a

critical category and not only for the analysis of the psychic content of modern self-suffering

due to "a metaphysical loss of 'home'" (Berger et al. 1973, p.77) in a world that "pours us all

into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of

ambiguity and anguish" (Berman et al. 1983, p.53). The significance of the theme owes much

also to its instrumentality, as noted by Middeke and Ward (2011), "for the cultural analysis of

colonialism, postcolonialism and the establishment of ethnic or 'racialized' identities" (p.8).

Concerning this relationship between the idea of self and idea of community, Jonathan Flatley

(2008) further notes:

> The disclosure of the historicity of subjective emotional life always beckons
>
> toward a potentially political effect. Through the articulation of a subjective
>
> experience of loss with a collective one, the affective map facilitates the
>
> transformation of a depressive disengagement into an […] interest in the social
>
> and political histories and processes that lie at the origins of one's losses. (p.106)

Recently, in search of the political and cultural meaning of melancholic attachments for the

postcolonial, subaltern, diasporic and aggrieved ethnic and minority groups in modern nation-

states, a considerable amount of scholarly attention has been devoted to the exploration of

critical responses of the aggrieved groups to the state they find themselves in. These include

"the demise of a number of abstract ideas, ideals, polities, or human rights, such as civic

liberty and freedom of expression or democracy, as well as the loss of an era, a political regime, an economic system, a historical movement, a homeland to settler colonialism, a culture or a language to the forces of globalization and so on" (Gana 2013, p.23). David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (2003) note that "melancholia, at the turn of this century, has emerged as a crucial touchstone for social and subjective formations" (p.23). Remarking on this "renewed interest in melancholia", Middeke and Ward (2011) also highlight that:

> in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, cultural theorists have adopted
>
> Freud's concept of melancholia to shed light on processes of individual identity
>
> formation, in particular with regard to gender, sexuality and ethnicity, but they
>
> have also adopted the concept to describe the refusal or the inability to mourn
>
> on more collective levels. (p.8)

This rising trend of politicised notion of melancholia is considered as a "part of an ethical turn which does not emphasise the playful postmodern position of 'everything goes' but the commitment to political and ethical questions" (Middeke & Ward 2011, p.8) of today.

Critical to this rise of "melancholic consciousness in social and psychological theory", Stephen Frosh draws attention to another aspect of postcolonial melancholic search:

> acting against the classic reading of melancholia as depressed self-
>
> destructiveness, some theorists have latched onto the idea that in 'preserving'
>
> the lost object as an unconscious trace, melancholia may provide a paradigm
>
> for the recovery of colonised histories and hence for a progressive politics of
>
> liberation. (2013, p.87)

Frosh (2013) argues that "social and psychological nomadism" (p.87) which shaped the political, cultural and intellectual environment of the twenty-first century has resulted in the rise of "sensations of rootlessness and loss" (p.87) and "this combination of excitement and loss gives rise to 'melancholic' consciousness in social and psychological theory, which has been seen as foundational for contemporary subjectivities and their solidification into identities (especially gender and race identities)" (p.87). Regarding the psychic and intellectual genealogy of this "melancholic consciousness […] and its emergence as a strand in postcolonial thinking" (p.87), Frosh (2013) suggests that postcolonial interest in melancholia manifests a "backward-looking" and "regressive search for the 'authentic' object that has been stolen and needs to be re-found" (p.87). This substantiates his claim (2013) that it is an intellectual exercise "opposing the kind of open connectivity that challenges our comfortable defences and opens up spaces for radical (personal and maybe social) change" (p.89).

However, recent studies on postcolonial subjectivity suggest that melancholic search, in colonial and postcolonial contexts, bespeaks not merely a retrospective search for the lost origin, involving, to use Frosh's words, "heritage industries" (2013, p.89), or "postimperial melancholia" of once-colonising nations in a postcolonial world (Gilroy 2005, p.99).[2]

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[2] Using melancholia as an analytical concept to map out "the morbidity of heritage" (2005, p.100) in the British setting in the aftermath of World War II, Paul Gilroy's seminal work *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2005) has demonstrated that for the other side of the colonial divide, melancholic search for the lost origin is mainly associated with "disappearance of the greatness" and denial of ongoing effects and legacies of the colonialism and imperialism. Gilroy (2005) defines this kind of psychic, cultural and political resistance of colonizing nations to detach from their privileges of the past as "postimperial melancholia", manifesting a political and cultural desire of a hegemony that disappeared "with the loss of Empire".

Conceived in these contexts, as Sam Durrant critically notes, melancholic search for postcolonial and aggrieved subjects also signifies a prospective search for "the possibility of a just future" that "lies in our ability to live in remembrance of the victims of injustice, in our ability to conjure the dead rather than bury them" (2004, p.9). Similarly, Eng and Kazanjian (2003) argue that "a better understanding of melancholic attachments to loss might depathologize those attachments, making visible not only their social bases but also their creative, unpredictable, political aspects" (p.3). As Judith Butler notes, a critical reading of loss and melancholia in colonial and postcolonial settings by the postcolonial scholars "offer a way to think about loss as constituting social, political and aesthetic relations, thereby, overcoming the conventional understanding that 'loss' belongs to a purely psychological or psychoanalytic discourse" (2003, p.467).

Approaching melancholia "as a phenomenon that is simultaneously place-and-time specific" (Bahun 2014, p.4), recent postcolonial, cultural and gender studies have demonstrated not only that "loss and its remains are [...] deeply political" (Eng & Kazanjian 2003, p.23) but, also, that our ways of working through our collective and personal losses and our psychic potentials and limitations to cope with the effects of loss deeply involve all the political, social and cultural domains.

Butler's work demonstrates that "our cultural frames for thinking the human set limits on the kinds of losses we can avow as loss" (2006, p.32). In *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997), Butler critically assesses how political, social and cultural dynamics shape the psychic structure of "gender melancholy in which masculinity and femininity emerge as the traces of an ungrieved and ungrievable love" (p.154). In *Precarious Life – The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2006), Butler further argues that our politics of love toward the other is determined by the

public domain and its dominant political and cultural discourses in the modern nation-states. Butler reminds us that in the modern nation-states, there is a "hierarchy of grief" (2006, p.32), arguing that "certain human lives are more vulnerable than others, and thus certain human lives are more grievable than others" (2006, p.30). For Butler (2006), a process of a "successful" mourning, in Freud's sense of the term, might be impossible particularly for those marginalized subjects whose lives "will not even qualify as grievable" (p.32). Thus, Butler (2006) critically asks: "after all, if someone is lost, and that person is not someone, then what and where is the loss, and how does mourning take place?" (p.32). Butler (2003) goes on to argue that the loss "becomes condition and necessity for a certain sense of community, where community does not overcome the loss, where community *cannot* overcome the loss without losing the very sense of itself as community" (p.468).

In her critical work, *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief*, Anne Anlin Cheng (2000) has proposed the term "racial melancholia" to describe "racialized" melancholic subjectivity in the US cultural context. By the term "racial melancholia," Cheng refers to "two particular aspects of American racial culture: first, dominant, white's culture's rejection of yet attachment to the racial other and, second, the ramifications that such paradox holds for the racial other, who has been placed in a suspended position" (2000, p.xi). Cheng (2000) argues that "the double malady of melancholia for the racial-ethnic subject is the condition of having to incorporate and encrypt both an impossible ideal and a denigrated self" (p.72). Examining reflections of this "double malady of melancholia" in the literary and artistic works of Asian-American and African-American writers and artists, Cheng illustrates how "racial exclusion" is expressed "within a melancholic structure" (2000, p.69) in postcolonial and diasporic literary and artistic works. Highlighting historical and material

sources of melancholia of "racialized" subjects, Cheng (2000) draws attention to the importance of "context" for a nuanced understanding of both melancholia of marginalized racial or ethnic groups in modern nation-states and the symbolic meaning of loss, mourning and melancholy in the cultural products of these groups:

> The psychoanalytic subject is universal only insofar as it posits every subjective being as historical beings, embedded in time, family and sociality [...] We should not conflate a haunted history with nonspecificity; on the contrary, haunted history alerts us to context. And it is from within this attention to contexts that we might be able to begin reenvision a politics attuned to the reality of grief in all its material and immaterial evidence. (pp.28–9)

Similarly, using melancholia as an analytical concept, Khanna (2003) demonstrates how our psychic and intellectual preferences for appointing some of our love objects as melancholic fixations, despite seeming indispensable and irreplaceable, are, in fact, deeply rooted in the political and cultural domains. In her critical work *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (2003), Khanna analyses the melancholic dynamics of anti-colonial national movements and third-world nationalisms "that emerge in melancholic remainders" (p.21). On one hand, her work attempts to formulate "an idea of the affective melancholia of postcolonials" (2003, p.17) for understanding the "different psychic lives of postcolonials" (p.17) that remained as a "dark continent" for decades for the Western psychoanalytic paradigm, emerging as "a masculinist and colonialist discipline that promoted an idea of Western subjectivity in opposition to the colonized, feminine and primitive other" (2003, p.x). On the other, her work (2003) also attempts to outline the critical function of melancholic attachments in the third-world nationalisms and the melancholic resistance of the anti-

colonial intellectual, regarded as a "critical agency" in a "colonial melancholia". Khanna uses the term "colonial melancholia" both "as a politics of affect and as a form of individuated critique" (2003, p.xii) performed by anti-colonial intellectuals. Considering "political revolutionary violence" of the colonised subject "as a form of political protest" (2003, p.23), Khanna analyses the revolutionary violence of colonized agent as "a form of melancholia in unconscious response [...] to the loss of an ideal. The ideal, in this context, is the right of subjecthood and the right not to be exploited" (2003, p.23). She describes "colonial melancholia" as a key concept for understanding the colonized and postcolonial subjectivity: "melancholia becomes the basis for an ethico-political understanding of colonial past, postcolonial presents, and utopian futures" (2003, p.30).

The melancholia models contextualised by Butler, Cheng and Khanna deepen our understanding of the melancholic subjectivities of colonial, postcolonial, diaspora and marginalized ethnic groups and their "different psychic lives" (Khanna 2003, p.17). Their critical work on a range of melancholic subjectivities provide a useful conceptual framework to "comprehend grief and loss on the part of the aggrieved, not just as a symptom but also as a dynamic process with both coercive and transformative potentials for political imagination" (Cheng 2000, p.xi). In this way, these critical readings of melancholic subjectivities of oppressed and marginalized groups also provide a useful conceptual basis for understanding and contextualizing the motif of loss, grief and melancholy inscribed in literary and artistic texts of colonial, postcolonial, diasporic and oppressed communities.

1.4. Freud and Derrida's Conceptions of Melancholic Subjectivity

This study utilises Freud and Derrida's contrasting conceptions of melancholy in its analysis of melancholy articulations in the selected novels for two distinct reasons. First, the novels analysed in this study envisage the melancholic subjectivity quite differently from each other by depicting melancholia as a psychic condition in two distinct shades, first as pathological, and secondly, as non-pathological and in some cases, as a productive form of melancholia. While Freud (1917) describes melancholy as a "clinical (major) depression, a deviant, complicated and unhealthy form of mourning" (Gross 2016, p.44), Derrida (2005) suggests that "melancholy is […] *necessary*" and "must never resign itself to idealizing introjection" (p.160). As it will become clear from the discussion, in a strict sense, the selected novels manifest the literary significations of both Freud as well as Derrida's respective notions of melancholic attachment to a lost loved object.

For instance, Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî* represents melancholia as a case of clinical depression in Freudian fashion by portraying the ego's melancholic identification with the lost love-object as a pathological condition, keeping the mourner in a psychic stuckness and on the verge of suicide. Depicting melancholy as an experience of "ego-splitting" in personality of the mourner as described by Freud (1917), Aydoğan represents melancholy not only as a form of emotional grief that makes the mourner an unfit person to make a fresh start in life but, hence, also, as a clinical disorder. In *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* and *Lehî*, Cewerî presents not only a motif of self-destructive melancholy, encasing the characters in a perpetual depressive mood, but, also, one that takes a violent form leading to the murder of a loved one. Freud's account of melancholia informs Cewerî's portrayal of melancholic personality in many respects; his novelistic characters experience loss as a melancholic depression that renders them unfit to recover from loss. But Cewerî's work also manifests the author's ambivalent notion of

melancholic subjectivity by representing the creative potential of the melancholic insistence on a lost love-object. Challenging both the self-destructive and destructive portrayals of melancholic insistence, Uzun's *Siya Evînê* depicts melancholic persistence upon a lost love-object as an emotional "fidelity" (e.g. to a lost lover) and intellectual responsibility (e.g. to the political ideal of a free homeland) in a markedly Derridean fashion by glorifying the character's acts of melancholy. In this regard, Freud's account of melancholia as a pathological condition and Derrida's description of melancholy as a non-pathological condition provides a useful framework for this study to elucidate how modern Kurdish novelists envisage the melancholic subjectivity in very different ways, despite commonly utilising melancholic suffering as an allusion to coloniality of the nation.

The second reason for taking Derrida's model of melancholy as a basis in this study, along with the Freudian notion, is that the third chapter of this study particularly focuses on the motif of "the lost other", the mourning for and the legacy of the lost other and the meaning of this legacy for the bereaved survivor in Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî*. Given the variegated perspectives afforded, Derrida's account of melancholy, contextualized around the theme of mourning for the "lost other", and Freud's conception as a pathological reaction to "the loss of a loved person," thus, provide effective frameworks to analyse the use of this melancholy motif in its connections with the issue of lost other and engagement with their legacy in the Kurdish political and cultural setting.

1.5. Freud's Account of Melancholia as a Psychic Stuckness

As briefly discussed, Freud (1917) attempts to formally addresses "the nature of grief – and its function" (Gross 2016, p.44) by proposing that "the work of mourning" (1917, p.257)

suggests two main forms: a "normal" healthy mourning which "involves a healthy, non-pathological response to the loss of a loved person (or object – physical or symbolic)" (Gross 2016, p.44) and an endless "pathological" melancholy. Despite altering his formulation of "the nature of grief" later in his 1923 essay, 'The Ego and the Id'[3], his seminal text 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917) remained one of main psychoanalytical expositions of pathological forms of melancholia as a psychic disorder. Freud (1917) describes melancholia as a mental disturbance and depressed mood (a state of stuckness over a lost love-object) through a contrast with "normal" mourning (consisting the possibility of the freeing of the subject from the lost object):

> The distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity and lowering of self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment […]; the disturbance of self-regard is absent in mourning; but otherwise the features are the same. Profound mourning, the reaction to the loss of someone who is loved, contains the same painful frame of

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[3] In 'The Ego and the Id', Freud describes the "character of the ego as an elegiac formation" (Clewell 2004, p.43) and suggests that melancholic identification with lost love-object, in fact, starts "in the individual's primitive oral phase" (Freud 1960, p.23). He defines ego as "a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes" (Freud 1960, p.24), proposing that the melancholic identification with the lost love-object "has a great share in determining the form taken by the ego and that it makes an essential contribution towards building up what is called its 'character'" (Freud 1960, p.23). Clewell (2004) argues that, by redefining "the identification process previously associated with melancholia as an integral component of mourning" (2004, p.43), Freud "collapses the strict opposition between mourning and melancholia, making melancholy identification integral to the work of mourning" (2004, p.61).

mind, the same loss of interest in the outside world – as so far as it does not recall

him - the same loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love (which would mean

replacing him) and the same turning away from any activity that is not connected

with thoughts of him. (1917, p.244)

Freud further argues that "when the work of mourning is completed, the ego becomes free

and uninhibited again" (1917, p.245). In this way, the ego regains its ability to invest in a new

"love-object"; on this account, this ability is also a critical dynamic that makes it possible for

both individuals and societies to free themselves from the futile grief of the lost love objects

of the past and build a new present and future. In his 1916 essay, 'On Transience', Freud

(1916) applies his concept of "normal" mourning to the economic, social and cultural losses

caused by World War I by emphasising the importance of the replaceability of the lost love-

object for a healthy work of mourning.[4] According to Freud, nothing other than a "successful"

mourning has the restorative potential to move the mourner out of the cycle of melancholic

mood. As Clewell (2004) also notes, "killing off the trace of the other in the self as a means to

reestablish psychic health" (p.60) is regarded as a healthy way of grieving by Freud in his early

theory of mourning, although he concedes the impossibility of "killing off the trace of the

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[4] In *On Transience* (1916), Freud argues that, although mourning is a painful experience, it "comes to a spontaneous end" after loss: "When it has renounced everything that has been lost, then it has consumed itself, and our libido is once more free (in so far as we are still young and active) to replace the lost objects by fresh ones equally or still more precious. It is to be hoped that the same will be true of the losses caused by this war [World War I]. When once the mourning is over, it will be found that our high opinion of the riches of civilization has lost nothing from our discovery of their fragility" (p.307).

other in the self" in one of his private letters about the death of his daughter, Sophie Halberstadt-Freud.[5]

For Freud, in contrast to mourning, in melancholia "the patient represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any achievement and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects to be cast out and punished" (Freud 1917, p.246). On this account, "the work of melancholia" suggests a complex psychic relation of the subject, both with oneself and with the lost love-object. In melancholia, Freud further argues that "countless separate struggles are carried out on over the object, in which hate and love contend with each other; the one seeks to detach the libido from the object, the other to maintain this position of the libido against the assault" (Ibid, p.256). Considering the "ambivalence" and "regression of libido into the ego" (p.258) as two preconditions of melancholy, Freud argues that "if the love for the object – a love which cannot be given up though the object itself is given up – takes refuge in narcissistic identification, then the hate comes into operation on this substitutive object, abusing it, debasing it, making it suffer and deriving sadistic satisfaction from its suffering" (Ibid, p.251).

Freud (1917) further notes that, in melancholia "the patient is aware of the loss which has given rise to his melancholia, but only in the sense that he knows *whom* he has lost but not

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[5] In a 1929 letter, written to his friend Ludwig Binswanger, about the death of his daughter, Freud, not only expounds on how it might be difficult to deal with loss of a loved person for the survivor but, also, admits the irreplaceability of the lost other with another love-object for the mourner: "although we know that after such a loss the acute state of mourning will subside we also know we shall remain inconsolable and will never find a substitute. No matter what may fill the gap, even if it be filled completely, it nevertheless remains something else. And, actually, this is how it should be. It is the only way of perpetuating that love which we do not want to relinquish" (1992, p.386).

what he has lost in him" (p.245). Furthermore, the melancholic ego reconstructs the lost object as an imagined figure:

> The free libido was not displaced on to another object; it was withdrawn into the ego. There, however, it was not employed in any unspecified way, but served to establish an *identification* of the ego with the abandoned object. Thus, the shadow of the object fell upon the ego and the latter could, henceforth, be judged by a special agency, as though it were an object, the forsaken object. In this way an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss and the conflict between the ego and loved person into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification. (1917, p.249)

In this grief schema, the melancholic "ego" recruits a "critical agency which is […] split off from the ego" (1917, p.247); it critically judges the rest of the ego when it "seeks to detach the libido from the [lost] object" (1917, p.256) by insisting on maintaining an attachment with the lost love-object. It is on this basis that Freud also suggests that "the critical agency […] might also show its independence" by distinguishing itself "from the rest of the ego" (1917, p.247), resulting in a challenging conflict in personality of the mourner: that of the critical agency versus the self.

1.6. Derrida's "Politics of Mourning" as a Work of "Carrying" the Lost Other

While Freud's focus is on the "painful disorder of melancholia" (1923, p.23), in contrast, Derrida, in his writings on the work of mourning, is distinctly concerned with the ethical aspect of grief, foregrounding both the value of the "lost other" and the mourner's ethical "duty" to "carry" the lost other "in self". In all his writings on mourning, Derrida examines the

possibilities of establishing a healthy relationship and "dialogue" with the lost other, the lost loved one, and building this "dialogue" in a form of mourning engaged with the legacy of the lost other. Thanks to his critical writings on mourning, "we now have new formulations, new ways of thinking about this strange, quasi-oxymoronic conjunction or disjoining of 'mourning' and 'duty'" (Royle 2009, p.78). In his writings on the deaths of his well-known colleagues and friends, collected in *The Works of Mourning* (2001) by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Nass, Derrida assesses the possibility of a "true mourning" by focusing on "the works of the deceased rather than the deceased themselves, of the book rather than the body, of the corpus rather than corpse" (Brault & Nass 2001, p.20). But Derrida's writings "not only speak of or about mourning but are themselves texts *of* or *in* mourning" (Brault & Nass 2001, p.3). As Jennifer Rushworth also highlights, "scattered throughout his extensive corpus […] Derrida's writings on grief are a curious, complex mix of the autobiographical and the theoretical; many of these texts originated as obituaries or funeral eulogies and inspired by the death of friends who were often also important twentieth-century French thinkers" (2016, p.7).

On the other hand, as Joan Kirkby notes, "Derrida's re-articulation of mourning is part of his long engagement with Freud and psychoanalytic thought" (2006, p.462). As noted by Brault and Nass (2001), he attempts "to reinvent, always in public and always in context, that is, always from within, a better politics of mourning" (p.17). Drawing upon psychoanalytic perspectives as well as ethics of loss and mourning and seemingly anticipating an obituarial reading, Derrida's corpus unfolds as a sui generis form of knowledge about the work of mourning and melancholy; it progresses in a form of mournful reflections on the ethical and psychoanalytic repercussions of the death, loss and mourning both for the lost other and

bereaved survivor. Brault and Nass, in their introduction to *The Work of Mourning* draw attention to this important character of his writings on the subject: "While any rigorous analysis of [Derrida's] texts would have to reckon with all the differences in tone, style, audience, and context, these texts are, nonetheless, part of a recognizable genre, even if there is no single apt term to describe it […] Derrida has thus opted, it seems, to forsake or abandon neither the concept of mourning given to us by psychoanalysis nor the genre of the funeral oration" (p.17). And indeed, in this theoretical and ethical attempt of "reinvention" and reformulation of mourning, a tenacious emphasis on the void left by *the dead other* and *the death of other* in "the world" emerges as a crucial parameter, deeply shaping Derrida's approach to mourning and melancholy.

For Derrida, the death of the other signifies "the death of the world" for both the deceased and the survivor:

> Death is nothing less than an end of *the* world. Not *only one* end among others, the end of someone or of something *in the world*, the end of a life or of living being […] the absolute end of the one and only world, of that which each opens as a one and only world, the end of the unique world, the end of the totality of what is or can be presented as the origin of the world for any unique living being. (2005, p.140)

In this framework, fidelity "consists in interiorizing the other and recognizing that if we are to give the dead anything it can now be only in us, the living" (Brault & Nass 2001, p.9). Derrida (2001) defines the concept of "normal mourning" described by Freud (1917) as a "consumption of the [lost] other" (p.159):

Memory and interiorization: since Freud, this is how the "normal" "work of mourning" is often described. It entails a movement in which an interiorizing idealization takes in itself or upon itself the body and voice of the other, the other's visage and person, ideally and quasi-literally devouring them. (1989, p.34)

From this perspective, rendering the work of mourning an ethical "duty," Derrida argues that the faithful survivor is "obliged to harbour […] voice of the other" (1989, p.34): "[the survivor] feels solely responsible, assigned to carry both the other and *his* world, the other and *the* world that have disappeared" (2005, p.140). Conceiving mourning in this way, the Derridean insight is that "to carry" the lost other and "*his* world" for the survivor is not to "idealize or incorporate the other's world into my own, not to make of that world *a* world, but to live with the melancholy of the end of the world […] at the death of friend" (Naas 2008, p.233). He describes the bereaved survivor as the only place wherein the lost other can "live" after his death and discusses the ethical "duty" of the mourner to mediate that lost other's "voice be heard" (2005, p.141) without consuming the "voice" and "uniqueness" of the deceased:

Being at a loss also has to do with a duty: to let the friend speak, to turn speech over to him, his speech, and especially not to take it from him, not to take it in his place […] to allow him to speak, to occupy his silence or to take up speech oneself only in order, if this is possible, to give it back to him" (2001, p.95).

Against Freud's formulation of melancholy as a pathological form of mourning (a "failure" of grieving the loss and leaving behind of the lost other), Derrida is distinctively appreciative of melancholy as a form of ethical "fidelity" to the lost other:

According to Freud mourning consists in carrying the other in the self […] Melancholy welcomes the failure and the pathology of this mourning. But if I *must* (and this is ethics itself) carry the other in me in order to be faithful to him, in order to respect his singular alterity, a certain melancholy must still protest against normal mourning […] It must rise up against what Freud says of it with such assurance, as if to confirm the norm of normality. The "norm" is nothing other than the good conscience of amnesia. It allows us to *forget* that to keep the other within the self. (2005, p.160)

Crucially, Derrida also argues that "mourning is an interiorization of the dead other, but it is also the contrary": both "the impossibility of completing one's mourning" and "the will not to mourn are also forms of fidelity" (1995, p.152). Against Freud's formulation of mourning based on the duality of "normal mourning" and "pathological melancholia", the concept of "semi-mourning" is deployed to describe these two forms of "fidelity" to the lost other:

If to mourn and not to mourn are two forms of fidelity and two forms of infidelity, the only thing remaining – and this is where I speak of semi-mourning – is an experience between the two. I cannot complete my mourning for everything I lose, because I want to keep it, and at the same time, what I do best is to mourn, is to lose it, because by mourning, I keep it inside me. And it is this terrible logic of mourning that I talk about all the time […] this terrible fatality of mourning: semi-mourning or double mourning. The psychoanalytic discourse, despite its subtlety and necessity, does not go into this fatality, this necessity: the double constraint of mourning. (1995, p.152).

On this argument, the survivor's "interior dialogue" (2005, p.138) with the lost other, which "let[s] the other speak" (1989, p.139), is also a condition of "being self" for the survivor rather than being a psychic burden as described by Freud (1917). Adopting Husserl's account of the other and intersubjectivity, Derrida (2005) argues that "I *must* carry the other, and carry *you*, the other must carry me […] even there where the world is no longer between us or beneath our feet, no longer ensuring mediation or reinforcing a foundation for us" (p.161). For Derrida it is our capacity "to carry" the other that makes us who we are:

> Before I *am*, I *carry*. Before *being me*, I *carry the other*. I carry *you* and must do so, I owe it to you. I remain *before [devant], owing*, in debt and owing to you before you. I must keep myself in your reach, but I must also be your grasp. Always singular and irreplaceable, these laws or injunctions remain untranslatable from one to the other, from some to others, from one language to another. (1989, p.162)

Moreover, as noted by Joan Kirkby, Derrida appreciates the work of mourning "as the opportunity for a continuing engagement with the legacy of the dead who remain within us and yet beyond us and who look at us with a look that is not ours to do with what we will, but a look that is a call to responsibility" (2006, p.461). In Derrida's writings, an engagement with the lost other's "works", "deeds or signature" emerges both as a way as well as a part of (his) mourning: "Derrida at once bears witness to a unique, personal relationship with the deceased and pays tribute to their public life and accomplishments, their words and deeds, sometimes even attempting to draw inspiration from the way they approached life and death in word and deed" (Brault & Nass 2001, p.20).

Adding to burgeoning study of the question explored by Freudian notions of melancholy, such insights inevitably were brought to bear on literary criticism and as noted by Kirkby (2006): "Derridean mourning significantly revises classic psychoanalytic accounts of mourning, reworking and combining conceptual apparatus from psychoanalysis, philosophy and literature" (p.461). His critical work on mourning deepens our understanding of the mourning by devoting dedicated attention to the ethical aspects of loss, grief and melancholy. Describing the work of "carrying" the lost other "in us" as an ethical responsibility, Derrida affirms and thus gives due attention to the other dimension of mourning as the act of internalization of "the image, idol, or ideal of the other who is dead and lives only in us" (1989, p.6); his description as a non-pathological labour is to the point. Conceiving the work of "semi-mourning" as a mechanism that may provide us with an emotional and ethical basis to keep alive the lost other "in the self" and to maintain our "dialogue" with the lost other, his insights help provide a more nuanced account of grief and melancholy inscribed in the literary texts.

In what follows, the discussion provides an overview of existing literary studies focusing on the representation of loss, mourning and melancholia as a trope, theme and discourse in modern or modernist novels. As a backdrop, it also includes an overview of cultural context in which melancholy appears in the modern novel and its literary representations with the objective of demarcating the contrast the modern Kurdish novel presents in terms of the aesthetics of loss and melancholy. It demonstrates that while melancholia is also a matter of "formal inflection" and "melancholic dynamics" (Bahun 2014, p.10) as in its usually figurative representations in the modern and modernist novel, in the case of the modern Kurdish novel, the characteristic concern is realist descriptions of loss and melancholic suffering or

resistance; this is the contrast it provides with its Western counterpart where the use of melancholy motif is relatively elaborate as an aesthetic device.

1.7. The Representation of Melancholia in the Modern Novel

In *The Theory of the Novel*, György Lukács refers to the modern novel as an "epic of the world that has been abandoned by God" (2006, p.88). Lukács (2006) believes it is "the ideal form for the attempt of modern self to find new means of definition given the apparent collapse of the old means" (Penny 2011, p.175). He regards the "melancholy" as the condition of modernity that led to "the crisis of selfhood" (Penny 2011, p.175). For Lukács, modernity meant the loss of a world as we know it:

> The melancholy of the adult state arises from our dual, conflicting experience that, on the one hand, our absolute, youthful confidence in an inner voice has diminished or died and, on the other hand, that the outside world to which we now devote ourselves in our desire to learn its ways and dominate it will never speak to us in a voice that will clearly tell us our way and determine our goal.
>
> (Lukács 2006, p.86)

The "melancholy" of the loss of the world as we know it as articulated by Lukács, can also be taken as forming a main area of interest for literary studies focusing on motifs of mourning and melancholy in the modern novel or performed by it. The "loss of metaphysical guarantees" and "a coherent and autonomous self" (Sánchez-Pardo 2003), the erasing of conventional belief systems and the emergence of "a new time-consciousness" (Flatley 2008) and the "epistemological uncertainty" and "existential crisis" of the subject (Enderwitz 2015) have also been proposed as defining characteristics of the "modernist melancholia" (Sánchez-

Pardo 2003) by scholarship, yielding a view of the modern novel as an aesthetic response to the loss of an old world. Informed more or less by similar accounts of modernity and its transformative power in the life of the individual and society, past and present scholarship on modern literature and culture not only reveals the intersections between modernism and melancholy that emerges in the modern novel, but also highlights the new aesthetic forms melancholy takes in the Western novelistic writing since the beginning of the twentieth century. Drawing from the findings of this scholarship, specifically the critical perspective afforded by Sanja Bahun's *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning* (2014), M. Wollaeger and Kevin J. H. Dettmar conclude that "what's new in modernism is that melancholia is not simply depicted in, say, the psychology of a central character; it is *textually performed*: lack of closure with respect to plot is thus in part a formal expression of melancholia's interminability" (2014, p.ix.).

In *Culture of the Death Drive: Melanie Klein and Modernist Melancholia* (2003), Sánchez-Pardo uses the term "modernist melancholia" to refer specifically to the "ways of representing melancholia and its symbolics of loss" (p.13) in the literary and artistic works of modernist writers and artists such as Virginia Woolf, Rene Magritte, Lytton Strachey, Djuna Barnes and Countee Cullen. Sánchez-Pardo notes that "modernism ranks among those projects that both elaborate a critique of modernity from ideological and aesthetic postulates and show signs of a shattering, fragmentation, or splitting of consciousness that finds its correlate in the shattering world" (2003, p.13). Based on this argument, Sánchez-Pardo further proposes that "as an aesthetic phenomenon, modernist melancholia can be understood […] as the work's memorializing of the 'cultural and emotional losses of our

pasts'" (2003, p.388). Thus, modernity itself constitutes a habitation for modernist melancholia:

> Modernist literary discourses are haunted by the spectre of object loss: loss of a coherent and autonomous self, loss of social order in which stability reigned, loss of metaphysical guarantees and in some cases loss and fragmentation of an empire. In modernist narratives, the obsessive reverberation of the individual's lost objects of love comes to shatter his or her identity. With regard to the interimplications of narrative and psychoanalytic selves, the crises and disintegration of old notions of the self find expression in a desperate search for the subject as the lost object par excellence. (2003, p.18)

Going further, Sánchez-Pardo (2003) marks the excessive figurative representation of loss and melancholia as one of the most important characteristics of modernist cultural productions:

> The melancholic's cultural productions are fractured. There is an inherent inability to symbolize, to draw the boundary between the literal and the nonliteral. The result of this is the excessive (modernist) concern for the form, which is conceived of not only as an extension of content but as the content itself. Thus […] there is an emphasis on the literalization of the form that is figured in the elusiveness of empty tropes such as the image of the frame with nothing inside, the hysterical overacting of masquerade, the traumatic repetition of an enigmatic scene, or the paranoid splitting and metonymic exchange of spare parts. (p.189)

In the same vein, in his study titled *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (2008), Jonathan Flatley presents reflections of "modern melancholia" in three

modern literary texts, including Andrei Platonov's *Chevengur* [1928], Henry James' *Turn of the Screw* [1898] and W.E.B. Du Bois' seminal *The Souls of Black Folk* [1903]), through a discussion of the "aesthetic strategies" or in Flatley's words, "melancholic practices" of modernist writers in their portrayals of loss and melancholy (2008, p.163). Sharing a similar perspective with Sánchez-Pardo, Flatley (2008) notes that "modernization has been experienced as loss" (p.31), pointing out that "in either the subjective or epochal, collective sense, modernity and loss would seem to be inextricably linked: to be 'modern' is to be separated from the past" (p.29). Flatley further (2008) argues that "modernity – in its meanings as a particular experience of time and as a set of concrete transformations of the material world of everyday life – is related to the experiences of loss" (p.28). He traces the relationship in between the "modernist melancholia" and melancholic subjectivities represented in modernist novels and the experience of modernity, marked by processes of industrialization, the rise of secularism and erasure of conventional belief systems, a new perception of time-space, urbanization, the cultural and racial policy of modern states and the destruction caused by the world wars.

Adopting a similar approach to Sánchez-Pardo (2003) and Flatley (2008), Anne Enderwitz (2015) contributes to the discussion on the relationship between modernity and melancholy in *Modernist Melancholia: Freud, Conrad and Ford* (2015), proposing that "the sense of modernity as rupture may produce feelings of loss" (p.14). Enderwitz traces the reflections of "modernist melancholia" in works of Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford to illustrate how "a melancholic experience of the world that combines epistemological uncertainty, existential crisis and linguistic scepticism" (p.18) is represented in the modern novel. From these premises, Enderwitz (2015) goes on to argue that, in modern novels, "melancholia does not appear foremost as the result of concrete event or childhood trauma. It is, rather, an

experiential mode" (p.3) and this "modernist melancholia is not only historical but, also, textual: it is a melancholia of signification and meaning" (2015, p.4). On this argument, what distinguishes modernist texts is that the "historical melancholia and the melancholia of signification go hand in hand" (2015, p.18).

Along the same line, in *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning* (2014), Sanja Bahun has critically investigated the significance of melancholia in several modernist literary texts (Andrei Bely's *Petersburg*, Franz Kafka's *The Castle* and Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*). Complementing Flatley and Enderwitz' argument, Bahun contends that "modernist melancholia is inextricably bound to contemporaneous social history: it is informed by and almost obsessively concerned with the psycho-social rifts" (2015, p.10). This gives rise to a conception of "modernist melancholia as a historically contingent mood-bending and an affect-trace of problematic relationship with what is, consciously or unconsciously, experienced as loss; a social index" (2015, p.4). As a genre, the modern novel, Bahun argues, "is an apt case study for probing the inscriptions of historical melancholia in the modernist aesthetic body" and goes on to propose that "insofar as modernist literature can be understood as an alternative mourning rite directed at a specific 'climate of loss', it is distinguished by the unusual tendency to give form to the very impossibility to mourn" (2015, p.9-10). Defining this melancholic response to loss as a "cultural practice of *countermourning*", Bahun concludes that, in the modernist texts "the melancholic dynamics are not – or not only – depicted (through characters, their mediation and their relations)", but, also, are textually "*performed*" (Ibid, p.9-10).

Contributing to the debate with a focus on the shift in the aesthetic conceptualisation of the motif, in her *Mourning, Modernism, Postmodernism* (2009), Tammy Clewell demonstrates

how modernist writers (e.g. Woolf and Faulkner), critical of "Victorian mourning practices" and "social rituals of nineteenth-century grief" (p.1), present a model of "anti-consolatory" or "ongoing" mourning by advocating "sustained rather than severed attachments to loss" (p.6). Clewell regards this "new way of thinking about loss" as one of the unique aspects of the "aestheticism of the modernist novel":

> Modernist aesthetics […] engages an innovative conception of mourning; it not only reflects a shift in emphasis from the communal to the psychic dimensions of grief, but, also, spurns consolation and the conventional aim of closure. In so doing, the aesthetic practices of this experimental fiction established a politically progressive politics of mourning for the culture of modernity. (2009, p.2)

According to Clewell (2009), "modernist novels filled a void in the culture of modernity […] by creating a social space and shared language for grief, a literary mourning discourse that negotiates, significantly, the intersection between the exigencies of public life and the seemingly private zones of bereaved consciousness" (p.14). In this way, Clewell's distinct emphasis that modern novelists "regarded modernist fiction as uniquely equipped to engage vexed experiences of individual and cultural loss" (2009, p.13) provides yet another pertinent point of confluence with the modern novel that any examination of its modern Kurdish kind would do well to consider as one of its distinct aspects.

Using the modern novel as a case study to examine the motif of loss, mourning and melancholy "in the modernist aesthetic body" (Bahun 2014, p.10), the foregoing studies detailed amply illustrate that the markedly figurative representation of "anxiety of object loss" (Sánchez-Pardo 2003, p.189) is one of distinguishing features of the modern novel.

Sánchez-Pardo's (2003) argument that, in the modernist novel, "melancholia emerges as a fictional (or visual) mode of mastering anxiety" (p.189). Clewell (2009) complements this account by pointing out to the fact that the motif of loss and melancholy in the modern novel, "is embedded" not only in the "thematic content" but, also, "in the aesthetic forms" (p.6). Bahun (2014) pertinently locates this in its lived historical context, arguing that "modernist melancholia distinguishes itself by representing the historical content through formal inflection rather than description" (p.10). And relevant to this examination of modern Kurdish novel is also Enderwitz's (2015) conception of "modernist melancholia" emerging in the modern novels as an iteration of "a melancholia of signification and meaning, as much as a melancholia of lost origin and empty iterations" (p.4).

1.8. The Context and Description of Melancholy in Modern Kurdish Novel

These critical perspectives provided by the modernist scholarship on the socio-political *content* and aesthetic *form* of melancholy in the Western modern novel also afford a useful comparative basis for the analysis of the *politics* and *aesthetics* of melancholy of the modern Kurdish novel. This is withstanding the disparateness of both the history, the conditions of emergence and development of these distinct novel traditions as well as the markedly different literary strategies and motivations for utilising the melancholy motif. Compared with the representation of melancholy in the modern novel, two major differences can be identified in its use in the modern Kurdish novels. First, in the modern Kurdish novels, the motif does not constitute a crisis of "meaning" caused by modernity; instead, it bespeaks a state of loss, suffering and grief caused by the political oppression and violence of the nation-state for the character. Second, the novels analysed in this study are markedly concerned with the socio-political and socio-cultural setting in which loss and melancholy appears and

with "descriptions" of melancholic suffering experienced by the character in these settings as opposed to "literalization of the form" (Sanchez-Pardo 2010, p.189) in their depictions of melancholy.

While the melancholy motif is utilised to contrasting effects in noticeably different settings by the authors selected for this study, the key context of melancholy is invariably the socio-political "crisis" and losses experienced by the oppressed nation and the individual under conditions of colonial oppression. The motif is generally used to describe the suffering, loss, grief, disappointments and dilemmas experienced by the (political) character during the political struggle for the freedom of the lost homeland. Analogously, the grieving "ego" represented in the selected novels is what may be regarded as a *politicised-ego* that has the potential to reflect and represent the political life of the suffering nation during this struggle. For instance, representing the loss of homeland as a primary loss for the Turkey's Kurds around the life story of an early twentieth-century Kurdish political figure and intellectual (Memduh Selim Beg), Uzun uses melancholy motif to represent the melancholic insistence of Kurdish political subject upon the political ideal of a free homeland and nationhood in *Siya Evînê*. In *Reş û Spî*, Aydoğan uses the melancholy motif to represent not only the inconsolable grief of those who lost their loved ones in the Kurdish political struggle for the freedom of the homeland, but also elicits the melancholy of the relatives of martyrs unable to engage with the political legacy of their loved ones. In *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* and *Lehi*, Cewerî presents loss, suffering and melancholy as an intergenerational fate, informing the lives of two political generations (1970s and 1990s) by employing the melancholy motif to invoke the agonies, grieves, disappointments and dilemmas of two political generations who struggled for the liberation of the homeland and paid a great price during this struggle.

Furthermore, in contrast to the modern (Western) novel, where themes of loss and melancholia also emerge as a matter of "formal inflection" (Bahun 2014), the modern Kurdish novel is arguably less concerned with the "form" in its representation of melancholy. In the narratives they construct, Kurdish novelists are mainly concerned with the "thematic content" (Clewell 2009, p.6) of loss and the "description" of melancholic suffering by the character. Hence, the novels analysed in this study are mainly concerned with the narration of political, social and cultural dynamics underpinning the melancholy of the character, rather than "textually" performing "the melancholic dynamics" (Bahun 2014) as found in the Western modern novel.

1.9. Reading of the Melancholy Motif in Modern Kurdish Novels in Context

The excessive interest in description of the political origin of loss and the socio-political sources of melancholy by the selected novels also determine the reading strategy and method of this study. It provides the motivation and encouragement for what may be regarded as an undue amount of attention paid to the political, social and cultural connotations of the melancholy motif at the expense of ignoring the "textual" aspects of melancholy. With this specific emphasis, this study distinguishes as one that focuses on the context in which melancholic subjectivity emerges in the novels and the specific political, social and cultural implications of this representation of melancholic subjectivity for the Kurdish community in Turkey.

The use of the melancholy motif around "the psychology of a central character" by the novels also provide the motivation for the analysis of melancholic suffering or its performance by the characters. For instance, *Siya Evînê* represents melancholy entirely around feelings and

thoughts of the central character and describes how the loss (or lack) of a free homeland opens up a psychic and intellectual void in the life and personality of a national intellectual. In *Reş û Spî*, reflections of the "work of melancholia" caused by the loss of a loved one is represented merely around the psychology of central character; the "interminability" of melancholic suffering is narrated through the endless "tears" of the character, rather than finding its aesthetic articulation in "the gaps, ellipses and silences condensed" in the "aesthetic structure of [the] text" (Clewell 2009, p. 10) as in modernist novels. Although the motif of the character's "ego splitting" into two different personalities becomes a kind of formal aesthetic device to represent melancholy suffering, as a negotiation of the legacy of a death between two characters, *Reş û Spî*'s main concern is not the "literalization of the form" (Sanches-Pardo 2003), but essentially a realist representation of the "content" of the loss and melancholy suffering by the Kurdish individual and community in Turkey. Despite Cewerî's excessive concern for literary form, evidenced with his sparing use of the "defamiliarization" technique (Sanchez-Pardo 2003, p.387) in the narration, melancholy motifs are mainly depicted around the psychology of central characters (Temo, Lehî and Alan). The suffering of loss and melancholy is not inscribed in "gaps, ellipses and silences" in the novel; rather, it is the characters' repetitive and implicitly didactic dialogues which expresses the interminability of their grieving of a loss and melancholic suffering: that Alan (the author) is in "a severe melancholy mood" (*Lehî*, p.152), Lehî is in "a cycle of endless grief" (*Lehî*, p.24) for her lost female "honour", Temo's eyes "have suffocated in a severe sadness and there aren't any signs of desire for living on them" (*EYB*, p.18). Although both these Cewerî's novels have an open-ended finale refusing to provide a narrative closure, the "lack of closure with respect to plot" in these novels do not imply "a formal expression of melancholia's interminability" (Wollaeger

and Dettmar 2014); rather it is an allusion to keeping the reader curious about the crime act of "melancholic murderer" (Temo in *Ez ê yekî bikujim*) or the fate of the victim of crime act (Alan in *Lehî*). *Ez ê yekî bikujim* leaves the reader in doubt as to who the male character (Temo) kills at the end of story, which we only learn in the opening of *Lehî;* and *Lehî* leaves the reader wondering whether Alan is "dead" or has been "murdered" at the end of its story, which we learn in the finale of Cewerî's latest novel, *Derza Dilê Min* (2020).

In the discussion of the melancholy motif in the selected novels, a set of critical readings are engaged with, such as the modern history of Turkey's Kurds, the rise and development of the Kurdish national movements and the legacies of critical political events in Turkey that have had a profound impact on the social and cultural life of the Kurds in the last half century (e.g. the 12 September 1980 military coup and the unknown murders of the 1990s). In this regard, this study chiefly follows the current trend of postcolonial literary studies, which have examined motifs of loss, grief and melancholy in the postcolonial novels within the wider context of colonialism and its legacies. The methodological approach of two literary studies, Durrant's *Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning* (2004) and Nouri Gana's *Signifying Loss – Towards a Poetics of Narrative Mourning* (2011), particularly provided the inspiration for the present study as a reading of motifs of loss and melancholy in the modern Kurdish novel.

Analysing motifs of mourning and melancholy in the novels of three contemporary postcolonial writers from distinct geographies and histories (J.M. Coetzee, Wilson Harris and Toni Morrison), Durrant (2004) has critically read the melancholia of racialized others in modern nation-states not merely as an issue of "autobiography" but, also, of the "historiography" of colonialism and its new forms in modern nation-states. In postcolonial

novels, Durrant (2004) notes, "insofar as […] characters are not simply mimetic representations of individual subjects, their grief cannot simply be regarded as a private affair" (p.10). Durrant further argues that the "grief" of postcolonials and racialized others bears a "historical weight" (2004, p.24), thus, the "melancholic rituals" of the characters represented in these texts "need to be reinterpreted as modes of collective mourning" (2004, p.11). Similarly, in his analysis of the significance of mourning and melancholy in the works of James Joyce, Jamaica Kincaid, Tahar Ben Jelloun and Elias Khoury, Gana (2011) argue that "the melancholic affective disposition of the postcolonial subject (which is historically produced)" (p.39) can be understood not only within the psychic context of the self but in the broader historical context of the colonial experience. Gana (2011) reads the melancholia of colonized and postcolonials "not only at the level of egoic history, but, also, at the collective level of history" (p.39). In this way, Durrant (2004) and Ghana's (2011) approach to the mourning and melancholy motifs in the postcolonial novels also provides a useful methodological framework for readings of the melancholy motif in modern Kurdish novels especially with respect to this collective dimension of the questions involved.

The Kurdish novelists whose novels are subject to analysis in this study often alert us about the political and "historical weight" (Durrant 2004) of the melancholy of characters. They represent Kurdish melancholic subjectivity as a psychic phenomenon that is essentially determined by the socio-political realities of the Kurdish society under Turkish oppressive rule, often at the expense of overriding the individual and psychological aspect of the "melancholic rituals" of the characters. They often draw attention to an implicit correlation between loss and Kurdish political life through the intersection of the Kurdish melancholic subjectivity and the socio-political conditions of the oppressed nation conveyed. With such

general determinations of the particular, in the narratives constructed, the melancholic acts of the characters also imply the collective pain, loss, grief and resistance of the nation in general. In *Siya Evînê*, the melancholic fidelity of Memduh Selim Beg to the lost homeland and to the political ideal of a free homeland also involves a collective Kurdish loss, set as it is within the context of a century-old Kurdish melancholic insistence upon the political ideal of a free homeland. In *Reş û Spî*, on the other hand, the melancholic sufferings of the central character do not merely signify how the loss of a loved one might be experienced by an individual "like an open wound" (Freud 1917, p.253), taking the form of melancholic predicament, but it also expresses the suffering, grief and melancholic dilemmas of thousands of Kurdish families who lost their loved ones in the political "unknown murders" of the 1990s. In *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim*, the "melancholic murder" committed by the main male character also represents the devastating legacy of the 12 September military regime for the Kurdish society and individual. Cewerî does not locate the motif of this melancholic murder merely in the psychology of the "melancholic murderer", but also in legacy of the 12 September regime and Diyarbakır military prison in the 1980s. Taking a contrasting perspective, in *Lehî*, the melancholy of the main female character about an honour-related loss provides yet another aspect of the social context presented with the narrative it constructs around the devastating legacy of the state violence and the impasse faced by politically active Kurdish female subjects in dealing with loss in a traditional society during the struggle for national liberation.

So conceived, the selected novels' strict engagement with the political and social context of the melancholic subjectivity accounts for the alternating reading method of the study too. In an attempt to render a comprehensive early consideration of the melancholy motif in the modern Kurdish novel, the readings therefore alternates between examinations of the

psychological meaning of characters' "melancholic rituals" in psychoanalytic discourse and discussions of the political, social and cultural implications of these specific melancholy articulations and their historical and political settings.

Attempting to understand the forms of melancholic grief represented in modern Kurdish novels in the light of the approaches of loss, mourning and melancholy, this study is the first of its kind bringing the psychoanalytic insights into burgeoning field of the Kurdish literary studies and criticism. This is significant in that, as rightly noted by Bocheńska (2014), this field of literary criticism and studies have so far been mainly preoccupied with the Kurdish novel through "the prism of national identity" as evidenced by a marked concern with the significations of the nation, homeland, history and collective memory in this novelistic project, often relying on the political interpretive methods at the expense of overlooking the potentials of other interpretive methods. An overview of the existing Kurdish literary scholarship provided in the following section suggests that while the field of Kurdish literary criticism has undergone a considerable period of development in the last decade and despite the diversification of interest beginning to be shown to different aspects of the Kurdish novel, the number of literary studies that bring new critical interpretive methods and readings to bear on the Kurdish novel is still very limited.

1.10. An Overview of Literary Studies and Critical Literature on the Kurdish Novel

Hashem Ahmadzadeh's book, *Nation and Novel – A Study of Persian and Kurdish Narrative Discourse* (2003), the first comprehensive scholarly work of its kind on the Kurdish novel, engages with the issue of national identity, the formation and construction of Kurdish identity, nationalism and political life as constructed in Kurdish novels through a comparison

of the Kurdish novelistic "discourse" with Persian novelistic one on these questions. It provides a critical account of how the emergence of Kurdish nationalism contributed to the rise of the Kurdish novel, highlighting "the preconditions of the rise of the novel in both Persian and Kurdish literature" (p.10) and the relationship between the emergence of novels in Iranian and Kurdish societies, while contextualising this analysis within the development of "journalism, translation and the printing industry" in these settings. Ahmadzadeh (2003) argues that the "Kurdish novel is necessarily linked to Kurdish nationalism and that the fortune of the Kurdish novel is mainly related to the aspirations of Kurdish nationalism" (p.303). He considers the rise of Kurdish national consciousness and the emergence of the Kurdish novel as parallel phenomena, emphasising that "the interrelationship of the Kurdish cultural and political nationalism is a determining factor in the emergence of Kurdish novel as, in [Benedict] Anderson's terms, a form of imagining" (2003, p.168). Through an examination of Kurdish novels selected from different parts of Kurdistan, Ahmadzadeh concludes that "in the case of the Kurdish novel, the search for a national identity is strongly reflected in the longing for a Kurdish homeland and national sovereignty" (2003, p.301).

Özlem Belçim Galip's comparative analysis of 100 Kurdish novels of Turkish Kurdistan (in Kurdish language), *Imagining Kurdistan: Identity, Culture and Society* (2015), provides yet another critical examination of the Kurdish novel and its cultural function in imagining and reconstructing Kurdish national identity, community and homeland. Galip's study demonstrates that the representation of Kurdistan and Kurdish ethnic identity and language constitutes one of the dominant themes of Kurdish novels of Turkey's Kurds. Considering Kurdish novels as cultural artefacts which Kurdish novelists use as a tool "to express their political views and ideologies", Galip highlights that "Kurdistan, as the ancestral of homeland

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of Kurds, becomes one of the unifying elements uniting the Kurdish imagined community"
(2015, p.222). She further argues that "Kurdistan, which is necessarily part of a political
argument, is also the main subject of Kurdish novelistic discourse through the emotional
attachment or specific disposition involved in belonging to Kurds as a nation and through its
significance as the homeland in mobilizing the national community" (p.222). Relevant to the
questions this study concerns, her study, importantly, also proposes that "the most crucial
feature, which most of the [Kurdish] novels have in common, is the use of memory as a source
of themes and information" (p.222).

Other important contributions, on the scholarly level, to Kurdish literary studies and criticism
include three unpublished PhD dissertations, including Kaveh Ghobadi's *Subjectivity in
Contemporary Kurdish Novels: Recasting Kurdish Society, Nationalism, and Gender* (2015),
Ameen Abdulqader Omar's *The Iraqi Kurdish Novel, 1970-2011: A Genetic-Structuralist
Approach* (2016) and Servet Erdem's *Political Fictions and Fictional Politics: A Comparative
Study of the Political Unconscious in the Turkish and Kurdish Novel* (2018) as well as a book
chapter by Joanna Bocheńska (2018) and several articles focusing on the representation of a
set of themes and motifs in the Kurdish novel.

Ghobadi's critical examination of the representation of "subjectivity" in Kurdish Sorani novels,
from Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan published in the first decade of the twenty-first century,
illustrates that "experimentation with new modes of writing and narrative techniques are the
common feature" (2015, p.3) in contemporary Kurdish novels. Ghobadi examines the
relationship between adaptation of modernist and postmodernist narrative modes and
techniques by contemporary Kurdish novelists writing in Sorani and new forms of subjectivity
emerging in these texts, suggesting that to the extent that contemporary Kurdish novelists

engage in modern and postmodern narrative forms, the imagination of subjectivity varies in their works. Through a close reading of works of Bextiyar Elî and Sherzad Hassan (from Iraqi Kurdistan) and Eta Nehayî, Sharam Qawami and Fatah Amiri (from Iranian Kurdistan), Ghobadi develops an argument that, contrary to the works of early Kurdish novelists, subjectivity emerges more "fragmented and passive" in the works of modern Kurdish novelists; he further highlights that "the [Kurdish] society that is represented in these [contemporary] novels appears to have separated from its high values and ideals" (p.4).

On the other hand, in his analysis of Iraqi Kurdish novels published between 1970 and 2011, Omar (2016) has applied literary critic Lucien Goldmann's theory of "genetic structuralism" to the Kurdish novel. He focuses on "the influence of both the political and economic conditions on the theme and structure of the Iraqi Kurdish novel from 1970 to 2011" (2016, p.8). Omar's study can be considered, as he himself puts it, as an example of "the branch of the sociology of literature, particularly the sociology of the novel" (Omar 2016, p.8) which investigates the relationship between "the development of the Kurdish novel and Kurdish society"; its main argument is that "there is an obvious link between the development of the Iraqi Kurdish novel and the socio-political context" (2016, p.227). His study is yet another example of the literary studies attempting to demonstrate that "Kurdish novel takes shape from and within political and socio-economic developments" (p.222) in the Kurdish society and homeland and to highlight "the socio-political background" of the Kurdish novelistic writing and their thematic foci.

The focus of Erdem's study (2018) too is mainly the "fictional politics" constructed in the works of Kurdish as well as Turkish novelists. Erdem's comparative analysis of these two disparate novelistic traditions is one of the recent studies giving due attention to the

representation of the politics and national identity in the Kurdish novels as well as highlighting the "instrumentalization" of literature for political purposes by Kurdish novelists. Examining "the politicisation of literary texts" (p.5) by Kurdish and Turkish novelists, Erdem's study is mainly concerned with "comparing contexts" such as "the larger picture of texts, subtexts, and political/social/historical contexts" (2018, p.7); it affords a critical account of how the politics of "language, love, religion and history", which, he argues, emerge as "the most common novelistic themes" in the Kurdish and Turkish novels, are put to operation in the texts and how these motifs are "inherently heavily politicised and ethno-nationalistically charged" (2018, p.5) by the Kurdish and Turkish novelists. Through an analysis of novels from Kurdish literature (e.g. Hesenê Metê's *Êş*, Mehmed Uzun's *Ronî Mîna Evînê Tarî Mîna Mirinê*, Erebê Şemo's *Dimdim* and Turkish literature (e.g. Esat Mahmut Karakurt's *Dağları Bekleyen Kız*, Orhan Pamuk's *Kar* and Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana*), Erdem highlights the relationship between the politics and imagined politics of these novelistic traditions. He argues that "in the fictional works of Kurdish and Turkish writers, politics is not a mere content; most of the time, literary production is itself a form of politics. Particularly in the Kurdish context, we could read literary texts like very long placards, or very detailed news, objections in courtrooms, confessions signed forcibly, petitions written hopelessly, and so forth, as much as aesthetic and literary productions" (2018, p.4). His study critically reveals how literary productions influence "Turkish and Kurdish political minds and vice versa" (p.6). Erdem (2018) considers the "politicisation" of literary texts by the Kurdish and Turkish "literary actors", whom, he suggests, have failed "in adopting a transformative politics and developing fully autonomous literatures" (p.5), thereby going onto consider them as a cultural obstacle for "solution of the persistent political and literary questions in Turkey" (p.5).

Despite this proliferated scholarly interest in the representation of national identity and politics in Kurdish novels, it is worth also noting that there has been an increase in the number of studies focusing on different motifs in the Kurdish novel through new readings and concerns for other aspects of the Kurdish novel. Bocheńska's book chapter, titled 'Between Honour and Dignity. Kurdish Literary and Cinema Narratives and Their Attempt to Rethink Identity and Resistance' (2018), can be considered as one of these original studies making an important contribution to the field of Kurdish literary criticism. It critically examines the Kurdish (classical) narratives and modern novelistic texts in the light of philosophical and ethical concept and issues. Using oral folk stories, short stories, modern novels as well as cinema works as primary sources, Bocheńska focuses on "the ethical transformation" (p.35), "moral imagination" (p.66), changing perception of female "chastity", "mercy" and "forgiveness" in Kurdish society within a historical framework and traces the aesthetic reflections of these motifs in the literary texts. Providing critical insights into modern Kurdish novels, Bocheńska's work brings distinct ethical perspectives to bear on the domain of Kurdish literary criticism; it demonstrates how modern Kurdish novelists offer "a new sense of honour" (2018, p.61), "love" and "forgiveness". Although her examination of concepts of the "honour", "dignity", "mercy" and "forgiveness" is situated within a wider historical and ethnographical setting and involves an examination of distinct literary genres and texts (e.g. oral and written, classical and modern, literary and artistic texts), her nuanced account and analysis of these motifs in Kurdish novels renders this study a very important contribution to the field of Kurdish literary criticism, pointing out to the different potentials the Kurdish novelistic texts have. Bocheńska's 2014 article, 'Kurdish Contemporary Literature in Search of *Ordo Amoris*. Some Reflections on the Kurdish Literary Tradition and Ethics', is yet another

example of this original reading practise of paying timely attention to the "ethical" features of Kurdish novelistic texts. Covering an analysis of Ehmedê Xanî's *Mem û Zin*, written in 1692, as well as modern Kurdish novels such as Uzun's *Rojek ji rojên Evdalê Zeynikè*, Cewerî's *Ez ê yekî bikujim*, Metê's *Labîrenta Cinan* and Jan Dost's *Mijabad*, Bocheńska's work shows how "ethical issues are unquestionably one of the most important topics undertaken by Kurdish writers. The *ordo amoris* idea of Max Scheler allows us to bring to light the most significant ethical problems which can be treated as the starting point in contemporary discussions devoted to Kurdish works" (2014, p.53). In another article, 'In search of moral imagination that tells us "who the Kurds are": Toward a new theoretical approach to modern Kurdish literature' (2016), she focuses, once again, on the concept of "moral imagination" and reflections of the "ethics of identity" emerging in Kurdish literary texts; she highlights that "the ethical dimension of Kurdish literature is an inseparable part of Kurdish identity disputes, which dominate Kurdish literary studies" (p.79).

What makes Bocheńska's book chapter and articles especially significant is not only that they examine the artistic forms of ethics in the Kurdish novel with a methodical and theoretical integrity and that they unlock the "ethical" potentials of Kurdish novelistic texts, but also the attentive analysis of the Kurdish texts they provide (both classical and modern texts) as aesthetic forms of "socially symbolic acts" (Jameson 2002, p.5). Despite prioritising the ethical interpretive method in her reading of the Kurdish literary texts, Bocheńska seems to maintain this reading with an account adapted from Fredric Jameson's (2002) approach, in which the individual literary text is understood "as a symbolic act" (Jameson 2002, p.61), resonating the actual ethical, ideological and socio-political tensions and conflicts of a social setting.

In addition to these, there also exist several other publications about the Kurdish novel and its development, mostly written by Kurdish novelists, which are informative or polemical in nature rather than being critical accounts of the Kurdish novel. These publications, some of which will be discussed in some detail to the extent that they relate to discussions developed later in this study, include Abidin Parıltı and Özlem Galip's *Kürt Romanı Okuma Kılavuzu* (2010), a survey of the development of Kurdish novel and its thematic foci; Medeni Ferho's *Rewşa Romana Kurdî* (2011), a collection of short writings about Kurdish authors, literature and novel; Helîm Yûsiv's short book *Romana Kurdî* (2011) which provides brief information on the history of Kurdish novel as well as critical yet very crude evaluations of Mehmed Uzun's authorship and novelistic project; Remezan Alan's *Folklor û Roman* (2013) which provides a well-grounded examination of how Kurdish Kurmanji novels which "rely on folklore" use Kurdish national folk tales and epics represent the "collective memory", "national identity", "history" as well as "reconstruct the past for [the needs of] the present" (Alan 2013, p.20 [translation my own]) and his *Bendname: li ser ruhê edebiyatekê* (2013), a collection of critical writings comprising also reviews of certain Kurdish novels; İbrahim Seydo Aydoğan's *Guman 2-Wêjeya Kurdî û Romana Kurdî* (2014), a collection of writings on the Kurdish literature, development of Kurdish language and Kurdish novels; Umran Aran's *Roman û Gotar: Mîxaîl Baxtîn û Romana Kurdî* (2019) which provides an examination of works of Remezan Alan, H. Kovan Baqî and Jan Dost in the light of Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of polyphony, heteroglossia, and the carnivalesque; Ferzan Şêr's topic—centred book, *Sûretên Pîştê. Barê Metîngeriyê Di Anatomiya Edebî ya Helîm Yûsiv de* (2021) which deals with the representation of forms of human "anatomy" and "organs" and their political and cultural connotations in Helîm Yûsiv's novels and short stories; and Fahriye Adsay's well-grounded unpublished MA dissertation,

Romana Kurdî (Kurmancî) Ya Dîrokî: Bîra Civakî û Nasname, which focuses on the utilisation of history by the Kurdish novelists as a cultural instrument for "the political needs of the present" and the functionality of historical fiction to build a "social memory" in the Kurdish literary and cultural setting.

Among others, the following articles and writings on the Kurdish novel, some of which will be discussed in more detail later in the study, should also be noted as important contributions to the development of Kurdish literary criticism: Ömer Türkeş's 'Bir Dil, Bir Edebiyat, Bir Kimlik Yaratmak' (2000); Nüket Esen's 'Mıgırdiç Margosyan and Mehmed Uzun's Remembering cultural Pluralism in Diyarbakır' (2009); Hashem Ahmadzadeh's 'The World of Kurdish Women's Novels' (2008), 'Four Narrations and an "Imagined Community"' (2012) and 'Stylistic and thematic changes in the Kurdish novel' (2015); Alpaslan Nas' 'Mehmed Uzun's Postcolonial Struggle: Between National Allegory and Hybridity' (2013); Remezan Alan's 'Modern Kürt Edebiyatında Kolonyal Karşılaşmalar, Ulusal İmaj Ve Tersyüz Olmuş Bir Klişe' (2015); Adnan Çelik and Ergin Öpengin's 'The Armenian Genocide in the Kurdish Novel: Restructuring Identity through Collective Memory' (2016); Chiad Abdulkarim & Ismael Saeed's 'The Burden of Colonialism and Alienation in the Modern Kurdish Novel' (2019-A); Davut Yeşilmen's 'Towards a resistance literature: the struggle of Kurdish-Kurmanji novel in post 2000s' (2019); Bocheńska's 'From Dengbêj to Modern Writer: Heritagization of the Kurdish Oral Tradition and Revitalization of the Kurdish Language in the Works of Mehmed Uzun and Mehmet Dicle' (2022). These academic and non-academic books, studies and articles, some of which could not be sufficiently reviewed and covered due both to scope of the study as well as their limited relevance to the main topic of present study, constitute the

basic corpus of Kurdish literary criticism with which any literary study focusing on the Kurdish novel has to engage.

1.11. Thesis Outline

This study is divided into four chapters. In Chapter One, I present a general overview of the Kurdish novel before moving on to an examination of the representation of melancholy in the novels under discussion. Drawing upon Georg Lukács, Ian Watt and Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of the novel, I discuss how, as a literary genre, it first emerged in the Kurdish literary domain, either narrating the story of a heroic agent in a political struggle or as the history of the national community. This is followed by a discussion of its transformation into an increasingly modern form from the mid-1980s, evidenced in its integration of more ambivalent and self-reflective characters and the "realist" (Watt 1957) account of Kurdish life it began to present. I argue that, whereas early Kurdish novelists have crafted the issue of loss merely as a theme of (militant) heroic subjectivity, in contrast, modern Kurdish novelists, beginning to publish from 1985, fashion the same subject matter as a theme of the melancholic subjectivity. The discussion highlights that to the extent that Kurdish novelists benefited from the potential of realist "literary convention" (Watt 1957) in their representations of the Kurdish political and social life, their interest shifted from the theme of heroism of the nation to the theme of loss, and this literary interest in loss elevated the melancholy motif to be one of the central motifs of the Kurdish novel.

In Chapter Two, the discussion provides an account of the use of the melancholy motif in two distinct settings in Uzun's *Siya Evînê*: first, melancholia as a "movement of fidelity" (Derrida 1989, p.31) to the political ideal of a free homeland and nationhood emerging as a motif of

intellectual rejection towards elimination of the Kurdishness and the Kurdish homeland by the Turkish nation-state project; second, as a motif of "melancholic lover's fixation on a single beloved" (Wells 2007, p.12) set around a love story emerging as a motif of lover's rejection to accept "the loss of a love-object" (Freud 1917, p.250) and to adopt a "new object of love" (Ibid, p.244). Alongside Freud and Derrida's approaches to melancholy, I draw also upon Khanna's concept of "colonial melancholia" (2003, p.17) to analyse the melancholy motif set around the issue of the lost homeland. In Chapter Two, the discussion also provides an account of the use of a motif of nostalgia inscribed in the novel. Providing an ample ground for this discussion, *Siya Evînê* envisages Ottoman İstanbul and the Ottoman era as an object of nostalgic desire for the Kurds in Turkey. Informed by approaches to nostalgia as proposed by Svetlana Boym (2001) and Tammy Clewell (2013), I read the motif of this nostalgic desire for the Empire's time and space as a Kurdish cultural and political critique of the Republic's disturbing present.

Chapter Three provides an analysis of representation of melancholia as a response to the loss of a loved one killed in the political struggle for the sake of a free homeland, taking Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî* as the basis of this discussion. The motif of melancholy is used in two different settings in this novel: first, to represent the inconsolable grief of those who have lost their loved ones in the unknown murders of the 1990s in Turkish Kurdistan; second, to represent melancholic predicament of the relatives of political subjects who were martyred for the sake of the homeland. Taking Freud's (1917) account of "ego-splitting" as a starting point, I critically engage with Derrida's mourning theory and attempt to adapt his concept of mourning "duty" to the Kurdish resistance struggle in Turkey and to the mourning practices of the families of Kurdish martyrs.

In Chapter Four, the discussion turns to an account of three different representations of melancholy in Cewerî's *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* and *Lehî*. In Cewerî's novels, the melancholy motif is used to represent both the ego's inability to overcome the legacy of state violence and make a new start in life as well as the ego's productive resistance to recover the cultural losses of the nation. Furthermore, the ego's inability to overcome a lost love-object is represented in two different settings: as a self-destructive mood and as a destructive and clinical disorder causing a violent act. Through an analysis of the motif of a violent melancholic disorder employed around the story of an ex-political prisoner, I draw upon Nikola Schipkowensky's (1968) concept of "melancholic murder". For my analysis of the motif of impossibility of the working through a traumatic loss related to female "honour", which is set around the story of female character, I draw upon Judith Butler's critical remarks about "a public foreclosure of the possibility of grief" (1999, p.172) alongside Cathy Caruth (1996) and Dominick LaCapra's (1994) approaches to trauma. For the analysis of the representation of melancholia as a "productive rather than pathological" (Eng & Kazanjian 2003, p.ix) condition, which is set around the story of an exiled Kurdish author producing a modern literature in a "forbidden" language (Kurdish) in exile, the discussion engages with David L. Eng and David Kazanjian's (2003) argument on the cultural and "political potential" (2003, p.ix) of certain melancholic attachments in colonial and postcolonial settings. On this basis, the discussion reveals the cultural and political meaning of the motif of the melancholic insistence upon the mother-tongue by modern Kurdish novelists to derive conclusions about the intellectual dilemmas of this melancholic fidelity for Turkey's Kurdish authors.

Drawing upon a range of perspectives including psychoanalytical, critical and postcolonial approaches to mourning and melancholy and both modernist as well as postcolonial literary

scholarship exploring the symbolic meaning of loss, mourning and melancholy in the modern and postcolonial novel traditions, this study brings psychoanalytic insights to bear onto the domain of Kurdish literary studies and criticism for an improved understanding of motifs of loss, grief and melancholy found in modern novels of Turkey's Kurds. In doing this, it contributes to addressing a gap in the field of the newly developing Kurdish literary studies and criticism. By exploring the idiosyncratic literary use of the melancholy motif and highlighting the psycho-social, political and cultural connotations of melancholy in the novels of a stateless nation in a century-long political struggle for a free homeland, this study also contributes not only to the field of literary scholarship on "the literature of melancholia" (Middeke & Ward 2011) and/or "melancholy literature" (Cosgrove & Richards 2012), but at the same time deepens our understanding of non-Western melancholic subjectivities and the unique political and cultural locales which shape them.

Chapter One

A Critical Overview of the Kurdish Novel

The Kurdish language comprises several dialects in Kurmanji, Sorani, Gurani and Kırmanjki/Zazaki: Kurmanji is spoken by Turkey's, Syrian, Iraqi and Caucasian Kurds; Sorani and Gurani are mainly spoken by Iraqi and Iranian Kurds; and Kırmanjki/Zazaki is spoken mostly by Turkey's Kurds. While novels have been published in the Kırmanjki/Zazaki dialect since the beginning of the 2000s, the Kurdish-language novels were written, by and large, in Kurmanji and Sorani dialects until the early 2000s, with the history of fictional works and the novel as a genre in Kurmanji and Sorani stretching back to a period of emergence in late 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, as noted by Clémence Scalbert Yücel (2011), "because of the ban on Kurdish for several decades […] Kurdish literary activities developed in a specific way, using different languages" (p.171). As this implies, Kurdish novelists write their novels not only in Kurdish but also in other languages such as Turkish and Arabic. However, as Mehmed Uzun critically notes, non-Kurdish literary works by Kurdish authors were themselves often "treated as stepchild[ren]" (2007, p.11) by Kurdish literary critics and historians themselves, showing inadequate attention to the political, social and cultural realities of the Kurds living under the

rule of four oppressive nation-states in the Middle East.[6] In the context of Kurdish literature, this "bilingualism" bespeaks "neither a purely bilingual situation in which an indigenous tongue coexists with a purist's language […] nor a simple polyglot richness benefiting from the extra but relatively neuter alphabet; it is a linguistic drama" (Memmi 2003, p.152).

Focusing on these questions of Kurdish literature beset in this particular social, cultural and political context, this chapter has a two-fold purpose. First, it aims to provide an overview of the history of Kurdish novel since its emergence in the 1930s until the 1990s, a decade when the reflections of a literary modernism became distinctly manifest in the works of the Kurdish novelists. Unlike the existing literary scholarship's use of the language criterion as a basic marker to define novels as "Kurdish" and their "Kurdishness", this overview also includes a consideration of the novels written by Kurdish authors in different languages.[7] Adopting a

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[6] Considering the linguistic dualism as a fact of colonial condition of the Kurds in the Middle East, Mehmed Uzun imagined Kurdish literary works beyond linguistic approaches by pointing out that "in Turkey, a considerable proportion of writers of Kurdish [origin] write in Turkish because they either do not know Kurdish enough or in order to free [themselves] from oppression of the [Turkish] state" (2006, p.87 [translation my own]). Uzun describes the marginalization of the Kurdish writers who "literarily express themselves through Turkish, Arabic, Persian and are often received with silence" (2007, p.11), by both Kurdish and Turkish literary circles, amounting to and comprising a literary and intellectual "injustice". He, thus, proposes that the non-Kurdish language works of these authors "have to be translated [into Kurdish], and they have to be introduced to the [Kurdish] readers through well coordinated [Kurdish] anthologies" (2007, p.11).

[7] In *Nation and Novel – A Study of Persian and Kurdish Narrative Discourse* (2003), Ahmadzadeh claims that Kurdish literature "includes only those literary works which are written in the Kurdish language" (p.138), although he goes on to partly revise his approach to the classification of "Kurdish literature" in his 2015 article 'The Kurdish Novel and National Identity-Formation across Borders,' where he argues that the work of Kurdish writers such as Salim Barakat (in Arabic), Yaşar Kemal (in Turkish) and Ibrahim Yunis (in Persian) "should be classified as 'Kurdish literature in other languages'" as this literature "mainly deals with Kurdish issues" (p.66). In *Imagining Kurdistan: Identity, Culture and Society* (2015), Galip regards "Kurdish" novels only as those works written in the "Kurdish language" and its different dialects. In his study, *The Iraqi Kurdish Novel, 1970–2011: A Genetic-Structuralist Approach* (2016), Omar assumes the Kurdish novel as a work written in the Kurdish language, despite not directly touching upon the definition of "Kurdish".

non-linguistic approach to the Kurdish novel, it introduces a history of the Kurdish novel "that is not determined by linguistic paradigms, but rather inspired by shared narrative traditions, contexts, histories, intertwined textualities, aesthetics, and politics" (Laachir 2015, p.16) as proposed by Karima Laachir for the Moroccan postcolonial literary tradition.[8] Such readings of the Kurdish and non-Kurdish language novels "side-by-side" beyond "the 'national'/'foreign' language paradigm" (Laachir 2015, p.12) not only provides us with the opportunity to note the wide linguistic geography to which the Kurdish novel has spread, but also provides a useful reading framework for identifying the intersections and divergences of representation of Kurdish life rendered in different languages.

The second aim of this chapter is to provide an account of the emergence and the inceptive forms of modern Kurdish novel in Kurdish language and how it distinguishes itself from the early Kurdish novel with respect to the representation of Kurdish (political) life, individual and history. Although first specimens of the Kurdish novel emerge by the middle of the 1930s, at a period when "the first 'modernist' phase of the modern novel" (Matz 2004, p.13) is almost over in Western literature, the early examples of distinctly realist modern novels in Kurdish language wait until the middle of 1980s to make an appearance (e.g. Mehmed Uzun's *Tu,* 1985; *Mirina Kalekî Rind*, 1987; *Siya Evînê*, 1989). Here, the term "realist" is used to refer to "the novel's realism" (Watt 1957, p.11) through which the human experience is represented

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[8] In 'The Aesthetics and Politics of "Reading Together" Moroccan Novels in Arabic and French', Karima Laachir (2015) proposes a practice of "reading together" for the multilingual national literary traditions. Laachir argues that "reading practices, based on linguistic determinism, have contributed to the marginalization of Moroccan literary traditions within dominant literary systems such as the Francophone/French and Arabic traditions, and therefore, have obscured the cultural, linguistic, and historical entanglement of these multilingual literary traditions with each other" (p.4).

in its complex dynamics and in which the destiny of "the individual" in a community instead of "the community" per se emerges as a central concern for the narrative.

Ian Watt (1957) argues that "the novel's realism" connotes a mode of representation of the human experience in its multidimensional aspects:

> If the novel were realistic merely because it saw life from the seamy side, it would only be an inverted romance; but in fact it surely attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience, and not merely those suited to one particular literary perspective: the novel's realism does not reside in the kind of it presents, but in the way it represents it. (p.11)

For Watt (1957), "the formal realism of the novel allows a more immediate imitation of individual experience set in its temporal and spatial environment than do other literary forms" (p.32). Expecting the modern novelist "to convey the impression of fidelity to human experience" as a primary task (1957, p.13), Watt suggests that "attention to any pre-established formal conventions can only endanger [the novelist's] success" (1957, p.13).

In the nascent field of Kurdish literary studies and literary criticism, terms such as "realist", "realism" and "modern" have not yet been adequately elucidated in the context of Kurdish novel, written in both Kurdish and other languages. For instance, Ahmadzadeh (2015) and Ghobadi (2015) use the terms "realist", "realism" and modern in order to periodize the history of Kurdish-language novel, with the period of the Kurdish novel writing extending from 1930s until the first half of the 1990s defined as the "realist" phase. By the term "realist", they either describe Kurdish novels which represent the Kurdish life in a simplistic and "heroic" manner, or the novels which mainly describe "the seamy side" of the Kurdish life and have "flat" and

one-dimensional characters.[9] Contrary to Ahmadzadeh's (2015) and Ghobadi's (2015)

perspective, this study proposes that the early period of the Kurdish novel, which can be said

to cover the period between 1935 and 1985, is, in fact, characterised by the "heroic" mode

of representation, what might be conceived as a close relative of epic style, rather than a

"realist" mode of representation per se, and that "realism" as a literary category, in fact,

constitutes one of the main forms of the modern Kurdish novel emerging in the middle of

1980s. It further argues that the adaptation of the realist "formal convention" (Watt 1957) in

representation of the Kurdish life by the Kurdish novelists has played a critical role in

emergence of the modern Kurdish novel. In order both to demonstrate the characterisation

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[9] In 'Stylistic and Thematic Changes in the Kurdish Novel' (2015) Ahmadzadeh argues that "until the early 1990s, the dominant style and literary mode in the Kurdish novel was realism" (p.237) and "socialist realist" (e.g. Soviet Kurdish novels) by imagining history of Kurdish-language novel as two periods: "realist" and "modern". Using the literary terms "realist", "realism" and "modern" ambivalently, Ahmadzadeh (2015) suggests that, in "realist" Kurdish novels "the protagonists had a decisive and straightforward character" (p.237) and emerged as "simple and 'flat' characters" (p.237). Although Ahmadzadeh refers to Watt's work *The Rise of the Novel* for describing this assumed Kurdish "realist" tradition, he misreads one of the essential points of Watt's theory of "realism" in the novel: that "the novel's formal realism" (Watt 1957, p.35) involves "a full and authentic report of human experience" as well as an "immediate imitation of individual experience" (Watt 1957, p.32), two fundamental literary qualities that we cannot find in early Kurdish novels. On the other hand, in his article, 'The Fact and Fiction in Modern Kurdish Narrative Discourse' (2017), Ahmadzadeh uses the term "modern" to describe "modern narrative mediums, i.e. the novel and short story, in contrast to traditional modes of narration such as fable and legend" (p.93). Similarly, Ghobadi (2015) suggests that "since the appearance of first Sorani Kurdish novel in 1961 up until early 1990s literary realism has been the dominant aesthetic mode of Kurdish novel" (p.31). Ghobadi argues that, using a "realist mode of writing", early Kurdish Sorani novels suggested a "simple realistic narration of the Kurdish people's sufferings, heroism, and romanticizing of their homeland" (2015, p.209). Ghobadi (2015), too, draws upon Watt's theory of "novel's realism" in his study; however, he overlooks the very meaning of "realism" in the novel in Watt's sense of the term: that a novel tradition cannot be defined as "realist" simply because it focuses on "people's sufferings" and further that the "realistic" novel tradition denounces both "heroism" and "romanticization"; instead, it is mainly concerned with the representation of an "authentic account of the actual experiences of individuals" (Watt 1957, p.27) by centring on the destiny of the "individual".

of early Kurdish novels, published between 1935 and 1985, predominantly with an epic and "non-realist" taste but also to examine realist and modern representations of Kurdish life in those published in 1980s and 1990s, the discussion begins with an introduction of the concepts of "epic" and "novel" as literary genres proposed by Georg Lukács, Ian Watt and Mikhail Bakhtin. The discussion will then proceed to examine the early Kurdish novels on this basis.

A two-fold discussion informs the reading of the Kurdish novelistic corpus produced until the end of the 1990s. The first element of the discussion involves questions of literary realism and modernism in the Kurdish literary setting and proposes that early Kurdish novelistic texts are largely, if not entirely, bereft of a realist taste; the main objective of the section is to illuminate the development of Kurdish novelistic writing from simple heroic narratives to a distinctly realist form exemplifying modernist conventions from mid-1980s; with this focus, the discussion aims to contribute to the field of Kurdish literary criticism with a nuanced understanding of application of literary terms such as realist, modern, modernist and postmodern to the Kurdish setting and the particular adaptations rendered in this novelistic project.

Afforded by this discussion, this overview also aims to illuminate the development of the aesthetics of loss and grief in Kurdish novelistic writing and highlight the relation in between the development of the modern Kurdish novel and the elevation of the grief and melancholy motif as one of its distinct literary device and tastes. The discussion, thus, gives due regard to reflections of loss and grief provided by early Kurdish novelistic writing; it develops an argument that in early Kurdish novels it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a genuine account of grief and melancholy and highlights how and in which forms grief and melancholy

reflections begin to manifest themselves more authentically in the Kurdish novel. The main point of consideration of this part of the discussion is that loss and grief also appear as common motifs in early Kurdish novelistic writing, but contrary to its modern counterparts, these motifs are largely utilised by the early texts to reveal an overall index of the nation's suffering and hardships, political and psycho-social bases of the armed resistance, symbolics of martyrdom, militant heroism as well as the (emotional) determination of the nation, which is often fashioned as a politicized community resilient in the grief of loss that turns the grief for their loved ones lost during the national struggle into a site of resistance.

Melancholy, in its simple definition, connotes an uninterrupted focus on a loss and relentless thinking about this loss; it is a form of subjectivity shaped by and for a lost love-object. Taking this as a conceptual basis in the comparative consideration of the early and modern Kurdish novels with respect to their aesthetics of loss and grief, the discussion suggests what a novelistic narrative requires to constitute a genuine literary form of melancholy: to problematize loss and its implications, to give substantial attention to the psychological or socio-political effects of loss that shape the subjectivity of the individual or society, and, to situate these reflections of loss at the centre of the narrative along the axis of the grieving individual or society; these are in addition to developing a sufficient and authentic vocabulary about loss and grief. It underlines that what makes a literary melancholy form possible is the text's uninterrupted interest in loss and grief as well as its aesthetic ability to uncover implications of the loss. Emerging as a narrative form that is chiefly preoccupied with articulations of heroism, bravery, armed resistance, ethnic, cultural or social uniformity and the emotional and moral virtue of the traditional Kurdish community, the early Kurdish

novelistic writing lacked this interest and ability conducive to producing an authentic form of grief or melancholic subjectivity.

2.1. Epic as a Narrative Form of Heroism, Naivety and Clear-Cut Oppositions

Despite their contrasting theoretical approaches to the novel, Georg Lukács, Ian Watt and Mikhail Bakhtin share some common assumptions about the representation of life and the individual in pre-modern literary forms (e.g. "epic" and "romance") and in the novel as a modern genre. They describe the novel mainly in contrast to the epic narrative with the purpose of identifying a set of criteria by which the novel can be defined as a genre in terms of the representation of life and the individual.

In *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács argues that "the epic and the novel [...] differ from one another not by their authors' fundamental intentions, but by the given historico-philosophical realities with which the authors were confronted" (2006, p.56). Lukács suggests that the novel "raises an individual to the infinite heights of one who must create an entire world through his experience and who must maintain that world in equilibrium" (2006, p.83). He goes onto propose that "the epic hero is, strictly speaking, never an individual. It is traditionally thought that one of the essential characteristics of the epic is the fact that its theme is not a personal destiny but the destiny of community" (2006, p.66). Lukács (2006) further draws attention to the quality of the novel as "the art-form of virile maturity, in contrast to the normative childlikeness of the epic" (p.71), noting that "the epic world is either a purely childlike one in which the transgression of stable, traditional norms has to entail vengeance which again must be avenged *ad infinitum*, or else it is the perfect theodicy in which crime and punishment lie in the scales of world justice as equal, mutually homogenous weights" (p.61).

Similarly, in *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), Ian Watt regards "realism" and the individual's destiny as the main focus of the narrative and as the two main features of the modern novel, arguing that novel as a modern genre focuses on "realistic particularity" (p.17). For Watt (1957), "the novel is the form of literature which most fully reflects [an] individualist and innovating reorientation" (p.13) and "whose primary criterion [is] truth to individual experience which is always unique and therefore new" (p.13). Watt (1957) argues that the novel is distinguished from previous forms of fiction, such as epic and romance, "by the amount of attention it habitually accords both to the individualisation of its characters and to the detailed presentation of their environment" (p.18). As an implication of this relationship, Watt argues that "the modern novel is closely allied on the one hand to the realist epistemology of the modern period, and on the other to the individualism of its social structure" (p.62). Hence, rejecting the traditional plots is a necessary condition for the modern novelist:

> Previous literary forms had reflected the general tendency of their cultures to make conformity to traditional practice the major test of truth: the plots of classical and renaissance epic, for example, were based on past history or fable, and the merits of the author's treatment were judged largely according to a view of literary decorum derived from the accepted models in the genre. (1957, p.13)

In contrast, in his *The Dialogic Imagination*, which compares the epic and novel both in form and content, Bakhtin (2006) draws attention to another distinguishing feature of the epic as a narrative form. Bakhtin (2006) argues that "a national epic past [...] serves as the subject for the epic [and] national tradition (not personal experience and free thought that grows out of it) serves as the source for the epic" (p.13), adding that "an absolute epic distance separates

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the epic world from the contemporary reality, that is, from the time in which the singer (the author and his audience) lives" (p.13). For Bakhtin (2006), "by its very nature, the epic world of the absolute past is inaccessible to personal experience and does not permit an individual, personal point of view or evaluation" (p.16). This implies that the epic's interest in history is strictly an interest in signifying the heroism of the nation: "the world of epic is the national heroic past: it is a world of 'beginnings' and the 'peak times' in the national history, a world of fathers and of founders of families, a world of 'firsts' and 'bests'" (2006, p.13). As such, the epic narrative provides an aesthetic of heroism; the meaning it aims to convey is not the disaffected, passive and ambivalent individual and the complex dynamics of the world that surrounds him, but the ethos of heroism and the world of simple dualities that make this ethos possible and meaningful.

Grounded on such an imagining of the world, Bakhtin (2006) considers the "monophony" in a novel as a narrative convention of the epic, arguing that the modern novel is characterised by "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses" and a multiplicity of meanings: "there are many [...] belief systems, with the hero generally acting within his *own* system" (p.334), but "in the epic there is one unitary and singular belief system" (p.334). He further argues that "there are no speaking persons in the epic who function as representatives of different languages – in the epic, the speaker is, in essence, solely the author alone, and discourse is a single, unitary authorial discourse" (2006, p.334) and "the ideological position of the epic hero is meaningful for the whole community" (2006, p.334). For Bakhtin (2006), unlike the epic hero, the "action" of the modern novel's hero, "has no shared meaning for the community, is not uncontested and takes place not in an uncontested epic world where all meanings are shared" (p.334).

The preceding assessment of the early Kurdish novels based on Lukács', Watt's and Bakhtin's approach to the epic and novel suggests that the epic taste and the "non-realistic convention" (Watt, 1957) distinctly manifests itself in the early Kurdish novels, pertaining specifically to three main domains in the representation of the Kurdish life. First, early Kurdish novelists are mainly interested in "the destiny of community" (Lukács, 2006) rather than of the "individual" in the community and despite chiefly focusing on the agony and unpleasant aspects of life of the Kurdish community, they are not able to offer a realist representation of the Kurdish political, social, economic and cultural life in the sense of "novel's realism" (Watt 1957). Second, in their representations of the Kurdish political struggle(s), early Kurdish novelists prevalently concern themselves with the signification of Kurdish *heroism*, in contrast to the realist representation of these struggles, each of which resulted in defeat, great social destruction, loss and suffering. The repercussion of this is that the political subject in early Kurdish novels whose actions are supposed to be presented in the context of a national political struggle, usually emerge as a one-dimensional militant hero rather than an authentic "individual" reflecting "all the varieties of human experience" (Watt 1957, p.11) and these political struggles are presented not in their complex dynamics but in a one-dimensional and simple framework. Third, the early Kurdish novelists' ubiquitous interest in Kurdish history was limited chiefly to "a national epic past" and to the signification of the "best" times and "fathers and founders" (Bakhtin 2006, p.13) of the nation rather than a detailed and realistic account of the Kurdish history. In their historical novels, early Kurdish novelists, writing both in Kurdish and other languages, frequently made use of fables and legends from Kurdish (oral) history to represent a "national heroic past" (Bakhtin 2006, p.13) and the hero in these historical fictions often emerged as a kind of national epic hero representing the courage and

heroism of the nation or as a heroic peasant who internalized the cultural values and virtues of the traditional Kurdish community, defending these values and virtues against the corrupted Kurdish traditional power elite (e.g. Kurdish chieftain, pashas and aghas).

2.2. The Emergence of the Novel as a Literary Genre in Kurdish Literature

While first examples of Kurdish fictional works emerged in Iraqi Kurdistan in the middle of the 1920s, with Cemîl Saîb's novelette *Di xew de* (*In My Dream*, 2009), first published in parts in the *Jiyanê* newspaper between 1925–1926, and Ahmed Muxtar Caf's uncompleted novelette *Meseleya Wijdanê* (*The Question of Conscience*, 2016), written in 1927–1928 but published in 1970 in Baghdad,[10] the first Kurdish prose fiction text that can be defined as a novel was published by Erebê Şemo in Soviet Armenia in 1935.[11] *Şivanê Kurmanca* (*The Kurdish Shepherd*, 2015) written in the Kurmanji dialect, which is an autobiographical novel, is the first Kurdish novel in Kurdish language. The novel presents a period in the life of Erebê Şemo (from his childhood to his twenties), who was born and grew up in a poor Kurdish family in

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[10] Although *Meseleya Wijdanê* is considered by Ahmadzadeh (2017) and, also, by some (Iraqi) Kurdish literary critics to be the first Kurdish novel in Iraqi Kurdistan (Ghobadi 2015), Caf's work is a long short story focusing on "the question of conscience" in Kurdish society in a very simple fashion. Even though "the novel is a genre which resists exact definition" (Eagleton 2005), it is generally defined as "a piece of prose fiction of a reasonable length" (Eagleton 2005), suggesting a "certain complexity that deals imaginatively with human experience, usually through a connected sequence of events" (Kuiper 2012, p.1). A work of fiction shorter than a novella but longer than a short story is generally defined as a novelette or a long short story (Milhorn 2006; Hawthorn 2017) rather than a novella or novel.

[11] The emergence of the first Kurdish novel in Soviet Armenia was related to the fact that Kurdish communities, many of whom had migrated in the early twentieth century from Ottoman Kurdistan to Russia, found educational and cultural opportunities with the founding of the Soviet Union for developing a literary tradition in Kurdish (Kurmanji). Thanks to Soviet Union's policy towards ethnic and cultural minorities, Armenian Kurds established cultural and publishing organizations that would keep Kurdish culture alive. In the former Soviet Armenia, nearly 240 Kurdish (Kurmanji) books were published between 1921 and 1961, including textbooks, grammar, literature, teaching methods, medicine, mathematics, natural science and agricultural economics (Hassanpour 1992).

the rural area of Kars, then under Russian rule, by focusing on the "class struggle" in the area inhabited by Russians, Armenians and Kurds. As also noted about the subject by Christine Allison (2005), "the vocabulary and sentence structure are conversational, and the whole work is reminiscent of someone recalling their past orally" (p.109); it is written "within the context of the literary activities of the new Soviet Union" (p.115). The novel is dedicated to the "Kurdish Komsomols" by the author. After meeting with Bolsheviks, Ereb develops "class consciousness" and actively participates in the October Revolution in 1917 as a young Bolshevik. The novel simply promotes Bolshevik ideals rather than presenting an authentic account of the Kurdish rural life. The social, economic and cultural realities of Kurdish rural life and tribal communities of the period are presented through the one-sided prism of Soviet official ideology rather than comprising "all the varieties of human experience" (Watt 1957) in *Şivanê Kurmanca*. One cannot identify authentic novelistic characters in the novel; what it presents are the "general human types" (Watt 1957, p.15) emerging either as good and idealised persons (Bolsheviks and poor peasants) or as villains (e.g. aghas, noblemen, sheikhs and imams), "the enemies of the class". Completely engaged with the Soviet propaganda machine in a local ethnic context, Şemo's descriptive account of the cultural, social, religious and economic life of the Kurdish tribal communities are no more insightful, if no more superficial, than the causal observations of a Soviet orientalist about a "backward" tribal community. In his 1936 short novelette *Kurdêd Elegezê* (*Elegez's Kurds*), Şemo continues to focus on "the class struggle" in Kurdish rural communities living in Soviet Armenia by using essentially a similar plot schema (the young Kurdish Bolsheviks versus Kurdish aghas, noblemen and sheiks) presented in *Şivanê Kurmanca*. *Kurdêd Elegezê* too presents a limited account of realities of Kurdish rural life from Soviet "literary perspective" by representing how

the Kurdish aghas, noblemen and sheiks tried to hold onto their social, economic and religious power, as in the "old days", and continued to exploit decent Kurdish peasants, even after the October Revolution. The story ends with the victory of good-hearted and heroic young Bolsheviks and the defeat of the "class enemies" such as the aghas and sheiks.

The second Kurdish novel, *Der Adler von Kurdistan* (*Kürdistan Kartalı – Yado* [*The Eagle of Kurdistan]*, 2014), co-written in German by exiled Kurdish writer, poet and politician Kamiran Alî Bedirxan and German publisher Herbert Oertel, was published in Germany in 1937. Kamiran Alî Bedirxan was a member of the central committee of the Kurdish political organization *Xoybûn*, which was founded in Beirut in 1927 by exiled Kurdish intellectuals and political figures. As Martin Strohmeier (2003) also notes, *Der Adler von Kurdistan* is a "militant nationalist novel" (p.159), describing the Kurdish resistance (in Turkey) as an armed struggle taking place basically between the Kurdish militant "patriots" and "foes" of the Kurds (i.e. the Turkish army and its local collaborators). In the foreword to novel, Bedirxan (2014) describes Kurdistan as a "cradle of humanity" (p.15) and expresses a primeval Kurdish desire for a free homeland, alluding to the heroism and courage of the Kurdish people for this cause from ancient times:

> The Kurdish people are committed to their freedom. They are always proud of their national feelings. This nation has never accepted foreign forces in its country. Oppressed under the flags of four foreign countries, divided Kurdistan has sought its freedom and independence at every opportunity. (2015, p.18 [translation my own])

Glorifying the militant heroic subjectivity, the novel describes a historical period for Turkey's Kurds (1925–1930) that was full of political and military defeats, social and economic destruction, loss and suffering around a theme of Kurdish heroism, rather than presenting "a full report" of the state of Kurds in this early Turkish Republic era. The first-person narrator of the novel, the young poet Remo, believes that he finds his "true self" when he joins the armed national struggle and that the only way to recover the lost "homeland" and recover the self for the Kurdish individual is to participate in the armed struggle. The central character of the novel, Yado (a real person in Kurdish history), emerges as an epic hero, representing the bravery, invincibility, determination and destiny of the nation. He is a "Kurdish eagle" (p.85), a "hero of heroes" (p.86) for Kurdish community: "he was the child of a rural family, but he carried all the dignity of Kurdistan" (p.30). He is not an ordinary military leader but is "honourable and majestic like a prince" (p.86), who "cared for the peoples around him like a shepherd caring of his flock" (p.86). "Without him", the Kurds "would live like a flock without a shepherd and [would be] vulnerable to all kinds of external threat and violence" (p.30). Yado, who is wounded and dies during the clashes with the Turkish army, in his last breath urges his fighters and comrades: "don't mourn for me! I will be martyred like those heroes who were martyred up until today" (p.165). The novel ends with the epic hero's (Yado) denial of the defeat and loss: "we lost the battle, but we did not lose the fight" (p.166). The novel presents the death of an epic hero and the defeat of the Kurdish forces in the Ağrı Rebellion not as a defeat and loss, but as the beginning of a new struggle: "we heard new voices at that moment […] Kurdish youths were walking towards the peaks of the mountains […] Freedom songs were echoing much stronger in the mountains" (p.167). The novel also implies that the

loss and death of the political subject is not a matter of grief but of heroism and (new) political resistance.

It is very unlikely that Rehîmê Qazî may have read *Der Adler von Kurdistan*, a text written in German and still not translated into Kurdish, when he wrote his 1959 novel *Pêşmerge* (*The Fighter*, 1997), the first novel of Iranian Kurds, written in Kurdish Sorani. However, the key elements of story presented in *Pêşmerge,* such as leading characters (an actual political leader from recent Kurdish history and a young and brave Kurdish fighter) and the setting of the events of the plot (the armed national struggle for a free homeland) notably resemble the plot schema seen in *Der Adler von Kurdistan.* Like Bedirxan, Rehîmê Qazî, too, was a political figure of the Kurdish national movement, a member of The Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI). Similar to *Der Adler von Kurdistan, Pêşmerge* presents a simple account of Kurdish political life by representing the Kurdish "resistance" simply as revolutionary activities of the militant patriots and forms the narrative of the question of the lost homeland around a theme of Kurdish militant heroism. In the foreword to *Pêşmerge*, Qazî explains his motivation for writing the novel, which demonstrates how early Kurdish writers have perceived the novel as a political means to be used in the service of the national struggle: "I consider this attempt to write *Pêşmerge* as a modest task and service for my homeland and nation" (1997, p.113 [translation my own]). As also noted about the subject by Bocheńska (2018), *Pêşmerge* "represents a very flat, black and white picture of good peshmerga and bad landlords [collaborating with Iranian army] and in this regard recalls a fairy tales rather than contemporary literature" (p.65). While the story of heroes (Pîrût and Şêrko) begins with an event of honour suicide (the suicide of Şêrko's sister Mîrût, who kills herself after being raped by Qeranî the agha), this motif is only a subsidiary motif utilised by Qazî to highlight Kurdish

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national resistance and heroism; Mîrût's death is employed not as a subject of grief or melancholic subjectivity, but of revenge and national resistance for the bereaved brother (Şêrko) and lover (Pîrût), who join national struggle after this event. The novel depicts the Kurdish armed resistance initiated by *Komele* (the Komela Party) and events that lead to the establishment of the Republic of Mahabad in 1946, a short-lived Kurdish self-governing state. Once again, it is extremely hard to find authentic novelistic characters in *Pêşmerge*; instead, the story revolves around epic heroes and brave patriots (e.g. Qazî Muhammed, Pîrût and Şêrko), the traitors (e.g. Mîna agha and Qeranî agha) and foes (e.g. Xwocendi, a commander of the Iranian army). The Kurds are described as "brave fighters"; in the hearts of Kurds, "there is no place for fear" (p.20). The leader of the rebellion, Qazî Muhammed (an Iranian Kurdish leader who led the Republic of Kurdistan and was hanged by the Iranian regime in 1947 following the defeat of the Mahabad initiative) is represented as a national legend. Pirut, an ordinary Kurdish peasant who joins the Kurdish forces, is portrayed as "a wrestler". After joining the Kurdish national struggle, he becomes a national hero whose "heroism" spreads throughout Kurdistan: "no one can bend Pîrût's wrist" (p.22). He is rendered a role model of the Kurdish patriotic individual, free from human weaknesses and flaws by Qazî. Aiming to effect a representation of Kurdish militant heroism in *Pêşmerge*, Qazî does not provide "a full report" of the Mahabad initiative and its sad finale (1946) as a grave defeat of the Kurdish movement and armed forces. A realistic representation of the historical, political and social dynamics that made the establishment of the 1946 Mahabad Republic possible, the internal and external political conditions that then led to its fall, and the subsequent social and economic destruction, human losses and collective and individual sufferings was to arrive much later in 1997 with Eta Nehayî's novel *Gulên Şoran*, the first modern novel of Iranian

Kurds (in Kurdish). Dealing specifically with this historical event and its aftermath, the novel goes beyond the motifs of epic national "heroes" and nasty "foes" and is subjected to analysis in detail in the succeeding sections of the chapter.

Conceiving the militant heroic act as a fundamental motif defining the Kurdish political subject and as the only possible way of being politically active also informs the first novel of Iraqi Kurds, *Jana Gel* (*The Agony of People*, 1972) written in Kurdish (Sorani) by Îbrahîm Ehmed, who was one of the prominent leaders of The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in Iraq. *Jana Gel* represents the "agony" of Kurdish community under the oppressive Iraqi regime in the 1950s and 1960s by using an individual drama as a motif to present the political and ethnic oppressions of the Kurds in Iraq: in the hope of finding a midwife for his wife who is suffering labour pains, character of the novel, Camêr, leaves home but finds himself in a political demonstration against the regime in the city centre and is shot and arrested by Iraqi security forces and, thus, loses his wife and baby-boy during childbirth. Although the story mainly revolves around the motif of an individual's loss and grief, *Jana Gel*, in fact, is distinctly uninterested in representations of this individual's "agony"; by contrast, it uses the motif of this individual loss and grief to represent the inevitability and necessity of the armed resistance struggle for Kurds. As Ahmadzadeh (2003) also notes, in *Jana Gel* the final decision of leading character (Camêr) "to join the Liberation Army shows that the dominant form of realising the idea of a free land is the armed struggle against the occupiers" (p.245).

Indeed, set only but loosely and superficially, all dramatic events, experienced by *Jana Gel*'s main character are integrated in the novel solely to justify and glorify the armed political struggle of the Iraqi Kurds for a free homeland. Living for a decade in inhuman conditions in prison, Camêr, strangely, cannot learn that his wife and baby-boy died during childbirth and

thinks that they are living with one of his relatives (Lawe). When he is released and returns to his hometown, due to a series of strange misunderstandings, he thinks that his wife and son died in a village as a result of a bombardment by the Iraqi army and then joins the Kurdish "Liberation Army" both in order to take "revenge" (p.180) for his son and wife but also to liberate the homeland from Iraqi rule. Ehmed's purpose and motivation to depict the militant act as the only "sign of [Kurdish] patriotism and bravery" (p.156 [translation my own]) not only deprives him of the opportunity to generate an astute representation of an "individual" loss and grief of loss set properly in a wider political and social domain in a realistic manner, but also transforms the plot of his novel into a sum of surreal dramatic events (transpiring in the character's life) that lack logic. Lacking a realistic and logical setting of events and the effects of these events as the character's paradoxical actions and choices, *Jana Gel* implies that an individual's "prosperity" cannot be separated from the "happiness and prosperity of the people" (p.179). The implication is that the colonised subject's grief for the loss of a loved one caused by oppressive acts can be meaningful only if it becomes a source of political dynamism, motivating the subject to enact justice at the collective level. In this way, it renders an authentic individual "agony" and grief invisible in the abstract "agony of people". Through the motif of character's joining the "Liberation Army", *Jana Gel* signifies the grief of the loss of a loved one due to colonial oppression as the subject of political dynamism and militant heroism, and not as an element of an introspective melancholic subjectivity; with this grief account, it presents methodological parallels with the Kurdish novels of the earlier era in terms of the utilisation of loss and grief motifs.

Depictions of the Kurdish political subject exclusively through the motif of a militant heroism and the demotion of the agony and grief of losing a loved one caused by coloniser violence

and oppression as invisible as part of the motif of political resistance and mourning rituals also characterises Xemgînê Temê's 1983 novella, *Pala Bêşop* (*Trackless Mountain*), the first novel of Syrian Kurds written in Kurmanji. Like Ehmed, Xemgînê Temê too is interested in the individual grief caused by the loss of a loved one (an active political agent) insofar as it is a functional motif to describe the "agony" of the nation and to demonstrate the resistance potential of the Kurdish community against its "enemies". Set in late 1970s in Syria's Kurdistan, *Pala Bêşop* presents a very simple account of the life of Syrian Kurds under the nationalist and authoritarian Baath regime around the love story of the young Kurdish patriots (e.g. Xebatê and Azad). Like its plot, *Pala Bêşop*'s characters are simple and one-dimensional, and, to use the main character's (Azad) words, are fighting for the freedom of "partitioned" homeland "ruled" by the "colonialist states". Azad, who takes part in Kurdish revolutionary activities after marrying Xebatê, is killed by Turkish security forces in a cross-border operation carried out against Kurdish revolutionaries in a village of the region. The destiny of the brave hero is determined by the destiny of his national community. Thus, Xebatê, who gives birth to their first child on the day Azad is killed, does not burst into tears when she receives the news of the death of her beloved husband; instead, she gives a political speech to her father-in-law by refusing to mourn for death of a national hero: "It will be of no use whether we cry or not. Look, I have [a baby] Azad next to me. We have many enemies. But no matter how much they kill us, we won't disappear […] Nobody can protect us against our enemies; we need to defend ourselves. Azad tried to defend his people with dignity" (p.75 [translation my own]). Azad's father appreciates the agitative speech of his daughter-in-law: "oh my daughter, you are a lion" (p.75). Temê's novella represents this death not as a loss which leaves survivors with a complex process of grief and mourning, but as the rebirth of another

political agent. The novel presents the death of an anti-colonial revolutionary not as the subject of individual grief and melancholy for his loved ones left behind, but as a source of honour and political resistance. Decorating the novel's finale with a baby-boy (Azad) motif born on the day of his father's death, Temê uses the motif of the loss of a loved one as a simplistic symbol of a collective political resistance, rather than dealing with the subject-matter of the grief of loss of a loved one as "actual experiences of individuals" (Watt 1957, p.27). As in this example, his work markedly employs the subject of loss as a motif instrumental to highlighting the national resistance, heroism and determination of the nation for freedom rather than being concerned with providing an authentic literary account of the grief for the loss of a loved one in a political setting.

Constructing representations of Kurdish (political) community prevalently around a motif of victimhood and resistance and a Kurdish political subject chiefly around a motif of militant heroism, free from human defects, inadequacy, weakness and fated only with a militant resistance, the early Kurdish authors could not present "authentic" (Watt, 1957) accounts of the Kurdish political life that reflects its various aspects. By refusing to describe loss as a *loss* both at the political (e.g. the loss of a national struggle) and individual (e.g. the loss of a loved one in a national struggle) levels, they produce an image of the (political) community in denial of defeat and loss, lacking the ability to grieve for its loved ones lost in the resistance struggle. The reflections of this heroic representation of the Kurdish life and individual probably found its most refined form in the early Kurdish historical novels, in which Kurdish history has been imagined not as a history of political and military defeats, social destructions, losses and sufferings, but as a history of bravery, chivalry and heroism.

2.3. Representing Kurdish History as a History of Legends and Epic Heroes

Kurdish history has always been one of the main areas of interest in the Kurdish intellectual life. As noted by Bozarslan (2003-A), historiography is "ubiquitous" with it: "History enters almost every field and becomes a real common ground of intellectual production, because it is held to be the key to the very existence of Kurdish society" (p.14). And, further, "any Kurdish nationalist intellectual work, be it linguistic or artistic, political or ideological, makes reference to history or reflects on it […] As a technique, it is the instrument par excellence by which past victories and failures, glories and tragedies, may be understood" (2003-A, p.14).

Complementing this in the context of the Kurdish novelistic writing, Fahriye Adsay (2013) argues that "the subject is the present rather than the past" in Kurdish historical novels, highlighting that "history teaching" and a concern "to build a social and historical memory" are some of the dominant features that characterize Kurdish historical novels (2013, p.110 [translation my own]). Drawing attention to how Kurdish historical fictions "become the instrument for building Kurdish identity and social memory" (2013, p.iv), she suggests that Kurdish novelists "use historical novels as an instrument because of the political needs of the

present and they sometimes write historical novels to teach history to new generations" (2013, p.iv).[12]

Indeed, the Kurdish novelists have been using the novel as a cultural medium since the 1950s for constructing literary representations of the history of Kurds and providing a sentiment of history in distinct literary forms. Concerning this relationship between literary forms and historiographic writing, Jerome de Groot notes that "historical writing can take place within numerous fictional locales: romance, detective, thriller, counterfactual, horror, literary, postmodern, epic, fantasy" (2010, p.2). Harry E. Shaw (1983) argues that "the modern historical novel arose as part of the rise of historicism, which made a sense of history part of the cultural mainstream and hence available to novels in general" (p.22). Herbert Butterfield (2011) further observes,

> Though we may not seek to gather our historical facts from the novel […] there
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> are pictures that haunt us, there is an atmosphere that compels us, and if we find

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[12] Adsay's MA dissertation, 'Romana Kurdî (Kurmancî) Ya Dîrokî: Bîra Civakî û Nasname - Kurdish (Kurmanji) Historical Novel: Social Memory and Identity' (2013), which consists of critical examination of the Kurdish historical fictions (e.g. Eliyê Ebdilrehman's *Xatê Xanim* and *Şer Li Çiya*, Erebê Şemo's *Dimdim*, Mehmed Uzun's *Siya Evînê*, *Bîra Qederê* and *Hawara Dicleyê*, Jan Dost's *Mijabad*, *3 gav û 3 darek* and *Mîrname*, Yılmaz Çamlıbel's *Biro*), provides an account of "anachronistic" use of history by Kurdish novelists. While her study offers a well-grounded examination of the instrumentalization of historical fiction for the reconstruction of Kurdish national memory in literature, it falls short in its consideration of the aesthetics of Kurdish historical reimagining in the novels in question, each of which construct history in very different literary forms and, indeed, for different cultural and aesthetic ends. For instance, while Ebdilrehman's *Xatê Xanim* and Şemo's *Dimdim* simply aim to unearth an ethos of the Kurdish heroism and bravery in a literary form markedly characterised by an epic taste, Uzun's historical fiction provides a detailed account of the political defeats, failures, exile lives and sadness of the actual political actors of the recent Kurdish history in the form of realist historical novel, despite doing this to a certain extent outside the conventional forms of the Western realist historical novel.

nothing else, we find the sentiment of history, the feeling of the past, in the historical novel. On one side, therefore, the historical novel is a 'form' of history.

It is a way of treating the past. (p.3)

The modern "historical novel as a form is generally considered to have originated during the early nineteenth century, and particularly with the writings of Sir Walter Scott" (Groot 2010, p.11). With the historical fiction of Scott, the historical novel, "became a rational, realist form, shifting away from the excesses of the Gothic to emphasise process, progress and transcendent human values" (Groot 2010, p.16). Thus, the modern historical novel, although varying in degree, "shares the conventions of realist novel" (Shaw 1983, p.30) in terms of its particular reconstruction of an "atmosphere of an age in the past" (Shaw 1983, p.25). As Jerome de Groot (2010) notes, in specifically the colonial and postcolonial context, "a historical novel might consider the articulation of nationhood via the past, highlight the subjectivism of narratives of History, underline the importance of realist mode of writing to notions of authenticity" (p.2). With its potential to challenge mainstream and repressive narratives (Groot, 2010), the historical novel became one of the most effective mediums in the texts produced by postcolonial novelists for "writing back to colonialist historiography" (Ogude 1999, p.2).

Although the first examples of realist historical novels in the Kurdish literature emerged with the novels of Uzun in late 1980s and the subsequent years (e.g. *Siya Evînê* in 1989, *Bîra Qederê* in 1995, *Hawara Dîcleyê I – II* in 2002 and 2003), the origins of this mode of writing in the Kurdish literary field dates back to the 1950s. In his historical novels, Uzun attempts to present a "full report" (Watt 1957) of the Kurdish history with the attention of a meticulous historian, representing the last two centuries of Kurdish history as a history of political

failures, military defeats, social and economic destructions, losses and suffering. His historical fiction is also notable for its evident strategy of re-writing a "destroyed (yok edilmiş)" and "distorted (çarpıtılmış)" history of Kurds (Uzun 2005, p.26 [translation my own]) by hegemonic Turkish, Arab and Persian historiographies.

However, unlike Uzun, the interest in Kurdish history of the preceding novelists of the earlier era was predominantly an interest, to use Bakhtin's (2006) words, in "the national heroic past", broadly characterised as representations of the heroism of the nation embedded in a distant past. The focus on Kurdish history rendered in novels of this earlier era is arguably closer to heroic narratives and chivalric romances as forms of narrative. Taking Kurdish historical events, fables and epics from the Kurdish "epic world" as their subject, they represent cultural and social integrity, purity, bravery, courage and heroism of the traditional Kurdish community; these are often articulated through the singular acts of an "epic hero" as the main character of the novel and invariably constructed through narratives revolving around naïve love stories. In this way these novels attempt to craft heroism, both at national and individual levels, as the key plot element for the fictionalisation of Kurdish history.

With respect to the use of folklore and oral epics as the source of themes by Kurdish novelists, Remezan Alan's study, *Folklor û Roman: Li Dor Texeyyulên Berê Rêçên Îroyîn* (*Folklore and Novel: The Traces of Today around Imaginings of the Past*, 2013), provides a critical examination of the epic features inscribed in those Kurdish novels relying on Kurdish epics or well-known national figures from Kurdish history. His study highlights the aesthetic shortcomings of these texts in terms of their representations of Kurdish history, (tribal) community and individuals, arguing that novel as the literary genre turns into a "pedagogical" device in the hand of the Kurdish novelists who utilise folkloric figure and elements with the

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aim of signifying "our pure and lost community" (p.109 [translation my own]) and national "origins" in line with the political and cultural needs of the "today". Alan (2013) discusses that in the Kurdish literary setting, "the past is transformed into a cultural laboratory" (p.95) for literature; Kurdish novelists use national historical figures and motifs "to create a collective memory" (p.95).[13]

The overall objective of Alan's discussion is to emphasise that "the compensation of historical losses [xisar] in this way also brings about associated aesthetic losses" (p.150). By considering the collective undertaking of "compensation" of nation's "losses" through literature by the Kurdish novelists in this way, Alan demarcates another major burden in the cultural baggage of Kurdish novelists.

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[13] Aiming to show the traces of the "today" in imaginations of the distant "past" by the Kurdish novelists, *Folklor û Roman* includes a critical examination of Ereb Şemo's *Dimdim*, Uzun's *Rojek Ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê*, Îhsan Colemêrgî's *Cembelî Kurê Mîrê Hekaryan*, Eyüp Kıran's *Dewrêşê Evdî*, Ronî War's *Mem û Zîn*, *Siyabend û Xecê* and *Tehar û Ziharê*, Abdusamet Yigit's *Destana Kawayê Hesinger*, Ibrahim Osman's *Evîna Mêrxasekî*, Zeynelabidin Zinar's *Siyabend û Xecê*, Perwîz Cîhanî's *Bilîcan*, Medeni Ferho's *Mîrza Meheme* and *Berxwedan jiyan e*, Sabri Akbel's *Evîna Pinhan*, Edip Polat's *Ristemê Zal* and Nesrîn Caferî's *Bilind û Nawî*. According to Alan (2013), with an "anachronistic" interpretation of Kurdish history, these texts illustrate that "the dream of a united homeland in a pastoral tribal life" (p.94), neglect the "psychological aspect", often rely on "poor colloquialism" (p.95) while the hero in these texts emerges as an "ideal" character rather than an ordinary individual reflecting the "consciousness" and discourse of their age: "Although the hero [in these novels] belongs to an old period when there was no national consciousness, the [Kurdish] author gets the hero to talk about and act with the motives of today. For this reason, the words such as Kurds, Kurdistan, country, nation, invader, colonialist, colonialism and freedom are uttered way too easily by the heroes. The author forgets the limits of the knowledge/consciousness of these heroes and gives them a historical consciousness" (p.119). Alan considers Hesenê Metê's *Tofan* and his own novel *Saturna* as texts using epic and folkloric elements successfully, suggesting that contrary to above-mentioned novels, his novel provides a well-structured "plot" and well-constructed "characters", incorporating "metafictional" and "intertextual" features (2013, p.145 [translation my own]).

On this basis, he contends that the deployment of folklore in such a poor manner has led to "the emergence of a genre that we can call epi-roman [epi-novel or semi-epic novel]" (p.151) in Kurdish literature. He uses the term "epi-roman" to describe the aesthetic weakness of novelistic texts that both make use of the narrative techniques of the novel but also lack its distinctive characteristic qualities. Based on Lukács and Watt's notions of the modern novel's narrative form and the significations of its hero, Alan (2013) suggests that,

> Doesn't all these [definitions of novel and the hero of the novel] make the [Kurdish] novels focussed here a mere shadow, a ghost, a pre-form? That is, a genre that we can call an epi-roman [epi-novel]. Not the novel, but its shadow of the novel, of its form. If it were so, then the epi-novel is torn between two mills (epic and novel)! As a species caught between two mills, epi-novel probably acts with social obligations rather than literary duties and exerts efforts to meet this need. In this way, it becomes a means of compensation of historical/social losses and points the reader to the path of liberation (2013, p.95 [translation my own]).

He argues that, despite being written with "conventions of the novel such as dialogue, fiction, description, plot, monologue as well as 'modern' motivations" (p.94), these novelistic texts lack "conventions and manoeuvres" of the modern novel such as "parody, irony, pastiche [and] intertextuality" (2013, p.94 [translation my own]), inferring that the absence of these modern narrative techniques brings these texts closer to the epic genre.

While Alan's survey provides yet another astute analysis of the "anachronistic" use of history in Kurdish novels by way of highlighting the epic features in strategies deployed to represent

history, community and historical personage, it does not offer a convincing consideration of the question as to whether these novels are concerned with "loss" or actually convey the heroism of the nation in terms of their thematic focus and textual strategies. Indeed, except Uzun's *Rojek Ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê*, the texts in question seem to highlight the nation's heroism, bravery, cultural and ethnic integrity or to be preoccupied with a renarration of (naïve) oral love stories rather than devoting due attention to the historical or cultural "losses" of the nation. Importantly, Alan (2013) also emphasises the non-realistic representation of Kurdish history by these texts; however, he chiefly seeks the reasons for this aesthetic shortcoming in the authors' *extra-literary* desire to compensate the "losses" of the nation in a way which utilises history for the purposes of "today" and in the texts' lack of "parody, irony, pastiche and intertextuality"; instead, no attention is paid to the consideration of the relation in between their thematic concern for reimagining of the Kurdish history and the non-realistic literary forms this thematic focus and literary concern brings about with it. In relation to this, it must be asserted that no novelized narrative of history striving to highlight the ethos of national heroism or bravery or the emotional and moral virtue of the community rather than a "realistic particularity" (Watt 1957, p.17) of a historical era and personage can escape becoming a *semi-epic* literary work; this is still the case even if it contains such features as "pastiche", "intertextuality", "parody" or "irony". A comprehensive reading of the early Kurdish historical fiction suggests that the ethos of heroism and bravery forming the main focus in the imagination of the Kurdish history, community and historical personage shape not only the content and form of those novels based on epic stories, but also other types of Kurdish historical fiction purporting to provide literary accounts of the past.

The following discussion highlights the ramifications of national heroism and bravery in the imaginings of the Kurdish past in historical novels published until the late 1970s. Its main contention is that the historical fiction in Kurdish literary field first developed not as part of "the rise of historicism" (Shaw 1983) aiming to provide an "authentic report" (Watt 1957) of the "distorted" Kurdish history (Uzun 2005) or as a postcolonial literary enterprise specifically focusing on the nation's historical and cultural "losses", but as a literary form aiming to index and reform the nation's oral epics, folk-tales, myths, legends and figures. It illustrates this by highlighting how these early novelistic texts have devoted a significant part of their aesthetic energies to recounting the heroism, bravery, courage and the moral virtue of the traditional Kurdish community.

For instance, in his 1958 novella *Xatê Xanim* (*Lady Xate*), the first Kurdish historical novelistic text written in Kurdish (Kurmanji), Eliyê Evdilrehman specifically asserts the heroism and bravery of the Kurdish tribes living in the Dersim region of Kurdistan under Ottoman governance, who have "not a few but many heroes" (p.10) and, thanks to these heroes, "the armies of the enemies […] who occupied Kurdistan could not enter the Dersim region" (p.10 [translation my own]). The events in *Xatê Xanîm* (2004) take place in an unspecified historical time in the Ottoman era. Through the story of Xatê Xanım, a "brave and wise" Kurdish female tribal leader and her son Sultan, Evdilrehman's novella narrates the bravery of the Kurdish community and the individual as a constant theme. It presents a version of how the Ottoman administration mistreated the Kurdish tribes by imposing unfair taxes and how this policy is halted when Kurdish tribes become "united" and "bravely" resist this policy. Having a very simple plot, *Xatê Xanım* lacks authentic novelistic characters; it contains only "brave" Kurdish

heroes (Xatê Xanım, Sultan and Kurdish tribes per se) and villains (the Ottoman Sultan and his corrupted local officials).

Similarly, in his 1966 novel *Dimdim* (*Dimdim Castle*) written in Kurdish Kurmanji, Erebê Şemo presents the "bests" and "peak times" (Bakhtin 2006, p.13) of the Kurdish national history. *Dimdim* (2007) re-narrates an old Kurdish folk tale of the heroic actions of the Kurds to defend their homeland against the Iranian army in the 17th century at the castle of Dimdim. It describes the Dimdim resistance as a legend of heroism in distinctly epic literary taste, centring on the bravery of Kurds, rather than dealing with this section of the Kurdish history in its political, social, economic and cultural complexity. The leading character of the novel, Xano, emerges as a national epic hero, representing the bravery, wisdom and heroism of the nation against enemies. The legendary resistance of Dimdim, led by an epic hero, ends in defeat, destruction and loss; but the narrator of *Dimdim* heralds the emergence of the new "Kurdish freedom war" on the ashes of the Dimdim at the end of story.

Likewise, in his 1974 novella, *Le Calvaire du Kurdistan* (*Kürdistan Kralı - The King of Kurdistan*, 2013), written in collaboration with Adolphe de Falgairolle in French, Kamiran Alî Bedirxan returned to "the national heroic past" by representing the heroic resistance of the ancestors against crusaders attempting to invade the Kurdish land. The novel presents the chivalry and heroism of the Kurdish warriors around the epic love story of a Kurdish king (Şêrzad) and a crusader princess (Kegan), the daughter of a (Western) king who joins the crusader army as a warrior and is captured by the Kurdish king (Şêrzad) in a battlefield in Kurdish lands. The gallant Kurdish king is depicted as an epic hero, representing the courage, virtue and heroism of the Kurdish nation. In *Le Calvaire du Kurdistan*, the story ends with a dialogue that reveals "a son" is born out of this love between the Kurdish king and the western princess and that

the son "founds a new [Kurdish] dynasty" (2013, p.87 [translation my own]), amounting to a literary analogue of the nationalist ideas of Bedirxan, who defined the Kurdish nation as one of the "oldest" nations of the "Aryan race" (2014, p.15) and connected it to the Western "civilized" nations through this "Aryan" line.

In contrast to Bedirxan, Seyit Alp selects his heroes from ordinary Kurdish peasants rather than noblemen to narrate a period of the Kurdish past in his 1979 Turkish-language novel *Devran* (*The Wheel of Fortune*). This novel, too, arguably seeks to signify the heroism of the nation. Set in the seventeenth century in Ottoman Kurdistan, *Devran* (2000) presents an account of the power struggle between the Ottoman Empire and the Kurdish principality of Bitlis through the point of view of patriotic Kurdish peasants. When the Ottoman pasha, Melik Ahmed Pasha, attempts to invade the lands of the (Bitlis) Kurdish principality with his army in order to impose a heftier tax, not the Kurdish Emir Abdal Khan but Kolık, an ordinary Kurdish peasant, heroically resists this occupation. Betrayed by Abdal Han, Kolık is handed over to Melik Ahmed Pasha and is then executed. Kolık's bravery and heroism against the Ottoman army spreads like "a legend" and his name becomes "immortal" among the people. After Kolık's death, his name and heroism survive in the memory of the national community as a symbol of resistance. Alp's novel ends with a scene hinting at the birth of the nation's new epic heroes: Kurdish young people begin to change their names to "Kolık" after his death. Yet again, despite Alp's successful illustration of the characters' inner world, the adaptation of certain modern narrative techniques (e.g. monologue and stream of consciousness) as well as the utilisation of an impressive poetic language, his chief concern and focus in *Devran* seems to convey an ethos of epic heroism and the moral virtue of the traditional community. With this thematic feature, *Devran* suggests a methodological parallel with Şemo's *Dimdim*

and Bedirxan's *Le Calvaire du Kurdistan*; it provides yet another version of national heroism rather than constituting an authentic account of a section of the Kurdish history.

Yaşar Kemal's 1970 novella *Ağrıdağı Efsanesi* (*The Legend of Mount Ararat*), which is his first work focusing specifically on Kurdish life, can also be read as an example of this literary trend of utilising historical forms to generate representations of the cultural integrity, purity, courage and heroism of the traditional Kurdish community. Although Kemal had already published his influential realist novels which focus on the contemporary life of the (Turkish) Çukurova region, such as *Orta Direk* (1960), *Yer Demir Gök Bakır* (1963) and *Ölmez Otu* (1968), in *Ağrıdağı Efsanesi*, he presents a simple account of the past life of Kurds around an infantile epic love story (between a Kurdish peasant, Ahmed, and the daughter of a Kurdish Khan, Gülbahar). Centred around a conflict between the cruel Kurdish pasha, Mahmud Khan, and the heroic peasant, Ahmed, an epic love story to be passed down from generation to generation through Kurdish oral culture is presented. Set in an unspecific period in Ottoman Kurdistan (in Ağrı-Beyazıt region), *Ağrıdağı Efsanesi* too distinctly exemplifies an epic taste rather than "conventions of realist novel" (Shaw 1983) in its illustration of history, community and historical personage, just as its Kurdish counterparts discussed above. The main focus of Kemal's novella is to signify the virtue and integrity of the traditional Kurdish community and the heroism of the Kurdish rural individual who has internalized the cultural values and virtues of the traditional Kurdish community. It aims to exalt Kurdish traditional cultural values and practices rather than presenting an account of a historical era through an authentic "individual experience which is always unique" (Watt 1957, p.13) and which is in tension with the given values of the traditional community.

2.4. Representations of History of the Kurdish Tribal Communities Migrating to Soviet Russia

Another form of historical fiction was produced by the Soviet Kurdish novelists in Kurdish Kurmanji during 1950s and 1960s, which particularly focused on the migration history of Kurdish tribal communities from Ottoman Kurdistan to Russia and Soviet Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and prevalently cover stories of two or three generations. As described succinctly by Allison (2005) it can be regarded as a literary form of novelizing "family history" (Allison 2005, p.106). The Soviet Kurdish novelists, such as Erebê Şemo, Heciyê Cindî, Eliyê Evdilrehman and Seîdê Îbo, produced literary migration history of their families and tribal communities in a form of novel often involving autobiographical elements. Their interest in fictionalising the recent histories of the Kurdish tribal communities is not with the purpose of providing a breakdown of the recent period of Kurdish history, shaped by the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the founding of the Republic of Turkey and the political and social turmoil, rebellions, mass migrations and economic destruction created by these great changes in (Ottoman) Kurdistan; instead, they make widespread use of the motif of a troubling past of the Kurdish tribal communities (in the Ottoman Kurdistan) in order to appraise and propagate the "happiness" and prosperity of the present time (in the Soviet land). The modes of representations of the past found in these texts remarkably resemble each other, both in terms of form and content, often recounting a brief history of their tribes and families, the departure of the tribes from their homeland, their challenging migration journey to reach to the Russia or (Soviet) Armenia and the "happy life" and social well-being attained there. Learning the exact date (e.g. year) of the historical events represented in these

novels is near impossible since a traditional Kurdish storytelling style (e.g. 'at that time') characterizes the way these novels recount recent history.

For instance, in 1959 *Jiyana Bextewar* (*Happy Life*), Şemo narrates the history of a Kurdish tribe, Ziliyan/Sipkan, migrating from Ottoman Kurdistan to Russian Empire, as a result of the political, social and economic oppression exerted by the Ottoman state. In the foreword of novel, Şemo summarises the aim of the novel: "you will see how those desperate Kurds have become free thanks to the great October Revolution, led by Lenin's Bolshevik Party" (p.8 [translation my own]). Presenting a simple account of the social, economic and cultural life of Ziliyan/Sipkan tribe in Kurdistan in the late Ottoman era, *Jiyana Bextewar* (2015) depicts how the Ottoman administration and its local collaborators (e.g. Kurdish noblemen and aghas) exploit the poor Kurdish peasants and how a Kurdish tribal community migrates to Russia because of this oppression and exploitation. With the October Revolution, the tribal community attains an economic and social prosperity and its young members become heroic defenders of Soviet ideals (e.g. Misto and Sehid). Characterised by a simple storytelling style in its descriptions of an important stage of the history of Turkey's Kurds, *Jiyana Bextewar* has a very poor plot and one-dimensional characters. Like Şemo's other novelistic works, the work solely promotes Soviet ideals rather than presenting an authentic account of the life of a tribal community in distinct political, social and geographical settings: Ottoman Kurdistan, the Russian Empire and Soviet Russia.

Similarly, Evdilrehman's 1957 novella *Morof* (*Morof*) and 1968 novel *Gundê Mêrxasan* (*The Village of Braves*) focuses on the history of the migration of Kurdish tribal communities and families from Ottoman Kurdistan to (Soviet) Russia during the early twentieth century. These works, in general, depict the prosperity and happiness that Kurds found in the Soviet lands.

In *Morof* (2012), Evdilrehman presents a simple account of the economic and social life of the Kurds in the Kurdish city of Bitlis under Ottoman governance by portraying the life of early twentieth-century Kurds in the "class" binary between Kurdish noblemen on the one hand, and aghas and poor and innocent Kurdish peasants on the other. Two types of characters, both somewhat one-dimensional, emerge in the narrative: a heroic Kurdish shepherd, Morof, innocent poor peasants and villainous Kurdish noblemen and aghas. At the end of the story, Morof and the poor peasants decide to emigrate to Russia, where the October Revolution is underway.

In *Gundê Mêrxasan* (2012), Evdilrehman narrated the migration story of several Kurdish tribes from Ottoman Kurdistan to Soviet Armenia in the early twentieth century. In the foreword to novel, Evdilrehman directly states the aim of his novel: "in this novel, around the story of three tribes of Ottoman/Turkish Kurds [Hêcimkan, Banokan and Qirmiskan], I have attempted to demonstrate the condition of Ottoman/Turkish Kurds" (p.10 [translation my own]). As Evdilrehman himself mentions in the foreword to the novel, "the hero of the novel is the community and several descendants of that community" (p.10). *Gundê Mêrxasan* too was not very concerned with the presentation of an authentic account of the history of tribal communities, but instead, with the representation of heroism and bravery of the community. Quite similar to novels before it, the ethos of heroism (of the nation) is at the centre of the narrative: "History shows that Kurds are lovers of freedom and are good fighters; they can be called the heroes of the mountains" (p.51). The novel also goes on to engage with the "realities" of the past and the present of Kurdish tribal communities who had migrated to Soviet Russia, but mostly to the extent these "realities" confirm the Soviet ideals of justice and equality. The conclusion of the story of three Kurdish tribes escaping Ottoman–Turkish

persecution and massacres in the 1920s, who migrate to Iran first, is only reaching their eventual destination of Soviet Russia, where they are welcomed by Soviet border officials with great hospitality. On this basis, Evdilrehman's novel depicts how the new generation of the tribal community become dedicated komsomols –communists- (e.g. Reşo, Xezal, Qasim) and struggle against "class enemies" to save their kolkhozes in Soviet Armenia.

Cindî's 1967 novel *Hewarî* (*The Call*) is another example of the same "literary decorum" (Watt 1957, p.13) for the representation of the recent history of the Kurdish tribal communities by Soviet Kurdish authors. *Hewarî* (2008)*,* too, mainly focuses on the history of the migration of the Kurdish tribal communities from Ottoman Kurdistan to Soviet Russia and the life of Kurds in Soviet Armenia through two consecutive generations. Just like an ethnographer, Cindî brings the reader to Kurdish villages to listen to the history of a Kurdish Yezidi tribe, Sipkan, through the voices of elderly characters (e.g. Moskov and Şeweş). In the course of the development of the plot, numerous folk wisdoms and songs, elegies and oral folk stories are integrated in the text. Although Cindî's *Hewarî* starts with the presentation of an individual story of a young Kurdish Bolshevik, Fêrîk (who is killed by the Czar's army in 1918, but disclosed as late as 1962), this individual's story is convoluted with the author's evident desire to integrate numerous oral stories about the history of the Sipkan tribe into the text.

The illustration of loss and grief by Cindî is particularly worth emphasizing; despite its development in quite contrasting socio-political and ideological settings, the way in which Cindî deals with these motifs shows remarkable parallels with the way the early Kurdish novelists from other parts of Kurdistan dealt with the subject. In Nurê's inner world, who is performing melancholic grief for her missing brother (Fêrîk) for over four decades, "mourning and joy embraces each other" (p.32 [translation my own]) when she learns that her brother

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died many years ago for the sake of "October Revolution". Nurê thanks the (Bolshevik) party official for giving her this "good news [mizgînî]" (p.32) that puts an end to her endless mourning; the heroism and dedication of the lost other for revolution turns into the antidote of melancholic grief for the bereaved survivor. Nurê's own account of "pain" and grief for the death of her brother, "*derdê bira*" (p.32), spanning some forty years of her life, is rendered invisible and resolved in a narrative form resembling a Bolshevik party propaganda pamphlet: "My brother fought and died heroically for the freedom of our country, our Republic of Armenia, our Soviet society and the October Revolution; believe me, today he is resurrected, he is no longer dead, he is alive" (p.32 [translation my own]). Containing a significant number of stylistic errors and inconsistencies, *Hewarî,* too, is not concerned with providing an account of authentic "human experiences" or the representation of the recent history of Kurdish tribal communities migrating to the Soviet Armenia; instead, his work uses the motifs of the recent Kurdish past for narrating the "happiness" that the community has found in the Soviet land of the period.

Once again, quite similarly, Îbo's 1981 novel, *Kurdên Rêwî* (*Kurdish Migrants*), focuses on the history of migration of another Kurdish Yezidi tribe, Ortila, and presents a simple account of the "class conflicts" in the pre-capitalist social and economic stage of Kurdish and Armenian villages near the city of Iğdır, under Russian rule at the time of the events of the novel. In its foreword, Îbo introduces himself and presents a brief history of his tribe. *Kurdên Rêwî* (2009) depicts how the Bolshevik movement developed and started to change the traditional social and cultural structure in Kurdish rural areas. The novel represents early twentieth century Kurdish rural life in a fashion aligned with the Soviet official thesis of the critical role of the Bolsheviks and poor peasants in the "class struggle". After the region comes under Ottoman

control, the Ortila tribe emigrates to Soviet Armenia because of the massacres perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks. The arrival of the Ortila tribe to Soviet Armenia is portrayed as an arrival to paradise. As seen in the other Soviet Kurdish novels, two types of characters emerge in Îbo's work: brave and ideal heroes (poor peasants and Bolshevik activists, such as Umnov, Suren, Zurbe, Sebri, Hemze and Usiv) and villains (aghas and clerics, such as Hemid, Keleş, Pir Mirzo and Karapet).

Mainly concerned with depicting the "happiness" of the day for the Kurdish tribal communities migrating to Soviet lands, Soviet Kurdish novelists treated recent Kurdish history according to their contemporary ideological and cultural agendas (Soviet affiliation) rather than providing a precise and genuine account of the Kurdish nineteenth and early twentieth century history. The Soviet official ideology determines the limits and capacity of the representations of historical "realities" of the recent Kurdish past as well as the social and economic "realities" of their present. A seemingly "individualised" (Watt 1957, p.21) character in these novels emerge as a flawless hero, who faithfully serves the Soviet Union, either as a heroic soldier or as an idealist kolkhoz worker, dedicated to the ideals of "equality", "justice" and "progress". Quite similar to character constructions in other early Kurdish novels, one cannot identify any other character apart from the heroes (innocent and poor Kurdish peasants and Kurdish Bolsheviks) and villains (e.g. "class enemies" and traditional actors of the Kurdish rural community such as agha and sheiks failing to adapt to the Soviet system) who might reflect an authentic individual "human experience" (Watt 1957). Despite often being presented with a detailed account of the contemporary daily life of the Kurdish community in these novels, the life represented is one idealized through the "literary decorum" of the Soviet official ideology. The impact of this "literary decorum", voluntarily or

involuntarily adopted by the Soviet Kurdish novelists, probably manifests itself most clearly in the concept of the homeland left behind which all these novels allude to. Yet, despite their evident and prevalent focus on a history of displacement from native lands, compared with those expressed in the early novels of four parts of Kurdistan, the novels do not assume or advocate a cultural or political desire for a free homeland; nor do we meet reflections of a melancholic or nostalgic longing for the homeland. This is chiefly because the (lost) homeland is replaced with a new love-object (the Soviet Union), the land of "equality", "justice" and "prosperity" in these novelistic texts.

2.5. Representing Contemporary Kurdish Rural Life Around Simple Binaries

Another major topic covered by Kurdish novels published in the 1960s and the 1970s was contemporary Kurdish rural life. Providing a methodological parallel with approaches to objective reality characterising some of the novels discussed so far, despite primarily focusing on the social, cultural and economic "realities" of Kurdish rural life, these novels, however, also fall short of offering an authentic literary representation of contemporary Kurdish rural community and individual. Alongside Erebê Şemo, Kurdish novelists from Turkey, such as Ömer Polat and Seyit Alp, writing in Turkish, present contemporary Kurdish rural life and individuals either around the motifs of the heroism and the cultural and moral integrity of the tribal community (e.g. Alp's *Welat – İskancının Türküsü* [*Homeland – The Song of the Forced Settler*, 1977] and *Dino İle Ceren* [*Dino and Ceren*, 1981]) or utilise the aesthetic formulation of given "literary decorums" to construct depictions of social, cultural and economic realities in the Kurdish rural setting. Of the two major examples to this, the first is Şemo's *Hopo* (*Hopo*, 1969), written in the official Soviet literary decorum. A contrasting second example is provided by Polat's novels such as *Saragöl* (*Saragöl*, 1974), *Mahmudo ile Hazel* (*Mahmudo*

and Hazel, 1975) and *Dilan* (*Dilan*, 1976), which are mediated by a Kemalist literary decorum emerging in the form of *köy romanı* [the village novel], an influential trend in Turkish literature between 1950 and 1980, in which Kurdish rural life in modern Turkey was often represented along a simple binary between the Kurdish backward religious and feudal actors and poor, ignorant and innocent peasants.

The impact of Soviet literary "decorum" is especially evident in Şemo's 1969 novel *Hopo*, in which an account of the contemporary life of Soviet Kurds in the rural area of Elegez, near Yerevan, is presented through a depiction of an idealized image of kolkhoz production. *Hopo* (2016) narrates how the descendants of "those desperate Kurds" who fled from Ottoman Kurdistan find a fair, equal and prosperous life in the Soviet lands. Although the novel provides a detailed description of Kurdish economic, social and cultural activities in a rural area of Soviet Armenia in the 1960s, the Kurdish rural "reality" presented in the novel is a one-dimensional "reality" to which the Soviet official ideology sets limits. The novel depicts the gratitude of the Kurdish migrant community towards the Soviet system: "Thanks to Lenin's party; who would have believed, a time will come, and the descendants of Kurds will learn to use machines that travel by themselves and faster than ox, horse and camel; thank god!" (p.26 [translation my own]). Analogous to its depiction of Kurdish rural social and economic realities, *Hopo*'s heroes are ideal figures (e.g. Zine, Hesen and Sertib), who dedicate their intellectual abilities to the interests of their community and country (the Soviet Union).

In similar fashion but in a different political, social and cultural setting, Polat presents a simple account of Kurdish rural life in Turkey in his novels *Saragöl* (2011), published in 1974, *Mahmudo ile Hazel* (2013), published in 1975 and *Dilan* (2011) in 1976. At a period when the Kurdish urbanization gained momentum and increasingly urbanized Kurdish individuals began

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to emerge in the social, cultural and political domains of the Kurdish community in Turkey, Polat (and also Alp) opts to represent the Kurdish life solely in a rural setting around the story of traditional rural figures. The contention with Polat's novels depicting Kurdish rural life is not about their subject matter but about "the way [they] represented" (Watt 1957, p.11) this subject matter. Polat's novels can be read as different volumes of one novel in terms of their settings (all of these novels are set in villages around Saragöl and Aladağlar, near Ağrı district, in the 1950s and 1960s) and characterizations, all of whom are portrayed either as heroic or innocent characters (in *Saragöl,* Apo Mıkko and Mirzo, in *Mahmudo ile Hazel* Mahmudo and Hazel, in *Dilan* Mirkan and Dilan) or purely villains (in *Saragöl,* Cemşid and Dılo aghas, in *Mahmudo ile Hazel* Mısto agha, in *Dilan* son of Bübet agha Paşo). In Polat's fiction, the plot is acted out "by general human types", behaving almost in the same way, rather than "by particular people in particular circumstances" (Watt 1957, p.15). He presents a stereotyped image of Kurdish village life produced by the Turkish *köy romanı* (village novel) of the time, constructing a representation of Kurdish rural life around a simple binary between evil-minded Kurdish landowners, aghas and sheikhs on the one side, and poor and innocent Kurdish peasants on the other.

Presenting parallels, but due to different reasons, Alp's novels, too, lack "realistic particularity" (Watt 1957, p.17) in their descriptions of Kurdish rural community and figures. Adopting an epic and poetic style in his description of the Kurdish rural life, Alp either focuses on "the destiny of community" rather than "a personal destiny" (Lukács 2006) or the heroic acts of the rural individual in his works *Welat – İskancının Türküsü* (1977) and *Dino İle Ceren* (1981). In *Welat – İskancının Türküsü*, Alp deals with the issue of the forced migration of a Kurdish tribal community in the Republic era through a narrative of the experiences of a

Kurdish tribe expatriated from Dersim region to central Anatolia. The hero in *Welat* is the tribal community itself, whose members are living in great longing for their native land. The migrant tribal community is portrayed by Alp as an idealised social and cultural unit, free from internal contradictions and conflicts among its members, and with a great cultural heritage which offers a stable and shared map of meaning for its members in the exilic space. *Welat – İskancının Türküsü* resembles a poetic lament to the ill-fortune of the exiled and displaced Kurdish community. In *Dino İle Ceren,* Alp presents an account of Kurdish rural life by providing a narrative centred along a simple binary of squirearchy and peasantness. The novel portrays how innocent Kurdish peasants are socially and economically exploited by the Kurdish aghas around a naïve love story. Dino, the shepherd of the Begin agha, and Begin agha's young (second) wife Ceren, fall in love with each other. The story ends with Dino's death for his illegitimate love. Typical of the early Kurdish novels, two general character types emerge in *Dino İle Ceren* along a simplistic binary: brave and innocent heroes (e.g. Kurdish peasants such as Masalcı and Şiran and epic lovers, such as Dino and Ceren) and villains (e.g. Begin agha and Rureş).

As this discussion demonstrates, the representation of Kurdish political, social, cultural and economic life, as well as the versions of history effected in these specimens of the early Kurdish novel provides a methodological connection: that it is not literary "realism" that characterizes the early Kurdish novel, but a sui generis form of heroic representation saturated by a distinct epic taste. The reflections of this distinct "non-realistic convention" (Watt 1957) that determines the early Kurdish novel have been illustrated through the foregoing discussion on the content, settings, characterization and textual strategies of these novels. The discussion paid a particular attention to the five distinct subject matters

considered in the novels: the representation of the Kurdish political subject and political struggles, often set around the motif of a militant heroism and stories of national heroes, foes and traitors; the fictionalization of Kurdish history, often around the motif of a Kurdish bravery, heroism and legendary figures; the Soviet Kurdish novelists' specific representation of recent Kurdish history; the representation of the contemporary Kurdish rural life set around clear-cut binaries (e.g. squirearchy/peasantry) and the illustrations of loss and grief often utilised as devices to elicit not an authentic individual experience, but the socio-political and socio-cultural state that turns grief into a site of political resistance. In this way, the discussion traces a common literary trend in the representation of the Kurdish politics, history, life and grief in the novelistic texts produced in the first phase of the history of the Kurdish novel.

Although this literary trend continues to evidence itself in a significant number of Kurdish novels published after the 1980s, the second half of this decade and particularly the 1990s have also witnessed the publication of the first realist modern novels in Kurdish language. Forming the focus of the following discussion, these novels present a clear artistic break from those of the earlier era and engage with the realist "formal convention" (Watt 1957, p.13) in the representation of subject matters their predecessors dealt with solely as a contingency.

2.6. Emergence of the First Realist Modern Kurdish Novels in Kurdish Language

In the foreword to the Turkish edition of Uzun's 1989 *Siya Evînê,* Yaşar Kemal (2000) describes the novel as "a masterpiece" (p.11) written in the Kurdish language and hails Uzun as a "master" novelist, who created a "rich", "advanced" and "new novelistic language" from a "forbidden language" (p.11 [translation my own]). Kemal (2000) importantly notes that *Siya*

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Evînê has "well-constructed characters" (p.12) and that Uzun writes everything "in a plain language" and "fascinates" the reader with "this plain language" (p.12). He also makes the point that several Kurdish novels in Kurdish language were written before Uzun, but that they were "simple/primitive" ("İlkel") novels (2000, p.11). It is somewhat questionable whether Kemal has read any of the early Kurdish-language novels that he describes as "simple/primitive", but nevertheless, his literary evaluation that Uzun was the pioneer of a "renewal" in the history of Kurdish-language novel is an indisputable reality.

In fact, certain elements of the "new novelistic language" and successful "characterization" Kemal identified in *Siya Evînê* could also be seen in Uzun's first novels, *Tu* (1985) and *Mirina Kalekî Rind* (1987), which can be regarded as the first examples of the realist novel in Kurdish literature written in Kurdish. As also noted by Chiad Abdulkarim and Ismael Saeed (2019-B), his early works suggest "characteristic[s] of modern realism," (p.391) reconstructing "individual voices" (p.392) to represent the socio-political situation of Kurds in Turkey. In *Tu* and *Mirina Kalekî Rind*, the Kurdish political, social and cultural life and the Kurdish political subject, who was often represented as a militant heroic figure in the early Kurdish novels, is represented in a more realistic light, providing an accurate account of its various aspects. In this sense, notwithstanding the problematic nature of literary periodization, the history of Kurdish-language novel can arguably be divided into two distinct periods of pre- and post-1985, a year marking the beginning of the artistically adept and realistic literary representation of the specific complexity forming the modern Kurdish life and individual.

The first modern Kurdish novelists in Kurdish, which include names such as Mehmed Uzun (1953–2007), Bextiyar Elî (from Iraqi Kurdistan) and Eta Nehayî (from Iranian Kurdistan), were not merely concerned with representations of the Kurdish "reality" in its political, social and

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cultural complexity inferred from the fate of individual, but also with the "form" of the work. The novels they produce suggest both realist "formal conventions" (Watt 1957) and modernist tendencies (e.g. Uzun's *Bîra Qederê*, 1995; Elî's second novel *Êvara Perwaneyê*, 1998; Nehayî's first novel *Gulên Şoran*, 1997). Despite continuing to dedicate a substantial amount of attention to the political conditions of the homeland like their predecessors, such as Bedirxan, Qazi and Ehmed, the Kurdish "reality" they represent, in contrast, is through more "ambivalent" characters and with the use of what may be regarded as contemporary narrative modes as noted by Ahmadzadeh (2015).[14] As Bocheńska also draws attention to in relation to the question of representation of "love", "dignity" and "others", "the psychological and philosophical portraits of Kurdish characters and their interrelations have become more

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[14] Ahmadzadeh (2015) rightly notes that, during the 1990s and later on, "new literary styles and modes, for example magic realism, the metanovel, surrealism, stream of consciousness and fantastic novels, enter the domain of Kurdish writing" (p.237). With the use of modern novel narrative techniques, the Kurdish novel achieved "a more complicated form in representing more complicated and 'round' characters" (p.237). Unlike one-dimensional and heroic protagonists of the early Kurdish novels, "the protagonists of recent Kurdish novels stress a significant degree of ambivalence in the way they face the world around them" (Ahmadzadeh 2015, p.237).

multidimentional and richer" (2018, p.66) in the works of modern of Kurdish novelists.[15] Their novels signify a fundamental shift from simple representations of the political issue and experiences to the contextualisation of the psychology of individual within a wider political and cultural setting. As such, the motifs deployed in the novels of the previous era are inverted from descriptions of abstract "agony of the people [jana gel]" to the authentic agony of the individual in a community beset by ethnic and political oppression, from heroic representation of the political subject in national resistance to the annihilation, suffering, defeat and disappointment of the political subject, saturated with a feeling of loss and melancholy. Particularly in the 1990s, not "what" but "how" modern Kurdish novelists represented their subject became visibly more important.

As noted by Jesse Matz (2004), "the modern novel […] does not just refer to any and all fiction written in modern times, or to fiction that is recent or new […] It refers to fiction that tries for new techniques, new theories, new languages – for the kind of radical 'formal innovation' […]

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[15] Bocheńska's comparative analysis of "love", "dignity" and "others" in the early Kurdish literary texts (e.g. oral and classical) and modern Kurdish novels is yet another important study revealing how modern Kurdish novels developed "new forms towards characters that were unknown to traditional texts" (2018, p.66) and how this engagement which went beyond "the black and white vision of bad and good" (2018, p.68) results in an "aesthetic transformation" in their works. Bocheńska argues that "along with the modern narratives, a new, wider understanding of love has emerged in Kurdish literature" (2018, p.66). Her study reveals the illustrations of "modern understanding of dignity" in the works of modern Kurdish novelists such as Mehmed Uzun, Bextiyar Elî, Eta Nehayî, Hesenê Metê, Firat Cewerî and Helîm Yûsiv. Bocheńska highlights that "[modern Kurdish novels] offer attention and sympathy towards people in what, following Lynn Hunt, can be called 'the process of imaginative identification allowing to feel the pain of others', thus starting to obtain a moral meaning. Importantly, these changes came into being as aesthetic transformation […] The meaning of love expands beyond erotic affection, mystical devotion, or patriotism [in these novels]. It elevates the universal value of human life, paving the way for a modern understanding of dignity" (2018, p.66). Her study demonstrates that modern Kurdish novels offer us not only a new "imaginary framework for dignity but also a solid theoretical background for a discussion of the ethical transformation" (p.67).

for the new philosophies and psychologies" (p.6). Matz further notes that "not just new plots and new stories, but new *forms*: not the *what*, but the *how*, is what sets the modern novel apart" (2004, p.8). Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (1991) group the main features of the modernist novel under four headings:

> The modernist novel has shown, perhaps, four great preoccupations: with complexities of its form, with the representation of inward states of consciousness, with a sense of nihilistic disorder behind the ordered surface of life and reality, and the freeing of narrative art from the determination of onerous plot. (p.393)

Informed with such lines of demarcation of the content and form of the modern novel, the following discussion emphasises that to the extent that Kurdish novelists engage in the realist "formal convention", their interest steer away from representations of heroism of the nation to those of the complex realities of the nation. Secondly, and of particular significance for the present study, the discussion suggests that to the extent that Kurdish novelists engage with the realities of nation and benefit from the potential of the modern novel, the motifs of loss, suffering and melancholy, at collective as well as individual level, become questions of prevalent focus in their works. The discussion highlights that the first modern Kurdish novelists distance themselves from the early Kurdish novelists in three major respects with respect to the representation of Kurdish history, life, individual and grief: first, they represent *loss* as *loss* rather than rendering it invisible within the given political and cultural conventions of the national and militant heroism; second, they frame the work of grief in the domain of the individual's psychic world; and third, as an aesthetic contrast, they employ literary modes

such as "interior monologue, stream of consciousness and first-person narration" (Clewell 2009) in descriptions of loss, suffering and melancholy.

Before moving onto the analysis of the reflections of realist and modernist "conventions" (Watt 1957) in the Kurdish-language novels published in the second half of the 1980s and 1990s, some attention will be devoted to the process of adaptation of realist conventions by the contemporary Kurdish novelists as a backdrop. This is necessitated by the radical changes it brought about for the literary representation of the Kurdish community, political subject and history. To this end, the traces of the realist trend in the representation of Kurdish life and history in two non-Kurdish novels, published in the first half of the 1980s, will be discussed briefly: Yaşar Kemal's Turkish-language novel *Yağmurcuk Kuşu* (1980), which is the first volume of *Kimsecik* trilogy, and Selîm Berekat's 1985 Arabic-language novel *Fuqaha' al-Zalam*, translated into Kurdish as *Feqiyên Tariyê* in 2013.

In *Yağmurcuk Kuşu*, Kemal presents an authentic account of Kurdish life and modern history (late Ottoman and the early Republic era), using narrative forms as variegated as those of (Greek) tragedies and magical realism, with astute depictions of the psychology of (Kurdish) characters in fuller detail. The novel, which also includes autobiographical elements from Kemal's life, narrates the story of an extended Kurdish family from Van, a city of Turkish Kurdistan, displaced to Çukurova, the eastern corner of the Turkish Mediterranean coast, and focuses on the political and social turmoil of the final period of the Ottoman history and the transition to the foundation of the Turkish Republic from the perspective of Kurds. Kemal's *Yağmurcuk Kuşu* can be described as one of the first novels in which a realistic representation of Kurdish life and modern history can be found, including a portrayal of the Yazidi massacres

as well as the turmoil of Ağrı rebellion (1927 – 1931) around stories of well-rounded characters (e.g. İsmail Ağa and Salman).

Syrian Kurdish author Selîm Berekat's 1985 *Fuqaha' al-Zalam* is another example of this realist trend emerging in the 1980s in the representation of Kurdish life and individual in novels produced in other languages. In his study, *The Experimental Arabic Novel – Postcolonial Literary Modernism in the Levant* (2001), Stefan G. Meyer notes that "the irony of *Fuqaha' al-Zalam* is that the greatest work of its type in the Arab language asserts a cultural identity that is non-Arab" (p.97). Arguably, yet another irony of Berekat's work is that it is the first "modernist" Kurdish novel in which a realistic account of Kurdish (rural) life and the Kurdish rural individual can be found. As Meyer (2001) also notes, Berekat's novel "not only represents reality by means of the mythic imagination […] but it also uses local [Kurdish] culture as a means of conveying a more universal condition" (p.88). In *Fuqaha' al-Zalam*, Berekat combined "a fluid, effortless style, complete mastery of language, striking imagery, and great sensitivity for the people and land, which constitute his subjects" (Meyer 2001, p.95). Around the allegorical story of Bêkes (meaning 'orphan' in Kurdish), who is placed in a distinct time cycle whereby he is born, grows up and gets older within the course of a single day, Berekat steers the reader to the history of the Syrian Kurds, represented as a history inscribed in the memory of mystical word; "in a blue-grey non-existence" (p.23), in "a speechless distance" (p.23). *Fuqaha' al-Zalam* presents an effective representation of the parts of Kurdish (rural) life built on the death-ridden economy of cross-border smuggling between Turkey and Syria through palpable and convincing characters (e.g. Mele Bênav, Birîna, Sînem, Mehmdê Koçerê, Mecîdo).

The presence of this realist turn in the representation of Kurdish social and political life does find a corollary in novels written in Kurdish in the same period. Uzun's first novel *Tu* (1985), which includes obvious autobiographical elements from his life, arguably a somewhat monophonic novel, was not one of his best works in the formal sense; however, its realist representation of the Kurdish political subject and political and social conditions of Turkey's Kurds and its efforts to adapt modern narrative techniques (e.g. monologue and stream of consciousness) into the Kurdish-language literature marks it as an important work in the history of the Kurdish novel. It is distinguished as the first Kurdish-language novel concerned with presenting an adequately complex account of Kurdish political life around the "destiny" of an ambivalent individual in search of self and ethnic identity in a community subjugated by political oppression. *Tu* also was the first Kurdish-language novel by Turkey's Kurds. Before *Tu,* a novelette (Brîndar's *Keça Kurd – Xanê*, 1982) and two novellas (Brîndar's *Soro*, 1983, and

Mahmûd Baksî's *Hêlîn*, 1984) were published by Turkey's Kurds in Germany and Sweden, but these texts were manifestly amateurish works in terms both of content and form.[16]

The narrator and the unnamed leading character of *Tu*, (a young political activist and intellectual who is arrested and tortured by the Turkish police) emerges not as a militant heroic subject, as we have often seen in the early Kurdish novels, but as a hopeless individual disaffected by the Turkish hegemonic power. In *Tu,* Uzun does not focus on the destiny of community, but the destiny of an individual which entails the destiny of the community. *Tu*'s unnamed character engages with the works of "Joyce, Tolstoy, Faulkner [and] Cavafy" while seeking to discover and regain his denied ethnic and cultural identity by the Turkish state and becomes a victim of state violence (torture and imprisonment) for laying claim to his own ethnic identity. As Alparslan Nas (2013) also notes, *Tu* conveyed the "loss and impossibility of

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[16] While Brîndar's two amateur self-published fictional works, *Keça Kurd – Xanê* and *Soro*, are considered by some Kurdish literary critics and scholars (e.g. Ahmadzadeh 2003; Ferho 2011; Yûsiv 2011; Aydoğan 2011) as the first Kurdish-language novels by Turkey's Kurds, *Keça Kurd – Xanê* is only but a simple novelette and *Soro,* a novella. Both are written with a very plain and limited vocabulary and have very simple plots. In *Keça Kurd – Xanê*, a Kurdish girl (Xanê), who joins the Peshmerga forces to fight for freedom of Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan, emerges as a national hero, representing the militant heroism of Kurdish women. In *Soro*, struggling against the Turkish state and its local collaborators (aghas), Soro emerges as a flawless and brave national hero. When he is killed by the local collaborators of the Turkish state, his pregnant wife Leyla delivers a baby named "Soro". The death of Soro does not represent a loss, but a birth of a new "Soro" for the nation, a simple plot schema discussed earlier in this section of the current study. Baksî's novella, *Hêlîn*, was another of these simple novelistic works published in the 1980s. Baksî presents Kurdish rural life along a simple set of binaries (e.g. squirearchy and peasantness, and Kurdish patriotism symbolized in the personality of an enlightened Kurdish teacher and Kurdish betrayal, symbolized in Reşo's personality). Starting with a narration of a Kurdish epic love story (Sîyabend û Xecê) from "national epic past", Baksî presents a simple account of the political struggle of Turkey's Kurds in the late 1970s and early 1980s through the didactic voice of a wise young girl, Hêlîn, echoing the critical voice of Baksî himself directed against the oppressive Turkish state.

active agency" in "colonial systems of oppression" (p.181) for the Kurdish individual, representing a realistic setting of the Kurdish political and cultural activism in modern Turkey.

In his 1995 novel *Bîra Qederê*, Uzun not only produced a representation of the lost legacy of the Kurdish intellectuals and political figures of the early twentieth century in a realistic manner as he did in *Siya Evînê*, but also used new narrative modes to commit this political and intellectual legacy onto the cultural memory of the nation. In *Bîra Qederê*, Uzun attempts to use a new language, "the language of photographs", to represent "the life", "works", "traces" and the legacy of Kurdish intellectual and political figure of Celadet Alî Bedirxan (1893 – 1951), so that it is not "forgotten" and "lost" (p.14). The photographs of Celadet Beg generate "the language of Bîra Qederê" (p.13). The novel presents a detailed version of the modern history of Turkey's Kurds along the axis of Celadet Alî Bedirxan's "Qeder" (destiny). The life of Bedirxan Beg is represented by Uzun not as symbolic of heroism, but as one of loss, exile, suffering and melancholy, conveying the individual cost of claiming Kurdishness in modern Turkey. The author of *Bîra Qederê* writes a *biographical* novel about Celadet Beg, who starts to write an *autobiographical* novel called "Bîra Qederê" in July 1951 and dies a week after starting, in dialogue with the lost other. Uzun uses motifs of loss and exile not only to describe the life and legacy of a Kurdish political and intellectual figure, but also to represent a passage of Kurdish history defined by political disturbances, rebellions, defeats and losses.

The first modern novels of the Iraqi Kurds, which emerged in the second half of the 1990s, also offered an authentic representation of Kurdish life by benefiting from narrative potentials and forms of the modern novel. With *Êvara Perwaneyê* (1998), written in Sorani dialect, Bextiyar Elî created not only an effective "polyphonic" novel in the Kurdish language,

suggesting "a plurality of equally-valid consciousness" (Bakhtin 1994, p.89) and multiple voices of independent and well-constructed characters (e.g. Ferîdunê Melek, Perwane, Xendana Piçûçik, Nesredîn Bêhnxweş, Mîdya, Zeynep Kwêstanî), but, also, an authentic account of the political, social and cultural life of Iraqi Kurds. Around the story of a group of urban men and women who attempt to build a utopian "Land of Love" ("Eşqistan") in the mountains in the hope of living a free life and "love", Elî presents how a society dominated by religious fanaticism confines the individual in an unbearable grip and leaves no space for individual freedom by focusing on the political, social and cultural locale of the loss, memory, mourning and the meaning of the legacy of the lost other in Kurdish community.

In her essay 'Modern Fiction' (1925), Virginia Woolf argues that, for modern novelists "the point of interest lies very likely in the dark places of psychology" (p.162) of the character. In *Êvara Perwaneyê*, Elî brings the reader into these "dark places of psychology" of the characters where each of whom have distinct particularities. Around a motif of melancholic mourning enacted by one of the main female characters, Xendana Piçûçik, who wants to write a "narrative" to keep the legacy of "Eşqistan" and her dead sister, Perwane, alive, Elî deals with the meaning of loss and mourning and politics of memory in a community whose life and history is defined by death, loss and suffering. The overall effect of *Êvara Perwaneyê* seems to be that as a result of living in an environment of endless violence, political defeats, suffering, death and loss, the Kurdish community has lost the ability to mourn its losses both at individual and political levels: "Everything in this country [Kurdistan] is a mirage; its history is nothing more than a distant cloud of dust; [...] its revolutions turn into dust; its rebellions turn into ashes" (p.162 [translation my own]). The novel avers that "the Kurdistan is the land" where thousands of lives vanished "without leaving any memory behind" (p.161), with the

implication that in a society where death and loss become commonplace, the loss of an individual ceases to be a matter of any authentic mourning. Through the motif of Xendan's futile intellectual effort to record losses of the past and the legacy of her killed sister through the "narrative", Elî does not only convey the banalization of loss in a subjugated community whose history has turned into a history of ungrieved losses, but also the difficulty of signifying losses of a community in perpetual political and social annihilation beyond mere trivialities: "what is worth recovering in the history of this country?" (p.161).

The symbolic meaning of life and death of the lost other, their political and cultural legacy and enactments of mourning for them in the Kurdish political and cultural setting also figure as the central focus of Nehayî's first novel *Gulên Şoran* (1997), the first modern novel of Iranian Kurds written in Sorani. In *Gulên Şoran*, Nehayî portrays the rise and fall of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad (1946) in realistic style by successfully using new narrative techniques such as stream of consciousness, inner monologue, flashback and complex psychological accounts of the well-rounded characters. Although the thematic focus of Nehayî's novel is mainly the politics of mourning for the lost other killed in the resistance struggle, *Gulên Şoran* also provides an authentic account of the recent history of Iranian Kurds from the First World War to the 1960s through the story of two generations of a Kurdish family (Wisû agha and his family members). Unlike Qazi who deploys the motif of Mahabad initiative mainly to represent the Kurdish bravery and heroism in *Pêşmerge*, in *Gulên Şoran,* Nehayî critically engages with the "law of mourning" (Derrida 2001, p.144) in a society that lives in perpetual violence, military conflicts, social destruction, death, loss and suffering around the story of a fighter (Las), who joins the Mahabad resistance and disappears after the resistance is crushed by the Iranian army.

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While *Gulên Şoran* also conveys the symbolic importance of Mahabad initiative for the Kurds, in contrast, it is centred around the banality of losing a loved one in a society whose "belief in death" has weakened its "belief in life" (p.19) as a result of being the subject of continuous political violence and oppression; hence, the question as to how the banality of "death" diminishes the society's ability to mourn the losses of its loved ones is of particular attention to the text. When Las, the main character of novel, disappears during the days of the the uprising's defeat, he is immediately declared "dead" by his family and community. "No one doubts" Las' "death" (p.19) because in the days following Mahabad's defeat, "thousands of mothers chased the fate of their sons" (p.111) but received no news: "They had mourned for his death. They lamented for him. They cried at his non-existent grave. After forty days of mourning as enacted for each dead, they had forgotten him. They had erased his name from their minds and memories" (p.19 [translation my own]). When Las returns fifteen years later, "on the anniversary of his death" (p.9), his wife (Xanzad) and younger brother (Ferxe) had married after an extramarital affair, and everything about his memory and legacy has been erased from the memory of his family members and community. Around the motifs of the "death" of a resistance fighter and "betrayal" to the legacy of a resistance fighter (e.g. the sinful marriage of Xanzad and Ferxe), Nehayî's novel represents the social, cultural and ethical crisis of an oppressed community trying to build a new life on its unmourned losses.

Containing these distinct features, Nehayî's work also provides an authentic melancholy aesthetic; indeed, its specific focus on the reflections of melancholic performances of the bereaved mother (Gulê), son (Yadgar) and widow (Xenzad), whose lives evolve along the axis of a loss and melancholic grief, marks it as the first novelistic text in Kurdish literature that genuinely deals with the grief of losing a loved one in national resistance. The tense

relationship and emotional conflicts involve Ferxe, Las' younger brother who believes that "the due of the dead is to be forgotten" (p.63), and his (former) wife Xenzad, who lives with a sense of guilt that she has betrayed him yet insistently keeps the photograph of her lost husband on the wall despite living with her new husband (Ferxe). The bereaved mother Gulê "does not live with the living as much as she lives with the dead" (p.149) after loss of her elder son and believes "Las will return one day" (p.149). Yadgar, Las' son, grows up with his image as "the hero of his dreams" (p.102) and "takes refuge in the chest of his [absent] father" (p.102) during nights when his grandmother tells him the story of "Şoran's Roses" for which his father "rode the clouds to bring [them]" (p.102). These believable characters and an intricate plot constructed around their complex relationships depicted innovatively form a literary version of the melancholy affect set around questions of grief for loss of the other and the "responsibility and fidelity, of how to mourn" (Brault & Nass 2001, p.12) for the loved one who die during resistance struggle. In this way, the reflections of the new life of a grieving family shaped by a loss are critically utilised by Nehayî to fashion a literary version of the ethical and affective dilemma of "amnesia" and "melancholy" (Derrida 2005, p.160) as a work of "carrying the [lost] other in the self" (Derrida 2005, p.159) and thus "keeping" the other "alive in us" (Derrida 2001, p.135) not only as communities but as individuals too.

The Kurdish novels analysed in the following chapters of this study, to a greater or lesser degree, reflect the characteristics of realist and modern conventions beginning to be seen in Kurdish novels after mid-1980s; they deal with the motifs of loss and grief both at individual and socio-political level in a manifestly realist fashion. "The destiny of individual" is at the centre of the story, although the individual's destiny now also implies the destiny of the suffering nation in the novels to be discussed in the following chapters. They engage with the

motif of loss and melancholy along the axis of the psychology of the individual and represent melancholy as "actual experiences of individuals" (Watt 1957, p.27), despite the often-blurred line between politics and psychology as much as "public" and "private" in their descriptions of loss and melancholic response. They articulate the connections between the sufferings of today and losses of the past by locating the story of the lost homeland and the nation's melancholic desire for a free homeland in an authentic historical setting and depicting this history as also one of political and military defeats, losses, suffering and exiles rather than a history solely of heroism (e.g. *Siya Evînê*). They thereby comprise a shift in emphasis from the political and cultural conventions of martyrdom and national resistance to "the psychic dimensions of grief" (Clewell 2009) in depictions of the suffering for a loss of a loved one in the resistance struggle (e.g. *Reş û Spî*). The realistic representations of the Kurdish political subject they achieve not as an idealised heroic individual free from crime, decay, dilemma and psychological annihilation, but as an authentic individual, defective, helpless and weak in the face of colonial violence and unable to overcome the loss and legacy of colonial violence, is also accompanied with a stylistic turn: it involves the utilisation and experimentation with narrative forms and techniques of the modern novel to construct these narratives of the devastating legacies of colonial violence (e.g. *Ez ê yekî bikujim* and *Lehî*).

Chapter Two

Melancholy as Intellectual Fidelity to a Political Ideal and the Motif of Love-Melancholy in Mehmed Uzun's *Siya Evînê*

This chapter provides an analysis of representation of melancholy in Mehmed Uzun's historical novel *Siya Evînê* (*The Shade of Love*, 1989) in two settings: the representation of melancholy as a motif of intellectual resistance to keep the political ideal of a free homeland alive in "hard times" (SE p.182) of the nation and secondly, the representation of a "love-melancholy" (Wells 2007) emerging as a motif of impossible love destined for separation in the middle of a political struggle aiming to liberate the homeland. The chapter also provides an examination of the use of nostalgia motif in the novel, utilised as a motif of nostalgic yearning for the Empire's time and its multicultural space (Ottoman Istanbul).

Focusing on a wider historical period of Turkey's Kurds (1910s–1970s), *Siya Evînê* can be considered as the first realist historical novel in Kurdish language that brings the readers' attention to the origin of the repression imposed on Kurdish people and homeland in modern Turkey, by presenting a literary account of the Kurdish issue in its historical, political and cultural complexity. In *Siya Evînê*, Uzun successfully presents the emergence of Kurdish national consciousness among the Kurdish intellectuals and political actors in Ottoman Istanbul in the early 1900s, the ideological and cultural mind-set of this early generation of Kurdish national intellectuals, most of whom came from Kurdish aristocratic families, and their organisation in various publications and associations for a national purpose in Ottoman Istanbul. The novel also goes onto portray the evolution of these early national sentiments in the context of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish

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Republic (1923) and the subsequent exile of Kurdish national intellectual and political figures from the country. Focusing on the earlier period of the emergence of national ideas within the Kurdish society, it also presents the development of the idea of an independent Kurdistan among exiled Kurdish intellectual and political figures in the wake of the establishment of the Republic and the establishment of the *Xoybûn* party by these figures in exile; it then turns to provide an account of the Ararat rebellion, also known as the Ağrı rebellion (1927 - 1931) with which this movement was associated and the "period of silence" (Bozarslan 2003) of Kurdish political and cultural activity that follows the defeat of this rebellion. Uzun fictionalises these historical events around the life story of an actual Kurdish intellectual, Memduh Selim Beg[17] ,

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[17] Memduh Selim Beg was a writer and editor of the pro-Kurdish *Jîn* (Life) journal, published between 1918 and 1919 in Istanbul, promoting the idea of Kurdish nationalism and Wilsonian principles of national self-determination for the subordinate subjects of the Empire. He was a member of the Kurdish Student Association *Hêvî* (Hope), founded in 1912 and of the *Kurdistan Tealî Cemiyeti* (Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan), formed in 1918 with the objective of founding an independent Kurdish state. After the proclamation of Republic of Turkey in 1923, he left the country and participated in the Ararat rebellion as one of its leading figures. After the defeat of the Ararat rebellion in 1930, he remained in exile up until his death in 1976.

who was among the founders of the Kurdish political organisation *Xoybûn*[18] that actively participated in the Ağrı rebellion.

Siya Evînê is the first example of Uzun's series of historical novels focusing on modern Kurdish history, which also comprises *Bîra Qederê* (1995) and the two-volume *Hawara Dîcleyê I – II* (2002, 2003). It is also Uzun's first novel which was promoted to a wider audience in Turkey, with an approving foreword by Yaşar Kemal, a leading novelist of Turkish, to its Turkish translation (2000) by Muhsin Kızılkaya, which recently reached its twenty-eighth edition. Differences between the novel's first Kurdish edition published in Stockholm in 1989 and later editions in Turkey, and some modifications made in the Turkish edition of the novel should also be noted here. Written in exile in an overtly radical national tone, the novel has been subjected to some critical changes in its description of events and characters in its translation

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[18] *Xoybûn*, which means *independence* or *to be oneself* in Kurdish, was founded in 1927 in Lebanon by Kurdish intellectuals of "aristocratic background living in exile" (Gunter 2011, p.161). Although, as Paul J. White (2000) notes, "like all the Kurdish nationalist organisations that had preceded it, Xoybûn was an aristocratic organisation" (p.76), it is widely considered to be the first modern Kurdish political organisation. Jordi Tejel (2009) notes that "like their Turkish counterparts, the leaders of the Xoybûn had been educated in modern Ottoman schools and associations in Istanbul, where they expressed their wish to lead the Kurds toward Western civilisation and declared the necessity of modernising Kurdish society 'from top-down'" (p.9). *Xoybûn*'s main aim was to establish an independent Kurdish state. Shortly after its establishment, the organization became "the cradle of Kurdish nationalism" (Tejel 2009, p.18). The organisation was an alliance of Kurdish "Westernised intelligentsia and representative of traditional Kurdish world" (Tejel 2009, p.17). *Xoybûn* actively participated in the Ağrı rebellion (1927 – 1931). Despite losing its military and political influence after the defeat of Ağrı rebellion, "*Xoybûn* publications had a significant impact in terms of communicating the agenda of Kurdish activist elite on an international scale" (Ersoy 2010, p.347). Having a secular nationalistic agenda, *Xoybûn* "in some ways may still be seen as one of the main organisational successes of pan-Kurdish nationalism in the 20th century" (Gunter 2011, p.161).

into Turkish[19], with a further section omitted by Uzun himself in the later Kurdish editions of the novel[20] published in Turkey.

In the discussion that follows, first, an examination of Uzun's historical fiction is provided through a discussion in relation to both its his cultural ambition to build a Kurdish national memory through historical novels as well as the cultural significance of the way this history is

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[19] In *Siya Evînê*'s Turkish edition, *Yitik Bir Aşkın Gölgesinde*, many sentences and passages were omitted with the permission of Uzun himself; some were considerably changed, resulting in important changes in feelings, thoughts and biography of the character. Most notably, Memduh Selim Beg, "the Kurdish intellectual, the thinker of *a subordinate people* [Ronakbîrê kurd, *bîrewerê gelê bindest*]" (SE, p.14 [my italics]) has turned into "a Kurdish intellectual […] a lover of niceness and fineness" (p.25) in Turkish edition. The inner voice of Memduh Selim Beg appraising and hailing "the Treaty of Sèvres, which was signed in 1920 and paved a way the Kurds could establish their own state step by step [Peymana ku li Sevresê, 1920, hat pê û rê dida ku Kurd jî, gav bi gav, ji xwe re dewletekê ava bikin] (SE, p.15) was completely omitted from the text. In the Kurdish edition, the narrator describes the inner voice of character in exile: "the time and the wheel of fortune will be changed. He will return again to his homeland, to his saint-like and kind people. He will build a small house on coast of Van Lake, in Kurdistan [Dewr û dewran dê biguherin. Ew dê dîsan vegere welatê xwe, nik merivên xwe yên ezîz û qedirgiran. Ew dê xaniyekî biçûk li nik gola Wanê ava bike]" (SE, p.25). In the Turkish edition, the paragraph, which reflects the character's longing for his hometown and homeland, has turned into a motif of nostalgic yearning for Ottoman Istanbul: "the time and the wheel of fortune will be changed. He will return again to his country. He will reunite with his Istanbul, with his Galata. Maybe he will have a small and white house on the coast of Van Lake" (p.43).

[20] I am grateful to my friend Dr Selim Temo, who is one of Uzun's Turkish translators, for informing me about an omission made in *Siya Evînê*'s later Kurdish editions by Uzun after the first two editions of the novel, published respectively in Stockholm in 1989 and in Istanbul in 1992 (see pp. 148, 149, 150 in the first edition). The omitted section is a piece of an order and a detailed report written by the Kurdish commander of the Ağrı rebellion, İhsan Nûrî Paşa, relaying the latest developments about the ongoing battle in Mount Ararat and the military activities of "patriotic tribes" participating in the uprising. It describes the rebellion as a harbinger of political subjecthood, "a crucial step" with which "Kurds are writing their history with their blood [Kurd tarîxa xwe, bi xwîna xwe, dinivisînin]" (SE, p.150). It also reports "the great casualties" (p.148) inflicted by the Kurdish forces on the Turkish army and the military capacity of the Kurdish forces, representing Kurdish rebels as well-organised armed forces under Xoybûn leadership. The omitted section does not cause a structural change in the story, nonetheless it should be noted that this fragment, which presents a detailed account of the developments on the war front in a very realistic fashion, is one of the most crucial sections that makes *Siya Evînê* the first Kurdish realist historical novel in the artistic sense.

represented through life stories of the actual Kurdish political, intellectual and cultural figures. My argument is that Uzun deploys the form of the historical novel not only to explore "the history of Kurds [that] has been destroyed or distorted by the official views/discourses of states in the region" (Uzun 2005, p.26)[21], but also as a form of "obituary" (Fowler 2007) to commemorate the actual political, intellectual and cultural figures of the recent Kurdish history, who often appear as the main characters of Uzun's historical fiction. The discussion of the use of melancholy and nostalgia motifs in *Siya Evînê* follows this critical evaluation of Uzun's historical fiction, which he defines as a form of "resistance literature [direniş edebiyatı]" (Uzun 2005, p.27). As its conclusions, the discussion firstly highlights how Uzun represents homeland as an indispensable object of love and a primary loss for Kurds that cannot be replaced, to use Freud's (1917) terms, by a "new object of love", and utilises the melancholy motif to express a century-long Kurdish political insistence upon the ideal of a free Kurdistan. Drawing upon Khanna's (2003) approach to the postcolonial and anti-colonial intellectual, third-world nationalism and "colonial melancholy", this melancholy motif is subject to comparative analysis in its relationship with early Kurdish nationalism as promoted by the Kurdish "notable class" (Özoğlu 2004, p.11) in the late Ottoman era, which then goes on to take a more refined form in the early Republican era. The discussion then turns to provide an examination of a motif of love-melancholy, which is one of the two main stories that the novel centres on, by highlighting how love-melancholy is represented by Uzun beyond an individual love affair, entailing also "tragedy of a scattered country [trajediya welatekî jihevketî]" (SE, p.53). In its final part, the chapter provides an examination of the

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[21] Kürtlerin tarihi, bölgedeki resmi devletler ve resmi görüşler tarafından yok edilmiş ya da çarpıtılmış.

nostalgia motif inscribed in the novel in the light of approaches to this question proposed by Svetlana Boym, Dennis Walder and Tammy Clewell, emphasising the symbolic meaning of the character's nostalgic yearning for the Empire's time and its multicultural space (Istanbul) for the current Kurdish community in modern Turkey.

3.1. Historical Fiction as a Cultural Means of Building a National Memory

Jerome de Groot (2010) singles out "the ability of historical fiction to voice an alternative, disquieting and destabilising past" (p.148) which renders this genre a useful literary means to echo the voice of dissidents, subalterns, the marginalised and the once colonised communities. In the context of postcolonial literatures, Groot notes, "historical novels have often been used to reinsert communities into the past, rescuing them from the marginal positions to which they have consciously been consigned" (p.148). Bill Ashcroft (2001) further notes the role played by postcolonial literary works "writing in the marginal space between literature and history" (p.99) as an intellectual and cultural form of "resistance". For Ashcroft (2001), in colonial and postcolonial context, the literary writing of history is "the way in which colonised people have been able" to narrate and, thus, interpolate "the reality of colonised experience" (p.99) into "the master discourse called History" that has systematically excluded the histories of subalterns and colonised peoples. It is also important to note that historical fiction as a genre has been "used in the various national constructions of identity" (Kaljundi et al. 2015, p.8) involving "the nation-building" (Sommer 1990) projects since the nineteenth century. The cultural and literary studies on the historical novels of "emerging nations" and their role in construction of "historical memory of cultures and communities" (Kaljundi et al. 2015) highlight the cultural potential of historical novel in the reconstruction of histories of "the imagined communities" (Anderson 2006). Analysing the early historical novels of Latin

America, another commentator, Doris Sommer (1990) argues that historical novelists of "emerging nations" are often encouraged "both by the need to fill in a history that would increase the legitimacy of the emerging nation and by the opportunity to direct that history towards a future ideal" (Sommer 1990, p.76). He defines "foundational fictions" of Latin America as "the nation-building novels" (1990, p.76) reflecting the "ideal histories" of emerging nations "through the novel" (1990, p.73). The studies on the historical fiction of emerging nations have also shown that these histories are often assembled "in highly selective terms by the foregrounding of certain events, themes and motifs and overshadowing others to suit the contemporary needs of the nation building processes" (Kaljundi et al. 2015, p.11).

Devoting particular attention to the modern history of Kurds and lives of actual Kurdish historical figures throughout most of his novelistic project, Uzun is described as an author who has spent the bulk of his literary efforts for "the narration of the past" (Galip 2015). Indeed, except in his three novels (e.g. *Tu*, *Mirina Kalekî Rind* and *Ronî Mîna Evînê Tarî Mîna Mirinê*), the subject matter mainly dealt with is the modern history of Kurds from their own perspective. As the following discussion demonstrates, comprising the acclaimed novels *Siya Evînê* (1989), *Rojek ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê* (1991), *Bîra Qederê* (1995) and the two volumed *Hawara Dîcleyê* (2002, 2003), his historical fiction, can be read as an "articulation of nationhood via the past" (Groot 2010), aiming to rectify, in his words, the "distorted" history of the Kurds (Uzun 2005).

Written "in the marginal space between literature and history", Uzun's historical fiction has been defined by some literary critics as a project of "counter-history [karşı tarih]" (Temo 2005) with which he reinterprets modern Kurdish history and offers an alternative

"historiography" of the Kurds (Ağuiçenoğlu 2012). Highlighting the cultural instrumentality of Uzun's historical fiction in reviving a national "past", Ahmadzadeh (2003) argues that Uzun "tries to use the novel as a medium to relive past lost heritage and to connect these to the present in order to create continuity in the history of the Kurds. In fact, Uzun aims at constructing a Kurdish identity by reconstructing the history of the Kurds" (p.169). Complementing this argument, Christine Allison (2005) further defines Uzun's historical novels as "works of memory", centring on "biographies of noted Kurdish figures" (p.104). She goes onto characterise Uzun's historical fiction as "show[ing] an interweave between a historical individual as an aware self and the events of his time" (p.104). It has also been argued that some of Uzun's historical novels (e.g. *Siya Evînê*) "shows particular postcolonial tendency of historicisation" (Nas 2013, p.180) with their prevalent concern for "'the legitimacy of past generations as supplying cultural autonomy'" and manifesting "counter-nationalism" (Nas 2013, p.180). Some critics have read Uzun's historical novels as cultural artefacts discovering the "forgotten past" of the Kurds (Türkeş 2000). For instance, Kurdish scholar and novelist İbrahim Seydo Aydoğan (2014) argues that Uzun "activated the *memory of the Kurds*" (2014, p.250 [translation my own]) through his historical novels (e.g. *Siya Evînê* and *Bîra Qederê*). For Aydoğan, by fictionalising the life stories of actual Kurdish political and intellectual figures of the early twentieth century (e.g. Memduh Selim in *Siya Evînê*, Celadet Ali Bedirxan in *Bîra Qederê*), Uzun aimed "to build the memory of the Kurdishness" (2014, p.249).

On the other hand, Uzun himself describes his historical fiction as a type of "resistance literature [direniş edebiyatı]" (Uzun 2005, p.27) evident in its engagement with a "rewriting of the historiographical version of the past" (Harlow 1987, p.86) from the perspective of the

oppressed. With the term "resistance literature", Uzun, neither refers to the historical

narratives, rewriting and rereading of history "without any pretence of being objective"

(Hawley and Nelson 2001, p.377) nor to the "resistance" narratives "participating" (Harlow

1987, p.xvi) in the political resistance, which Barbara Harlow defines as a particular category

of literature in her work *Resistance Literature*.[22] Instead, Uzun uses the term to refer to those

literary texts that critically engage in "remembering" the past with the aim of producing "the

absent gaze" or "the unwritten historical text" (Behdad 2000, p.76) of the oppressed,[23]

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[22] The term "resistance literature" is often used to describe a category of literature which is "always concerned with a specific historical and political crisis, rather than the story of one individual" and those which "are always informed by the author's political agendas against the colonial forces and/or military regime" (Hawley and Nelson 2001, p.377). Barbara Harlow (1987) considers "resistance literature" to be a specific category of literature, one "that emerged significantly as a part of the organised national liberation struggles and resistance movements in Africa, Latin America and Middle East" (p.xvii). For Harlow (1987), the term "resistance literature" does not denote only literary writings reflecting the anti-colonial "resistance" of national liberation movements but also those which "can be said to participate" (p.xvi) in the political resistance. Harlow suggests that "resistance literature calls attention to itself, and to literature in general, as a political and politicised activity" (p.28); thus, Harlow (1987) argues, "formal virtuosity" is not one of the main concern of resistance narratives, rather, "it is part of their historical challenge, their demand for an access to history which necessitates a radical rewriting of the historiographical version of the past" (pp.85–86). According to Harlow, "the emphasis in the literature of resistance is on the political as the power to change the world. The theory of resistance literature is in its politics" (p.30).

[23] In his essay, '*Une Pratique Sauvage*: Postcolonial Belatedness and Cultural Politics', Ali Behdad (2000) places the colonial and postcolonial critics "on the side of memory" (p.75) and describes "postcolonial practices" as "the belated return of the repressed histories of resistance" (p.76). He argues that "the postcolonial reading of the memories of the colonial encounter always lags far behind history to produce the absent gaze, the unwritten historical text, it is an exercise in remembering, a recourse to a repressed memory that history has swept away – such remembering produces new histories of resistance through speaking about a lack of a returned gaze in the history it tells" (p.76).

suggesting that his historical novels seek to write an "unwritten historical text" to use Behdad's (2000) words.[24]

On the other hand, one of the most remarkable features to note about Uzun's historical fiction is that he fictionalizes modern Kurdish history mainly around the life stories of distinguished Kurdish political and intellectual figures such as exiled emirs (e.g. Bedirxan Beg in *Hawara Dîcleyê*), urban aristocrat intellectuals of the early twentieth century who once lived in Ottoman Istanbul (e.g. Memduh Selim Beg in *Siya Evînê* and Celadet Alî Bedirxan in *Bîra Qederê*) and well-known national bards, known *dengbêjs* (e.g. Evdalê Zeynikê in *Rojek ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê*).

Although the lives of the actual Kurdish historical figures represented in Uzun's novels appear as fictional lives, Uzun narrates these lives mostly by remaining faithful to their actual biographies; indeed, he makes a significant use of the narrative potential of "biography" as a literary genre, what Siegfried Kracauer (2017) defines as a literary form that provides literary

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[24] Uzun (2005) argues that history of the Kurds has been "distorted" or "denied"; therefore, "Kurds need a history of their own" (p.26 [translation my own]). For Uzun, "a Kurdish author who wants to write effective works and creating literary works needs to know this reality" (p.26). According to Uzun (2005) most important task of a Kurdish author is "standing against these oppressions and creating a resistance literature" (p.27). For Uzun, a historical novel that enable to produce "a returned gaze in the history" (Behdad 2000) of an oppressed people can be defined as a form of "resistance literature". He defines his two-volumes historical novel *Hawara Dîcleyê* as an example of this kind of "resistance literature". Criticising the postmodern trend of the 1980s and 1990s in historical fiction writing, in which the authors "often turn 'pastiche and parody' in their negotiations of history" (Hess 2019, p.150), Uzun (2005) argues that the main task of the historical novelist is to represent history in its authenticity. According to Uzun, in today's literature "history has been turned into a game and a technical fiction" (2005, p.58). For Uzun, "a great majority of today's novelists are actually [literature] technocrats […] there is no realness in their narratives. Their narratives are parodies of the narrative. Take, for instance, Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*… When you read it, you see that the fiction is a game from start to the end" (2005, p.58 [translation my own]).

tools to the contemporary writer to describe the history in its authenticity. A general effect of reading his novel is that Uzun believes that the Kurdish "history is condensed into the lives of its highly visible heroes" (Kracauer 2017, p.108). However, this literary choice of narrating modern history of an oppressed nation through its distinguished national and cultural figures, at the same time, renders his historical fiction a controversial literary project, bringing into question the aesthetic quality of his historical novels, where the life stories of prominent Kurdish figures are at the centre of the narrative and is, thereby, the Kurdish history itself. Some critics including Helîm Yûsiv (2011), a well-known Kurdish novelist himself, and Müslüm Yücel (2012) argue that the authenticated fates of those distinguished historical figures provide Uzun with a ready-made formal schema and that the success and popularity of his historical novels actually stems from the national significance of the lives of those historical personalities rather than from Uzun's creative talent for fictionalising those historical personages and events.[25]

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[25] Criticising Uzun's historical fiction because of its exclusive focus on the lives of well-known Kurdish historical figures, Yûsiv suggests that "writing novels on the lives of historical and well-known figures is the easiest form of the novel genre" (2011, p.19 [translation my own]). Yûsiv argues that, for the novelist who fictionalises the lives of well-known actual national figures, "the material is almost ready at his hand" (2011, p.19 [translation my own]). Thanks to the availability of a "ready" formal schema, "the author can easily gather up material and write a lengthy novel" (2011, p.19 [translation my own]) after brief (historical) research. Moreover, according to Yûsiv, because "the well-known [historical] figures are too much respected by the [Kurdish] people" (2011, p.19 [translation my own]) and their lives are the subject of a great interest for the Kurds, the reader is already "ready" to appreciate a historical fiction focused on those distinguished lives. Similarly, Yücel (2012) has considered Uzun's literary interest in the lives of well-known political and intellectual figures as a literary weakness. Alluding to Uzun's historical fiction, Yücel (2012) suggests that Kurdish authors' understanding of the historical novel is limited to the presentation of "profiles" from Kurdish history. According to Yücel (2012), they choose their characters from historical personalities, all of whom are portrayed as "ideal" characters as though "drawn with a ruler": if you remove these well-known actual characters from the novel, Yücel suggests, "there is only one thing left, the author's name and surname" (p.465 [translation my own]).

The question of the "metaleptic relationship between fictionality and historicity" (Hemecker & Saunders 2017, p.4) in relation to Uzun's historical novels is not a primary concern of this chapter. Nevertheless, it would be useful to draw attention to a few points about the criticisms of Uzun's historical fiction voiced by Yûsiv (2011) and Yücel (2012) and whether and how it applies to the representations of actual historical figures in his work and the cultural strategy this form of representation implies. First, instead of reading Uzun's novels as historical fictions, both Yûsiv and Yücel seem to have simply read Uzun's historical novels as literary biographies, in which the biographer might have found a ready-made "formal schema". Kracauer argues that, for the literary biographer, the "authenticated fate" of his hero "functions simultaneously as the guarantor of the compositional form. Every historical figure already contains its own form [...] Thus, the author is not obligated to come up with an individual formal schema, since he is given one delivered right to his door" (2017, p.103). As a contrast to such deployment of characters against events in biographic writing, in Uzun's historical novels, however, the actual political and intellectual figures appear as completely fictional characters and their life stories are set in a way not only to represent political, social and cultural realities of a past generation, but also to refer, explicitly and implicitly, to the political, social and cultural realities of the day for Kurds. Defining his historical novels as fictions dealing with the "unchanging fate" of the Kurdish intellectuals, Uzun argues that he wrote *Siya Evînê* and *Bîra Qederê* "in order to narrate the century-old tragedy of the Kurdish intellectuals" (Uzun 2005, p.24 [translation my own]) in Turkey. In one of his interviews, he explains why his historical novels are also *contemporary* novels:

> It is true that some of my novels focus on the historical periods distant from
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> today. But who can claim that the feelings and thoughts, the tragedies and

disasters, the conflicts and contradictions [presented] in these novels are not relevant to today? Isn't Memduh Selim Beg in *Siya Evînê* or Celadet Ali Bedirxan in *Bîra Qederê* […] a little bit the Kurdish intellectuals of the today? (1997, p.168 [translation my own])

A second important issue with the criticism of Uzun's historical novels, voiced by Yûsiv (2011) and Yücel (2012), is that Uzun does not write about the lives of "well-known" and "respected" Kurdish political and intellectual figures currently living in the political and cultural memory of contemporary Kurdish community; rather, it is his fictionalisation of the lives of important historical personas whose lives ended in loneliness and misery in exile for the sake of the ideal of a free homeland, but whose political and cultural legacy has been "forgotten" by contemporary Kurdish society, that renders these historical personalities "well-known" for the wider Kurdish community in Turkey. Although the life and legacy of these political and intellectual figures began to enter the agenda of Kurdish political and intellectual circles in the 1970s, as indeed noted by Bozarslan (2003-A),[26] the recognition of these historical figures and their legacy by the wider Kurdish audience, in fact, owes much to Uzun's historical novels which reached mass readership in the 2000s. By bringing "into consciousness the repressed time of the other" (Behdad 2000, p.76), Uzun's historical fiction served as an important

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[26] Bozarslan (2003-A) describes cultural and intellectual environment of the 1960s and 1970s, in which Mehmet Uzun himself grew up as a political activist, as a period of the rediscovery of Kurdish national memory and of former Kurdish political idols for contemporary Kurdish nationalism. Bozarslan (2003-A) argues that, in this period: "the works written in the years of silence [1940–1960] fulfilled their role as testimony, transmitting the nationalist cultural heritage and earning a post-mortem glory. The old [Kurdish revolutionary] leaders – only a few of them still surviving by the end of the 1970s – were seen as figures from a living mythology. Through their memories and their own writings, history became, to an incomparably greater degree than previously, a key field for the production of knowledge and meaning, the route to the discovery of Kurdishness and entry into it as political activist" (p.35).

cultural signifier for the rediscovery of Kurdishness and Kurdish history for the new political and intellectual generations.

A third consideration which may be offered in response to the criticism of Uzun's historical fiction and its cultural strategy is the actual content constructed in these: actual "profiles" are not simply offered for representing the modern history of the nation; the lives of these historical profiles themselves also emerge as a subject of commemoration in these texts. As in the case of this criticism, although some literary critics highlight the importance of Uzun's historical fiction in terms of its potential to revive a "forgotten past" (e.g. Türkeş 2000 [translation my own]) and national "memory" (e.g. Aydoğan 2014) through the life stories of these actual personages in Kurdish history, the commemorative aspect of Uzun's historical fiction has not been adequately taken into account or addressed by literary critics.

3.2. Using the Potential of the Historical Novel as a Cultural Means of Commemoration

As a thorough reading of his historical fiction shows, for Uzun, the historical novel is not only an appropriate device to rewrite the "distorted" history of Kurdish people, but also a narrative form of commemoration of the life and legacy of political and intellectual generations: in Bıro's words in *Hawara Dîcleyê,* it aims "the voice of those who have been forgotten [dengê jibîrbûyiyan]" (HD, p.13) to be heard. Uzun's cultural concern for commemorating "forgotten" national figures not only determine his way of representing these actual historical figures, but it also often shapes the formal structures of his novels, turning his historical novels into obituary-like narratives of the Kurdish historical personages. In these historical novels, the plot usually revolves around the life story of an actual historical personage, (often covering of a long span of time from character's birth or youth to death) and the narrator generally

refrains from a determinate and critical narration of the experiences of these historical personages, who have left their mark on recent Kurdish history both with their struggles and their political failures; this is demonstrated by the evident investment in an obituary-like style in the portrayal of the lives of these national figures, represented as a passage of loss, suffering and loneliness in exile.

Examining the representation of actual national figures in *Siya Evînê* (Memduh Selim Beg) and *Bîra Qederê* (Celadet Alî Bedirxan), Aydoğan (2014) argues that Uzun represents actual national figures as good and ideal rather than as real "human beings" (p.257 [translation my own]) and that this is evident from the uses of a "mournful language" (p.255) in these novels. Although Aydoğan recognises Uzun's cultural ambition to build "the memory of Kurdishness" through life stories of these actual historical figures, he accounts for Uzun's positive portrayal of these figures on the basis of the "sympathy" he felt for the "tragedies" of his novelistic characters, that is, with Uzun's individual psychology rather than with his authorial intention and cultural ambition.[27] As with this particular instance, the criticisms that actual Kurdish national personages are represented as "ideal" characters in Uzun's historical novels (Yücel 2012; Aydoğan 2014) do not adequately take into account the two seemingly indispensable

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[27] Aydoğan (2014) argues that in *Siya Evînê* and *Bîra Qederê*, Uzun "wanted the reader to like Memduh Selim and Celadet Bedirxan. Thus, as far as he could, he fictionalised the side of their ruined lives, their broken loves, their ideals which were lost in the difficult [political] struggles and their unfulfilled hopes. In dramatisation of these sad events, the author produced and used a mournful language; thus, one surmises that he is speaking for and on behalf of his characters" (pp.254–5 [translation my own]). Aydoğan (2014) suggests that Uzun unconsciously identified himself with his novelistic characters, whose life were marked by loss and misery in exile and the "misery and unfortunateness of Uzun's *actual* characters obstructed and limited his ability for character-structuring" (p.256). According to Aydoğan (2014), Uzun "loved and pitied his characters" (p.256) and "felt" their pain and misery in himself; thus, "before his readers, Mehmed Uzun himself came under the influence of his [novelistic] characters" (p.256).

aspects of his authorial intentions and cultural aim in producing these historical novels. First, they overlook the fact that these novels were written by a historical novelist who aims not only to write "an unwritten historical text", but also to build a *positive* national memory through historical fiction. This brings Uzun's project closer to and indeed exemplifies the positive representation of a national history and its historical national figures, often found as a "narrative habit" in "the nation-building novels" (p.76) of emerging nations such as those which Sommer (1990) identifies in the context of early historical fictions of Latin America. Second, such conceptions of his work disregard one of the fundamental cultural missions of Uzun's historical fiction as an attempt to convey the legacy of important political, intellectual and cultural figures of modern Kurdish history particularly to contemporary generations; it is for this reason that an obituary-like narrative form and content emerges deliberately as an appropriate means of representing the life and legacy of these historical figures in Uzun's historical fiction.

An examination of the representation of the actual historical personages in Uzun's historical fiction suggests that Uzun's concern for commemorating the actual national figures and signifying their legacies in the memory of the nation determines the "character-structuring" not only in *Siya Evînê* and *Bîra Qederê* (Aydoğan 2014), but also in his other historical novels (e.g. Evdalê Zeynikê in *Rojek Ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê* and Bedirxan Beg in *Hawara Dîcleyê*). With the motif saturating his work extensively, it can further be argued that Uzun's cultural concern of commemorating the national figures in the form of historical novel has turned his historical fiction into what might be called an *obituary literature*, or, to use Bridget Fowler's

(2007) term, an "obituary narrative",[28] in which commemorating the memory of a distinguished dead person and the importance of legacy of the deceased becomes the central concern of the narrative. By the term *obituary literature*, I do not mean only historical fiction which selects certain lives as models of "well-lived" lives and deaths as "noteworthy" that should be registered in the memory of the nation involving a cultural "act of nation-building" (Butler 2003, p.34)[29] but, also, historical fiction which represent the lives and deaths of actual national figures in an obituary style, both in content and form.

In the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (2005), "obituary" is described as "an appraisal of a life in the form of a brief biography". Examining the cultural function of obituary as a narrative genre, Fowler (2007) notes that "the importance of cultural products such as historical films and novels – or obituaries – is precisely that they mould collective memory" (p.10). Fowler defines the "positive form" of obituary narrative, in which "the individual portrayal ensures that they are, by no means, always an accolade" (2007, p.17) as the "first and most usual mode of commemoration" (2007, p.17).

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[28] In *The Obituary as Collective Memory*, Bridget Fowler argues that obituary as a biographical form "features as a crucial benchmark of later consecration or canonisation" (2007, p.7). She emphasises the "significance of the obituary not just in relation to issues of national memory but, also, for the light it continues to shed on the social relations of class, gender and ethnicity" (2007, p.4). Fowler further (2007) argues that "one characteristic of the obituary is that these lives are selected as particularly memorable, distinguished or newsworthy" (p.7). According to her, the selection and depiction of the certain lives that are considered "well lived" directly involves the project of building a national memory.

[29] Examining the notion of obituary as a memorial practice around the issue of "grievability", Judith Butler (2003) argues that selection of certain biographies of the nation as "noteworthy" biographies per se involves an "act of nation-building". Butler (2003) discusses that "the obituary functions as the instrument by which grievability is publicly distributed. It is the means by which a life becomes, or fails to become, a publicly grievable life, an icon for national self-recognition, the means by which a life becomes noteworthy. As a result, we have to consider obituary as an act of nation-building" (p.34).

In *Siya Evînê* and *Bîra Qederê*, we do not only find a positive representation of the lives of the main characters (Memduh Selim Beg and Celadet Alî Bedirxan) in an obituary style throughout the pages, but, at the same time, with both novels ending with sections resembling an obituary with detailed descriptions of when and where the real historical characters actually died, reports of the last words they utter as they take their last breath, the people by their bedside at the moment of their death, what they did for the Kurdish national struggle in the course of their lives and the specific irreplaceable void the loss of these historical figures leave in the Kurdish intellectual and cultural life. The opening and closing section of *Siya Evînê*, can be read in this vein as a sixteen-page obituary for Memduh Selim Beg*,* both in style (written in a mournful tone) and content (an obituary appraisal of a life), inviting the reader to the "bedroom ceremonial" (Fowler 2007, p.51) of death of a national idol, who has managed to keep alive the ideal of a free Kurdistan and "transmitted" it to the "new generations [nifşên nû]" (SE, p.209). It is as if Uzun asks his reader to participate in a mourning rite for Memduh Selim Beg. Similarly, in the last chapter of *Bîra Qederê*, *The Last Photo*, the narrator invites the reader to mourn for a veteran and moderniser of a "wounded language [zimanê birîndar]" (BK, p.371), Celadet Alî Bedirxan, on his deathbed, who "has fulfilled his own duties for his nation and homeland in a good way" (BK, p.356)[30] throughout the course of his life. Aiming to remember as well as "revitalise the father of Kurdish songs and idioms Evdalê Zeynikê" (2010, p.15)[31], whom Yaşar Kemal describes as the "Homer of Kurds", *Rojek Ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê* can also be read as an *obituary* narrative for Evdalê Zeynikê, a well-known nineteenth-century Kurdish bard, by way of offering an appraisal of a life and highlighting the importance

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[30] Bi wazîfeyê xwe, ji bo milet û welatê xwe, bi awayekî baş [...] rabû.

[31] Bavê stran û gotinên kurdî Evdalê Zeynikê ji nû vejînê.

of the legacy of an actual Kurdish bard in the development of Kurdish as a literary language. The novel does not only anticipate a reading as a cultural attempt of "the heritagization of oral tradition" as noted by Bocheńska (2022, p.924), but also resembles a literary elegy dedicated to the memory of Evdalê Zeynikê. *Hawara Dîcleyê* too can be read as an "positive obituary" narrative for the last Kurdish emir Bedirxan Beg, commemorating the life of "the emir of a defeated country and people [mîrê welat û ehlê şikestî]" who rebelled against the Ottomans for greater autonomy and was then exiled in 1847 (HD, p.699). The narrator of *Hawara Dîcleyê*, Bıro, not only tells the story of the peoples of upper Mesopotamia (the Kurds, the Chaldeans, the Nestorians and Yezidis) throughout the novel but also presents an obituarial biography of "[Bedirxan Beg] who ascended the throne with great celebration, indescribable excitement and great splendour, and passed away in a deep silence, helpless, lonely and forgotten [in exile in Damascus]" (p.730)[32], describing the last Kurdish emir as a great national figure bearing a Kurdish national consciousness who aimed to liberate the Kurdish homeland from Ottoman rule and establish an independent Kurdish state.

As evidenced in the above discussion, alongside a detailed account of a "distorted" and "ignored" history, Uzun's historical fiction also offers a space for the commemoration of Kurdish national figures who have paid the price for the ideal of a free homeland and nationhood. His novels do not only talk about the Kurdish rebellions and the political defeats and the exile, the suffering and grief of the actual Kurdish historical personages they represent, but they also mourn for the deaths and legacy of these historical figures which

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[32] Mîr bi şêniyeke boş, geşiyeke bêpayan û şênahiyeke abadîn hatibû ser hukim û di nav bêdengiyeke kûr de, bêgav, bêkes, jibîrbûyî, ji dinyayê xatir xwestibû.

they represent as distant cultural artefacts. Invariably, (national) historical personages in his novels are constructed as lost lives and their (political and cultural) legacy in exile, which is their thematic content, with the ramification that they become subject to mournful commemoration performed by the text through the set of narrative devices deployed. Characterised with this literary taste and strategy, Uzun's historical fiction also suggests a form of mourning narrative or, to use Nouri Gana's terms (2011), a sui generis literary "narrative mourning", which is distinctly "concerned with the task of tracing back a symptom (of an unlocatable loss) to a historical past – a task that eventuate [...] *in the construction* of that past" (Gana 2011, p.40).

The thematic diversity of Uzun's novels in engaging with modern Kurdish history makes lends his historical fiction to different readings as well as disparate classification of the form of his work for literary scholars and critics. It has been the subject of debate as to whether Uzun's novels focusing on the Kurds' past are "historical" novels, "biographical" novels, "resistance narratives" or examples of "exile" literature. For instance, Galip (2015) categorises *Siya Evîn*ê, *Bîra Qederê* and *Hawara Dîcleyê* both as "historical" and "biographical" novels. She argues that *Siya Evîn*ê deals with the establishment of "Xoybûn", "Mount Ararat" and "Sheikh Said" rebellions through the account of life of Memduh Selim Beg whereas, in contrast, *Bîra Qeder*ê represents the lives of "the Bedir Khan family" by using the past as the central "backdrop". Aydoğan (2014) considers *Siya Evînê* and *Bîra Qederê* as "biographical" rather than "historical" novels by arguing that these novels deal with "the events of two personalities of Kurdish intellectual history" (p.249). According to Aydoğan (2014), although the events in these novels are "the events of the past", the historical events presented in these two novels are limited to the events that affect the lives of both characters (Memduh Selim Beg in *Siya*

Evînê, Celadet Alî Bedirxan in *Bîra Qederê*) as evidenced by their figuring as background "accessories" (p.249 [translation my own]) in the description of the lives of these historical personages. Moreover, Aydoğan (2014) argues that instead of history, a theme of "exile" is at the centre of *Siya Evînê* and what is seen are "the traces of Uzun's own life" as a matter of his "thematic choice". He further suggests that "in fact, Mehmed Uzun talks about his own exile in this novel through the exile of Memduh Selim Beg" (p.250 [translation my own]), suggesting the role of Uzun's own exile experience.[33]

On the other hand, Nas (2013) reads *Siya Evînê* as a "narrative of resistance" (p.180) dealing with the Mount Ararat rebellion, examining the motif of an armed "resistance against the colonial Turkish nation-state" (p.181) as the main focus of the novel.[34] As an approach exemplifying another outlook, Nas' reading of *Siya Evînê* as a "resistance narrative" which specifically focuses on the armed conflict between Turkish military and Kurdish rebels can be considered as a further example of a problematic reading habit implicit in the reading practice(s) of the "resistance narratives" and "resistance literature" that Harlow (1987) proposes. Reading the motif of "resistance" represented in third-world resistance narratives merely as a motif of political and military activity inevitably results in such oversight of "the

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[33] Uzun was 23 years old when he sought exile in Sweden in 1977 due to prosecution as the editor of a Kurdish journal, *Rizgari*, which focused on Kurdish cultural and political rights, and advocated an independent Kurdistan. After leaving Turkey, he lost his citizenship and lived in exile in Sweden for many years.

[34] Nas (2013) considers *Siya Evînê* as an example of "nationalist literature", arguing that Uzun's novel manifests "clear-cut dichotomies of colonial divide" (p.178) and sets "certain hierarchies of culpability/victimhood" (p.180) and positions Kurdish armed rebels "at the 'victim' pole of hierarchy" (p.180). He suggests that "hierarchies of culpability/victimhood perform counter-nationalism for decolonisation in national allegories" (p.181). According to Nas, the motif of loss of armed resistance represents "impossibility of active agency" in the novel: "SE [*Siya Evînê*] displays the impossibility of being an active agent under overpowered colonial rule" (p.181).

other scene of politics" (2013, p.79) as critically noted by Nasrin Rahimieh and Sharareh Frouzesh. As an approach, it "precludes the possibility that resistance may appear everywhere, marking flights and paths not foreseen by the order of institutional and state-related politics" (Rahimieh & Frouzesh 2013, p.81).

While Uzun's *Siya Evînê* also includes a detailed account of the Ararat resistance, the present chapter will neither pay close attention to the representation of armed resistance, nor to the motif of exile as a primary concern; this is despite the argument by Aydoğan (2014) that the novel also lends itself to be read as an example of exile literature. Adhering to the main purpose of the present study, this chapter will deal mainly with the motif of psychic and intellectual "resistance" emerging in the form of melancholic attachment to the political ideal of a free homeland. Alongside an examination of motifs of love-melancholy and nostalgia, the discussion will primarily focus on the motif of melancholic attachment to the ideal of a free Kurdistan appearing as a distinct aspect of intellectual "resistance" in the novel. It pays particular attention to the account of the period before the Ararat rebellion, which is presented as the basis for the examination of the representation of the emergence of the idea of a free homeland among Kurdish intellectuals and the political elite in the last period of the Ottoman Empire and the early Republican era. To complement this, the account of the period following the defeat of armed rebellion provided in the novel is utilised for the examination of the representation of a melancholic attachment to ideal of a free homeland as a form of resistance in "hard times" of the nation when this "fidelity" to the ideal appears as a futile intellectual endeavour.

3.3. Plot Summary

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In *Siya Evînê*, the story opens with a detailed account of the late Ottoman era and Istanbul, in early 1923, when the country is amidst political uncertainty. With the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, which brought with it a new political environment targeting pro-Ottoman political opponents and Kurdish political and intellectual figures, Memduh Selim Beg, who had been involved in pro-Kurdish political activities in Istanbul since the 1910s, leaves the country. In the early days of his exile, he treats it as a temporary state of affairs, hoping that the political conditions in the country would change and that he would be able to return. In exile, in the Syrian city of Antakya, he meets with Feriha, a daughter of a pro-Ottoman Turkish journalist who had left the country as a dissident repressed by the Kemalist regime, and he, then, gets engaged to her. Feriha becomes a "shelter" for Memduh Selim Beg, in whom he finds consolation: "in the wasteland of exile, Memduh Selim Beg has found a sheltered place, a shade; that is, the shade of love" (p.105).[35] In the meantime, he takes part in the establishment of the Kurdish political organisation *Xoybûn* in 1927. He is sent to Mount Ararat in 1927, where a rebellion is underway, for a short-term mission. However, he cannot return until 1931. As Feriha and her family believe that he has died in a battle in Kurdistan, she marries another man while he is away. He manages to survive the defeat of the Ararat rebellion and returns to Antakya. Despite the political amnesty declared in 1933, on the tenth anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey, for political dissidents, including the leading figures of the Kurdish rebellion and intellectuals, Memduh Selim Beg refuses to return to the country ruled by Kemalist regime because it denies the existence of the Kurds in Turkey. He dedicates himself to the "cause" of Kurdistan and Kurdishness and

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[35] Memduh Selîm Beg di çola kiraç ya welatê xerîbiyê de ji xwe re daldayekê, siyekê peyda kiriye; siya evînê.

spends the remainder of his life in exile, by refusing to detach himself from both the political ideal of a free Kurdistan and "the shade of love" (Feriha) that he has lost during the national struggle. He dies in exile in 1976.

3.4. The Representation of Homeland and Emergence of Political Ideal of a Free Homeland

In the following section, the discussion provides an examination of representation of the emergence of political ideal of a free homeland among the Kurdish intellectual and political elite living in Ottoman Istanbul at the turn to twentieth century in *Siya Evînê*. It focuses on two issues: first, how *Siya Evînê* represents the emergence of the "hope of an independent and united Kurdistan" (p.50)[36] amongst Kurdish intellectuals and the political elite in the late Ottoman era in Istanbul; second, how it represents the transformation of the ideal of a free homeland from an abstract intellectual project among Kurdish national intellectuals into a concrete political enterprise with the collapse of the Empire and establishment of the Republic.

As a starting point, it would be useful to provide a brief historical background to the development of the Kurdish national consciousness in the late Ottoman era. Although the origins of the Kurdish nationalism can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, finding its concrete manifestation in the uprising of Sheikh Ubaydallah of Nehri in 1880, which aimed to set up an independent Kurdish state (Jwaideh 2006; Olson 1989), as a distinct modern political project, Kurdish nationalism emerged in the early twentieth century in Ottoman Istanbul (Özoğlu 2004). It first emerged as "a phase of diaspora activities" (Özoğlu 2004, p.123). As this implies, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Istanbul was one of the

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[36] Hêviya Kurdistaneke xweser û yekgirtî.

main centres of the Kurdish intellectual and political activity. A great majority of the early Kurdish intellectuals and influential Kurdish leaders, who played a critical role "in promoting the idea of nationalism" among Kurds (Özoğlu 2004, p.87) lived in Istanbul and "the state carefully monitored and regulated their access to their territories in Kurdistan" (Özoğlu 2004, p.122). Drawing attention to the role of the secular education that young Kurds received both in Ottoman secular schools and abroad (mainly western European countries) in the emergence of idea of an independent Kurdistan, Özoğlu (2004) notes that Kurdish intellectuals and political figures who promoted the idea of a free homeland and nationhood in the late Ottoman era were mainly "educated in the nonreligious professional schools [in Istanbul] and most of them studied abroad" (Özoğlu 2004, p.124).

An article by the actual Memduh Selim Beg, the editor of *Jîn* (*The Life*) magazine, entitled 'Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti'nde bir musahabe', which was published in *Jîn* in 1919, is noteworthy for tracing the development of Kurdish national consciousness among the Kurdish intellectual and political elite in the Ottoman Istanbul. In this article, Memduh Selim Beg provides a report of the thoughts and feelings of those participating in a seminar organised in the centre of the Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti (Society for the Rise of Kurdistan) in Istanbul: "Those who left the meeting generally had the idea that any administration that has not arisen from the Kurdish spirit cannot be enduring in Kurdistan; only Kurdish desires can dominate the destiny of the Kurds and Kurds will live and rise" (1988, p.898 [translation my own])[37].

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[37] İctimaı terk edenler, umumen kanaat getirmişlerdi ki, Kürd ruhundan doğmayan hiçbir idare, Kürdistan'da payidar olamayacak, Kürd mukadderatına ancak Kürd arzuları hakim olacak ve Kürd yaşayacak ve yükselecektir.

The representation of this process *Siya Evînê* constructs is that the first national Kurdish intellectuals gained a national consciousness and developed the idea of a free homeland to the extent that they were engaged with political ideals of the Enlightenment. The novel pushes to the fore the role of secular "education" and "knowledge" acquired by the children of prominent Kurdish families in Istanbul and European countries in the Kurdish national awakening. It is in this framework that the portrayal of Memduh Selim Beg represents the enlightened character of Kurdish national movement in the late Ottoman era and the role of the intellectual in this national awakening. He is portrayed as a committed intellectual who believes that "the history is created" (p.140)[38] by the nations through social struggles. For Memduh Selim Beg, "knowledge, change and history are the seals of time" (p.140).[39] Thus, he remarks, "if one wants to have a history of one's own, then, one must strive to influence history" (p.140).[40] He is described as "a modern intellectual [ronakbîrekî nûjen]" (p.73), an advocate of the principles of the Enlightenment; he is familiar with political, cultural and intellectual developments in the West. He experiences an "excited life" in Ottoman Istanbul, having an opportunity "to focus on the politics and theories of politics" (p.198).[41] During his undergraduate studies in Paris, he gets "a chance to learn French culture, literature, revolution and civilisation" (p.198).[42] We see Diderot's *Encyclopédie* on the coffee table in his house in exile. When he leaves Istanbul, there are the works of Montaigne, Descartes, La Fayette, Rousseau, Shakespeare and Voltaire in his suitcase together with the works of

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[38] Tarîx tê afirandin.

[39] Fikir, guherîn û tarîx […] mihorên wextê ne.

[40] Eger meriv dixwaze xwediyê tarîxeke taybetî be […] hingê meriv divê xîret bike û hewl bide ku tesîr li tarîxê bike.

[41] Wî serê xwe bi siyasetê û teoriyên siyasetê êşand.

[42] Wî çand û edebiyata fransizî […] şoreş û medeniyeta Fransê […] hîn bû.

Ehmedê Xanî, Ferdowsi and Omar Khayyam; It is especially highlighted that he is a cosmopolitan intellectual who has blended the ideas, arts and literatures of the East and West: "East and West together" (p.21).[43] He is represented as "a lovesick reader of poetry"[44] (p.37) who can recite the poems of Melayê Cizîrî, Hafez and Cavafy; a passionate fan of sonatas of "Claude Debussy" and "Eugène Ysaÿe" of high (Western) musical tastes; his literary taste is not only shaped by the classic Kurdish, Persian and Arab poetry, but also by the turn to the modern, exemplified with the reference to Flaubert's realist novels such as "*Novembre*, *L'Education Sentimentale* and *Madame Bovary*" (p.92).[45]

Through overt allusions to Enlightenment thinkers and ideas as well as realist French novels of the nineteenth century (e.g. Flaubert's works), *Siya Evînê* suggests that the mindset of the early Kurdish intellectual elite was shaped by and within a metropolitan cultural setting, and that Kurdish intellectuals gained a national consciousness to the extent that they engaged in the political, cultural and philosophical texts of the Enlightenment. It, thus, proposes that the intellectual background of the Kurdish "awakening" in the late Ottoman era is rooted in ideas and values of the Western enlightenment. This is evident from features such as Memduh Selim Beg learning from the "books" of the Enlightenment canon that "humanity, love, patriotism and love of country are the highest values" (p.96).[46] He learns from the political and philosophical discussions during his student years in Paris and Istanbul "that our century is a century of creation of history of oppressed nations" (p.140).[47] He believes that

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[43] Rojhelat û rojava bi hev re.

[44] Xwendevanekî dilsoz yê şi'îran.

[45] Novembre, L'Education Sentimentale û Madame Bovary.

[46] Merivahî, dilovanî, welatparêzî û welatevînî bi ser her tiştî re ye.

[47] Sedsala me sedsala afirandina tarîxên milletên mazlûm e.

Enlightenment ideals and universal concepts of humanity and the equality of humanity promise an age of freedom for "subordinate nations"; thus, also opening a window of opportunity for the Kurds to set up their independent homeland. For Memduh Selim Beg, the mission of intellectuals of subordinate nations is to initiate the revolution against subordination: "Memduh Selim Beg learned from books that an intellectual of the twentieth-century should use his heart and intellectual ability in service of his homeland, nation and humanity"' (p.96).[48] As the portrayal details, for Memduh Selim Beg "the voice of the heart beats with the homeland, with people of the homeland, with the delight of the homeland" (p.24).[49] There are three pillars in his life: "the voice of heart, the doves of love and the homeland. And homeland, the reason for everything that exists" (p.92).[50]

The novel also provides a representation of the process whereby with the collapse of Ottoman Empire and establishment of the Republic, the idea of a free homeland imagined by the Kurdish intellectual and political elite in the late Ottoman era turns from an abstract political ideal into a concrete and urgent need for the Kurdish community in Turkey. It depicts the establishment of Republic of Turkey in 1923 and the Turkish modernization project as the beginning of a history of annihilation, loss, subjugation and exile for the Kurds and the end of a period of Kurdish political and cultural activity that flourished in the final days of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul:

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[48] Ew ji kitêban hîn bûbû ku ronakbîrekî sedsala 20 an divê dil û mêjiyê xwe bixe bin xizmeta welêt, millet û merivahiyê.

[49] Dil bi bîhna welêt û merivên welêt û bi tahma xweşiyên welêt hildavê.

[50] Dengê dil û kevokên evînê û welat. U welat, sebebê hebûna her tiştî.

It is the autumn of 1923. Galata. Ships. Rain. People. Teardrops. Handkerchiefs.

Wounded hearts. The tent of exile and migration is put up […] New Turkish rulers

are hunting down those who did not support their cause [during the struggle of

the War of Independence]. Gallows have been set across the country. People are

arrested and killed. Those who survived are escaping […] The rule of thousands of

years works again: the victors exile the losers. (p.20–21)[51]

The narrator describes the very beginning of Republican era as a political turmoil by portraying the victory of the Turkish nationalist elite as a defeat of the liberal values - the end of the cultural and ethnic tolerance of the Empire and of free political and cultural activism for Kurds. The novel presents the Turkish modernisation project as an "exile" for the Kurdish (political) subject:

The new Turkish leader, Mustafa Kemal and his friends who aspired to found a

new state have succeeded in their struggle. They are founding a new State [in

Ankara] and gradually advancing to Istanbul [the Ottoman capital]. […] People are

leaving their country in drives. Every day, ships are picking up groups of people

from the Istanbul harbour. The State of Ottoman dynasty has gone. Many

[51] Payiza 1923-an e. Galata. Keştî. Baran. Meriv. Hêstirên çavan. Destmal. Dilên keserkûr. Kona sirgûniyê, kona macîriyê tê vegirtin […] Ew ketine pey kes û hêzên ku h dijî tevgera wan bûn. Li her aliyê welêt sêdar hatine daçiqandin. Meriv tên girtin û kuştin. Yên mayî direvin [...] Prensîba hezar salan bi car tê; kesên serketî yên binketî bi dûr dixînin.

journalists and writers have left the country; others are on the way. Democrats and liberals are leaving. Kurds are leaving. The destination is exile. (p.19)[52]

This account is corroborated by the discussions in *Xoybûn*'s founding meetings in Beirut in 1927 which report that with the establishment of Republic, Kurds loses not only the possibility of free political and cultural activities that they enjoyed in the late Ottoman era but, also, their historical homeland and ethnic identity. The *Xoybûn*'s first propaganda brochure, penned by Memduh Selim Beg himself, represents the loss of Kurdish historical homeland with the establishment of Republic:

> It has been four thousand years [since] Kurds have been living in their homeland. However, today in this dark and bleak moment of history, the land of our nation has been fragmented and destroyed. Today our homeland is in mourning. The treacherous Turkish state has been intensifying its attacks day by day. They want to transform the Kurdish homeland into Turkish land (pp. 55–56).[53]

The novel asserts that the "[new] Turkish state destroys and ruins our homeland, transforming it into a wasteland. They have also banned our language" (p.53).[54] The *Xoybûn*,

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[52] Serokê Tirkan yê nû Mistefa Kemal û hevalên wî ku li pey dewleteke nû ne, bi ser ketine. Ew komareke nû ava dikin û gav bi gav ber bi Stembolê tên […] Meriv, kom bi kom, dev ji welatê xwe berdidin. Keştî her roj komên merivan ji Stembolê bi dûr dixînin. Mabeyn, yanê saraya dewleta Osmaniyan bi dûr ket. Piraniya rojnamevan û nivîskaran bi dûr ketin, yên mane li rê ne. Demokrat û lîberal bi dûr dikevin. Kurd bi dûr dikevin. Rê ber bi welatê xerîbiyê ye.

[53] Çar hezar sal in ku milletê kurd li ser erdê xwe, li welatê xwe dijî. Lê îro, di vê gava tarî û reş ya tarîxê de erdê milletê me, welatê wî hatiye perçekirin, wêrankirin. Welatê me îro di nav şînê de ye. U hukumeta Tirk ya xaîn êrîşên xwe yên hov roj bo roj zêdetir dike. Wan dil heye ku welatê kurdan bikin tirk.

[54] Dewleta Tirkiyê welatê me hildiweşîne, dike kavil, xirbe û çol. Wan zimanê me jî qedexe kiriye.

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founded by the Kurdish intellectual and political elite in exile, is represented as a political attempt to end "the tragedy of a scattered country" (p.53).[55] The founders of *Xoybûn* are portrayed as political agents who "know the responsibility of the destiny of an oppressed nation is on their backs" (p.60).[56] The name *Xoybûn* denotes a political and cultural resistance against the denial of the Kurdish existence: "the name of our party shall be *Xoybûn*. In other words, existence. That is the existence of our people and our homeland" (p.54).[57]

The novel goes on to highlight that an idea of an independent Kurdish state becomes the only possible safe place for the "suffering nation" after the 1925 Sheikh Said rebellion: "the step we take at the moment will clear away the darkness which has been put on our history by our enemies and will enlighten our history" (p.60).[58] *Siya Evînê* further contends that it is the "policy of the Turkish state" in Kurdistan which makes the need of a free homeland for the Kurds all the more urgent, as it leaves no room for the Kurdish intellectual and political elite but to wage an armed struggle to emancipate their homeland and ethnic "existence". The novel reflects patriotism and the ideal of a free homeland as the main motifs which define the world of the early Kurdish intellectual and political elite. Indeed, it specifically develops the argument that in the early twentieth-century the destiny of the Kurdish intellectual and political elite was intertwined with the destiny of their homeland and nation:

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[55] Trajediya welatekî jihevketî.

[56] Ew dizanin ku berpirsiyariya qedera milletekî binpê ketiye ser milê wan.

[57] Bila navê partiya me XOYBUN be. Yanê heyin, yanê hebûn. Yanê hebûna gelê me, hebûna welatê me.

[58] Ev gava ku em niha davêjin, divê tarîtiya ku dijmin li tarîxa me vegirtiye, biqelişîne û ronahî bireşîne ser tarîxê.

Their life and their homeland. Life and homeland have become one. Everything for the homeland. Every [personal] desire is lost to them. Only homeland, the desire for the homeland. In exile, they have been yearning for a homeland. There is no other way for them. In any case, this is the way they have to walk. (p.117)[59]

As can be seen from this passage, as a continuous distinct feature, *Siya Evînê* portrays the Ararat rebellion as a well-organised attempt aiming to liberate the lost homeland; through the portrayal of *Xoybûn*'s founding figures, it engages with the role of modern Kurdish intellectuals and intellectual motivations inspired particularly by the Western enlightenment in the Ararat rebellion.

The novel also deals with the role of the early Kurdish national intellectuals in actively preserving the political ideal of a free Kurdistan and nationhood in "the period of silence", when Kurdish political activity in Turkish Kurdistan completely ebbed after "a series of revolts" brutally put down between 1925 and 1938 (Bozarslan 2003-A). The novel presents how the intellectual's public task becomes vital in the period after the national resistance ends in a decisive defeat, when political despair and dismay reigns supreme over the subordinated community under political oppression. As a distinction, *Siya Evînê* points out to the ability of the intellectual to become an active subject of keeping a collective political ideal alive and conveying this ideal to the future generations in "the hard times" of the nation at a period when the possibilities for political and social resistance are all but lost. The motif of

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[59] Ewana, jiyana wan û welat. Jiyan û welat bi hev re bûne yek. Her tişt ji bo welat. Her celeb daxwaz winda bûye. Bi tenê welat, daxwaza welêt. Di welatê xerîbiyê de, ew bi agirê welêt disotin. Wekî din tu rê jî li ber wan nemaye. Ew divê di riya ku wan daye ber xwe de, her bimeşin.

fidelity of the main character (Memduh Selim Beg) to the ideal of a free Kurdistan and nationhood and his refusal to mourn the loss of Kurdish homeland and "existence" in modern Turkey is used by Uzun to represent the importance of melancholic persistence in keeping a collective ideal alive and the critical role of the intellectual in sustaining the legacy of the national resistance for the "new generations".

3.5. The Intellectual as the Bearer of the Lost Political Ideals in the "hard times" of the Nation

This section of the discussion deals with the use of melancholy motif as a manifestation of fidelity to a political ideal and cause by examining the symbolic meaning of the character's melancholic attachment to a free homeland and nationhood. The character's exile period after the amnesty represents the Kurdish intellectual's refusal to mourn the loss of Kurdishness in modern Turkey. The events of his life are represented as a *semi-voluntary* exile; the *voluntary* side of this exile embodies the character's active subjecthood, manifesting itself in the domain of an intellectual "resistance" refusing to mourn the loss of ethnic, cultural and political recognition of the Kurds in Turkey. The character's choice of remaining in exile is also represented as a motif of melancholy act; in addition to aiming to preserve the ideal of a free homeland and nationhood, this is represented as being undertaken specifically to transmit the legacy of the national resistance to the "new generations". In this way, as a question to which special attention is dedicated, *Siya Evînê* represents the denial of the Kurdish "existence" and loss of ethnic and cultural recognition of the Kurdish community in modern Turkey as a central dynamic determining the critical position of the modern Kurdish intellectuals in Turkey.

Khanna's (2003) discussion of the colonial and postcolonial intellectual provides a useful conceptual framework for understanding *Siya Evînê*'s description of how the loss of Kurdish representation in modern Turkey changes the outlook of the modern Kurdish intellectuals. Khanna (2003) considers the issue of non-representation of the subaltern national groups within the "modern liberal nation-state" (p.85) as one of the main themes shaping the relationship between the intellectuals of the subaltern groups and the colonising "nation-state" (p.262). She argues that colonial and postcolonial intellectuals are characterised by "the loss of an ideal, that is, of the ideal of representation" (2003, p.266) of the people they seek to represent within the modern nation-states in which the "instruments of representation" of their communities are "inadequate" (p.243). On this argument, the "failure" of the modern nation-states to create a democratic space for the representation of their once-colonised "subjects" leads to the loss of the ideal of a "European nation-statehood" (p.262) among intellectuals of subaltern national groups. Drawing from such considerations, she concludes that the loss of this ideal is one of the main dynamics that motivates the intellectuals of colonized peoples to get actively involved in the national liberation struggles. As Khanna puts it, "what cannot be mourned […] gives rise to a critical

agency" that can be termed "the melancholic postcoloniality" (p.272), resulting in "a critical relation to the ideal of the nation-state" (p.266).[60]

Engaging with the issue of non-representation of the Kurds in modern Turkey as a main theme leaving no choice but the ideal of a free homeland and nationhood for Kurdish national intellectuals, *Siya Evînê* suggests that the representation of the Kurds in the modern Turkish nation-state is possible only by losing their Kurdishness. It narrates how Kurds and Kurdish intellectuals can live as citizens in modern Turkey to the extent that they do. The character's refusal to benefit from the general amnesty granted by Turkey in 1933, which applied, also, to those who were involved in the Ararat rebellion, and his deliberate choice to remain in exile signifies the intellectual's rejection to accept the loss of Kurdishness and Kurdish "existence". With the declaration of the amnesty, "the possibility of returning to the country emerges. The longing and suffering of foreignness could be left behind. After ten years, Memduh Selim Beg could see his father and sister again; if he wants, he could settle in Istanbul or Van. He can return back and live with his people" (p.179).[61] He is also informed by the

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[60] Adopting Freud's term "ego-ideal", Khanna (2003) describes the psychic and intellectual refusal of the subaltern intellectual to identify themselves with "a high ego ideal" (e.g. a modern nation-state) as a side of "critical nationalism" (p.21). Khanna (2003) argues that "if identification itself is haunted by the notion that the structure of the state maintains the structure of exclusion that existed in the colonising nations, then disidentification will almost inevitably follow" (p.265). She considers "disidentification" of the subaltern and postcolonial intellectuals as a form of melancholia, what she defines, a "colonial melancholia" that "grows out of vague symptoms of uncertain national affiliation" (2003, p.178). For Khanna, "a concept of the nation-state conceived in a manner that originally excluded its new members" (p.262) can be a source of "critical melancholia" (p.x) with which colonised and postcolonials intellectuals engaged. According to Khanna, "this [...] form of melancholia would apply to postcolonials who, in the formation of national consciousness, would be unable to fully accept the ego-ideal as a form based on European nation-statehood" (p.262).

[61] Ef derdikeve. Imkana vegera welêt tê pê. Hesret û derd û kulên xerîbiyê dikarin li pey bimînin. Ew dikare, ji nû ve, piştî deh salan, bav û xwişka xwe bibîne, eger bixwaze li Stembolê yan jî li Wanê bi cîh be. Ew dikare here û di nav gelê xwe de, bi însanên xwe re bijî.

Turkish ambassador that "were he to return to Turkey, he will be pardoned and can freely live there as a Turkish citizen" (p.179).[62] The dialogues between Memduh Selim Beg and Celadet Alî Bedirxan, in correspondence, about amnesty, represent the impossibility of the Kurdish intellectual and political subject to accept the ideal of a modern Turkey built on Turkishness and the "categorical denial" of the Kurds (Yeğen 1999-A, p.111). Memduh Selim Beg writes to Celadet Ali Bedirxan in a letter: "Dear lord, returning, too, should be based on some principles. If we were to trample upon our principle and beliefs, what, then, is the meaning of life?" (p.180).[63]

The character's "ambivalence [dudilîtî]" (p.178) over whether "he should return [to the country] or remain [in exile]?" (p.178)[64] after the amnesty also reflects how early Kurdish national intellectuals were torn between the ideals of a democratic Turkey and a free homeland. With this emphasis, *Siya Evînê* also highlights a melancholic dilemma of Kurdish political and intellectual activism in Turkey that has characterized almost all subsequent Kurdish political movement and generations to a certain degree as well as the complexity of the Kurdish and Kurdistan issue in the Turkish setting: as soon as the the possibility of a democratic Turkey appears on the horizon, the Kurdish melancholic desire for the lost homeland is suspended by the political subject, while in the times of hardy political oppression loss turns into both an object of melancholic mourning as well as a useful basis for political and social dynamism. The character's inner negotiations with the idea of

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[62] Eger Memduh Selîm Beg vegere Turkiyê, ew dê efû bibe û bikaribe wekî hemwelatiyekî Turkiyê, bi awakî serbest bijî.

[63] Mîrên min, veger jî divê li gor hin qayidan be. Gava me her celeb qayide û bawerî dan bin lingên xwe, hingê mana jînê çi ye?

[64] Ew vegere yan bimîne?

"returning" reflects how the denial of the "Kurdish existence" in modern Turkey brought about a further consolidation of the ideal of an independent Kurdistan among Kurdish national intellectuals. As his inner voice reflects, for Memduh Selim Beg, to take advantage of the amnesty and return to Turkey means not only "betrayal" to a political "cause" but, also both to his "own self" as an intellectual and his ethnic identity:

> In the amnesty proposal there is nothing for or about [the rights] of Kurds; Kurds are not mentioned at all. The new regime no longer recognises the existence of Kurds. Moreover, tyranny and oppression is still continuing. Weren't all those struggles, sufferings, difficulties and sorrows for the freedom and independence of Kurds? Now if he returns, wouldn't he be denying himself? Wouldn't he be the one who has betrayed his own self, his own life, his own cause and his people? In this way, wouldn't he be legitimising the [oppressive] policy of the new Turkish regime? (p.179)[65]

The novel is clear in stating that although Kurdish intellectuals may have invested in another "ego-ideal" (an independent and united Kurdistan) at the turn of the century, they were also ready to embrace the idea of a democratic nation-state after the Kurdish rebellions ended in defeat. Resting on this account, the novel attempts to show how the Turkish "policy of compulsory assimilation" (Yeğen 2007, p.127) aiming to subsume Kurdishness and to entirely

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[65] Di biryara e'fûyê de ji bo kurdan, li ser kurdan tu tişt nayên gotin. Rejîma nû, niha, tewr hebûna kurdan jî nenase. Zor û zulim li welêt her berdewam e. Ma evçend xebat, evçend zehmetîkêşan, derd û keder ne ji bo azadî û serbestiya kurdan bû? Gelo ew niha vegere, ew dê li xwe mikur neyê? Ew dê îxanet li xwe, li jiyana xwe, li doza xwe û li gelê xwe neke? Ew dê, bi vî awayî, siyaseta rejîma nû ya Turkiyê nepejirîne?

eradicate its ethnic and cultural reminders, made it impossible for the Kurdish national intellectuals to compromise the idea of a free homeland and nationhood in Turkey.

The exile is represented as the only possible space where the Kurdish intellectual can live without "betraying" one's "own self". The novel describes the individual's acceptance of the loss of his ethnic identity and "existence" as a "betrayal" to one's "own self" and of nation. Taking these considerations in tandem, the post-defeat era is represented as a period when many former Kurdish political figures accepted the impossibility of the ideal of a free homeland and nationhood and "betrayed" the Kurdish cause:

> The betrayal and the hypocrisy is enjoying the challenging and hard times. Kurds are experiencing such harsh times. Hopes have been crashed. Desires have crumbled […] The Ararat Rebellion has been defeated. After the suppression of the Ararat, the *Xoybûn* Party also suffered a hit. Many people returned back and surrendered to Turkey. Many people turned away from their old friends, comrades and the cause. (p.182)[66]

Through an allusion to a piece of paper found under the pillow of Memduh Selim Beg on his deathbed, containing a well-known poem of the seventeenth-century Kurdish poet Ehmedê Xanî, considered widely as the first literary expression of Kurdish desire for a free homeland and nationhood, the intellectual's melancholic fidelity to a collective ideal in "difficult times" is highlighted: "why do Kurds lack everything / in the order of the world / Why have they been

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[66] Îxanet û durûtî jî ji rojên teng û dijwar hez dikin. Kurd rojên weha dijîn. Hêvî têk çûn. Miraz qurmiçîn […] Serîhildana Agiriyê şikiya. Bi dû şikesta Agiriyê re, partiya Xoybûnê jî şikest xwar. Gelek kes çûn û teslîmî Turkiyê bûn. Gelek kesî rû ji heval û dostên xwe yên kevn, ji doza xwe bada.

fated to all this?"[67] (p.218). This "difficult question of the Kurdish history"[68] (p.218) is represented as "the summary of Memduh Selim Beg's long life" (p.218).[69] The narrator's description of Memduh Selim Beg's house in the early 1970s, a few years before his death, reflects the spiritual triumph of the intellectual in melancholic fidelity to a collective ideal and political cause:

The house of Memduh Selim Beg has become a kind of place of pilgrimage. Writers, journalists, researchers and intellectuals come and speak with him; they ask him about different issues, they look at his books and collections of magazines. Now, he himself has become history. His experiences and the events that happened [in his lifetime] have become history. His library has become a witness of the past times. That Armenian massacre, Istanbul, HEVI association, ROJI KURD magazine, Kurdish Progress Association, JIN magazine, XOYBUN Party, the rebellion of Ararat and so on… Now these events have become the subject of research and books. Memduh Selim Beg himself speaks of a historical era; he himself sheds light on history. He wants to transmit the memories and ideals of the leaders of that time to the new generations (pp.208–9).[70]

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[67] Kurmanc di dewleta dinê de / Aya bi çi wechî mane mehrûrn? / Bîl cimle ji bo çi bûne mehkûm?

[68] Pirsiyara esasî ya tarîxa kurdan.

[69] Kurtebiriya jiyana dirêj ya Memduh Selîm Begê.

[70] Mala Memduh Selîm Begê bûye celebek ziyaretgeh. Nivîskar, rojnamevan, lêger û ronakbîr tên, pê re dipeyivin, jê tiştine dipirsin, li kitêb û kovarên wî dinihêrin. Ew niha bûye tarîx. Tecrubên wî, tiştên ku wîjine, niha, bûne tarîx. Kitabxana wî bûye şahîda demên rabirdû. Wan, qetliyama ermenan, Stembol, komela HEVI'ye, kovara ROJI KURD, teşkîlata Kûrt Tealli Cemiyeti, kovara JIN'ê, partiya XOYBUN'ê, serîhildana Agiriyê û hwd […] Niha bûne babetên lêger û kitêban. Memduh Selîm Beg bi dest dipeyive, bi qasî xwe, ronahî direşîne ser tarîxê û dixwaze bîr û baweriyên serok û rêberên wê demê biguhezîne nifşên nû.

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As evidenced by the preceding passage, the representation the novel constructs also involves how those Kurdish intellectuals who sustained the political ideal of a free homeland and nationhood in exile created the Kurdish national memory and also became its most respected figures. It also develops as a representation of the how in challenging times of the nation, the intellectual's melancholic fidelity to a collective ideal per se can become a revolutionary act, by proposing that, in the colonial context of the subordinate nations, the melancholic *failure* of national intellectual to mourn a collective loss connotes, in fact, a *success*. The melancholy, in this setting, bespeaks not a pathology but a form of political and intellectual resistance.

As argued earlier, in Uzun's historical fiction the historical national figures (represented in the novels) also emerge as subjects of commemoration and mourning; Uzun's historical novels do not speak only about the lives of national historical figures but each volume of this historical fiction per se is *in* mourning for a particular life and legacy on which it is centred. In *Siya Evînê*, the political and cultural legacy of the historical personage (Memduh Selim Beg) is melancholic fidelity to the Kurdish cause itself. The narrator asks the reader in the final part of the novel: "who will recognise that the entire life of Memduh Selim Beg which came to pass seeking an answer to this question? Three lines from the seventeenth-century [from Xanî's poetry]; the legacy of Memduh Selim Beg"[71] (p.219). The question as to "who will recognise" the political and cultural "legacy of Memduh Selim Beg" suggests that, as a historical novel, *Siya Evînê* not only bears witness to a life dedicated to the Kurdish cause, but also expects a reading as mourning the "legacy" of this distinguished life. As described in the finale of the story, the loss of the engaged intellectual, who has spent his life in melancholic

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[71] Kî dê bizanibe ku hemû jiyana Memduh Selîm Begê ji bo bersîvdana vê pirsiyarê bihurî û çû [...] Sê rêzên sedsala XVII an; wesiyeta Memduh Selîm Begê.

fidelity to the ideal of free homeland and nationhood, is represented as an irreplaceable loss for the nation: "in Memduh Selim Beg's room everything is in a desperate mood […] The destitution, sorrow and sufferings of the long years. There is a history that has penetrated into books, journals, newspapers and papers. An old, wounded and forgotten history. Now, one more witness of this old history is passing away" (p.217).[72] Distinctly concerned with signifying both a Kurdish historical loss (homeland) as well as the life, death and legacy of a "witness" of a "wounded and forgotten history" in obituarial fashion, *Siya Evînê,* thereby, positions itself in-between a realist historical fiction and an *obituary narrative*.

With the objective of paying due attention to the representation of a melancholy motif put into motion specifically around a political ideal, this section therefore highlights also the obituarial features of the novel by through the examination it attempted to situate in a wider historical and socio-political setting of the Kurds in Turkey. The following discussion affords an analysis of a different kind of melancholy articulation set around motifs of love, separation and grief of separation and further complements our understanding of the treatment and function of the motif in modern Kurdish novel by providing a case study of one of its other prevalent forms.

3.6. The Representation of Love-Melancholy

Melancholic love can be described as a lover's "continual focus on an internalised beloved" (Wells 2007, p.98). "The melancholic lover's fixation on a single beloved bespeaks a stubborn

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[72] Li oda Memduh Selîm Begê, her tişt di nav neçariyeke dilsoj de ye […] Feqîrî, keser û janên salên dirêj. Di nav kitêb, kovar, rojname û kaxizande tarîxekê. Tarîxeke kevn, birîndar û jibîrbûyî. Şahîdekî din ji şahîdên tarîxa kevn dere, koç dike.

attachment to a particular, unique individual" (2007, p.12), as noted by Marion Wells. It refers to the lover's rejection "to adopt any new object of love" (Freud 1917) after loss; more specifically, lover's refusing to "replace" (Freud 1917) the lost lover with another lover. In Freud's (1917) account of melancholy, the melancholic is described as someone who resists to accept the loss of a love-object and "reality that the object no longer exists" (Freud 1917, p.255). Freud (1917) argues that, in melancholia, "libido" does not depart from "love-object" and incline towards a "new one"; instead, it is "withdrawn into the ego". The "capacity" of "resistance" (Freud 1923, p.24) of melancholic subject to insist on attachment to the lost love-object distinguishes the melancholic from the "normal" mourner, who, Freud argues, demonstrates a psychic ability to invest in a "new object of love" after loss. Taking these considerations as basis, the following discussion provides an examination of the motif of love-melancholy by paying particular attention to both the representation of political and cultural setting in which love is situated as well as the representation of the male and female iterations of the love melancholia in *Siya Evînê*.

The Kurdish novel can arguably be regarded as being excessively preoccupied with motifs of love and separation; as also noted by Galip (2015), the motif of love comprises one of the most commonly used motifs in Kurdish novels by Turkey's Kurds. In relation to use of the love motif, Galip (2015) argues that "Kurdistan is usually equalled to a beloved woman" (p.174) in Kurdish-written novels by Turkey's Kurds, highlighting that "the complicated nature of the experience of Kurds with their 'home-land' makes it an effective tool for identifying it with certain concepts and images in relation to the love theme" (Galip 2015, p.175).

However, despite the prevalence and instrumentality of love motif in Kurdish novel, the number of novels that genuinely deal with the love-melancholy are very limited in Kurdish

literature in Turkey. Uzun's *Siya Evînê* (1989), Silêman Demîr's *Sorê Gulê* (1997) and *Piştî Bist Salan* (2007), Aydoğan's *Leyla Fîgaro* (2003) and Cewerî's *Derza Dilê Min* (2020) can be listed as major, if not all, Kurdish novels providing an aesthetic form of love-melancholy. What makes the above-mentioned the main texts of the branch of *melancholy literature* in Kurdish is that they distinctly deal with the motif of loss in love by providing a detailed account of the psychology of grieving individual; further, this is augmented with an effort to situate the character's grief performance in a framework of melancholic subjectivity in which the separated melancholic lover is described as being unable to invest in another love-object. A comparative analysis of the contents of these narratives or the aesthetic merits in constructing a form of love-melancholy is not the point of this section; the purpose, rather, is to outline the general scope as well as focus of the love-melancholy narratives constructed by the Kurdish novelists.

Although the forms of love-melancholy offered by Kurdish novels mentioned vary both in terms of setting as well as aesthetic qualities, the representation of melancholic desire for the lost lover and the indispensability of the lover for the separated lover emerge as one of the main concerns in the narratives. In *Siya Evînê*, the melancholic sensibility and the overemphasized emotional performance of the separated lover (Memduh Selim Beg) emerge as one of the main areas the text focuses to describe the psychology of love separation; the grief of the separated lover is constructed on the irreplaceability of the lost lover and the void caused by this loss in the emotional and sexual life of the lover. In *Sorê Gulê*, starting twenty years ago in Nusaybin, the melancholic love story of Serdar and Gulê, who is married after Serdar leaves the country for political reasons, comes to a tragic if not uncommon end when the lovers commit suicide in a rural area on the Atlantic coast of Norway; the love story of

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Serdar and Gulê not only points to the tension and conflict between melancholic love and social and cultural rules, but also develops a form of love-melancholy on the axis of motifs of melancholic insistence upon a lost object of desire as well as melancholic suicide, purporting that melancholic love is a relentless insistence upon a fixed object of desire. Similarly, in *Piştî Bîst Salan*, Memo, the first-person narrator of the novel, writes his love story in order to alleviate the grief of losing her youthful lover, Meryemê, from whom he cannot detach himself for twenty years; with this literary standard, the novel develops a literary form of melancholic love asserting that the subsequent love affairs of a separated lover are shaped by a melancholic fixation and that the melancholic lover is condemned to a never-ending search for the object of desire he has lost. Revolving around similar emotional motifs in a different setting, *Leyla Fîgaro* deals with the motif of love separation around the theme of irreplaceability of the lover with another love object; Leyla and Fîgaro's melancholic devotion to each other and their one-day long separation and relentless grief following this separation covers almost the whole story as well as shaping the entire plot of the narrative. Informed by the same literary taste of melancholy articulation, *Derza Dilê Min* provides yet another loss-oriented account of endless grief in love, emphasizing the indispensability of the lost lover. Indeed, the novel is virtually made up of the leading female character's (Malîn) emotionally charged expressions of melancholic grief for an unrequited love and the one-sided romantic love letters to the lost lover (Alan); in this way, it develops a form of unrequited female love affair, with the contention that melancholic love for women manifests an uninterrupted emotional focus on a lost love-object.

Representing melancholic love through similar motifs, most notably along the axis of emotional melancholic fixation for a particular individual, the aforementioned novels suggest

some methodological parallels in terms of their treatment of the romantic love, separation and melancholy as a sentiment of separation. In relation to this motif, it can be stated with considerable ease that *Siya Evînê* distinguishes as one of the first modern Kurdish novels which attentively deals with love-melancholy, despite the representation of the motif being putatively from the point of view of the sensitivity of men.

In his foreword to the Turkish edition of *Siya Evînê*, Yaşar Kemal defines *Siya Evînê* as a "novel of an incurable two-loves; one is a love for a woman, other is a love for a [political] struggle" (2000, p.11).[73] The "love" that Kemal describes with the word "incurable" articulates melancholic love, emerging as a motif of "internalised beloved" by lovers who have fallen apart but refuse to "abandon a libidinal position" (Freud 1917, p.244) and invest in a "new object of love" after separation. In Turkish, the novel was entitled, *Yitik Bir Aşkın Gölgesinde* (*In the Shadow of a Lost Love*), foregrounding the motif of "shadow" of a "lost love" on the lives of lovers. But the novel's original title, *Siya Evînê* (*The Shade of Love)*, does not imply "a lost love" or its shaping power in the lives of melancholic lovers; instead, it explicitly refers to an object of desire for the male character. For Memduh Selim Beg, Feriha represents "the shade of love" (p.105)[74], "a sheltered place" that he finds "in the wasteland of the exile" (p.105).[75] Although title of the novel has also been usually translated into English as "*The Shadow of Love*" (Ahmadzadeh 2003; Galip 2015; Bocheńska 2018), the Kurdish word "sî" in this specific context connotes the *shade* and *coolness* arising from the feeling and pleasure of love. Memduh Selim Beg finds a relief and pleasure in the "shade" of Feriha's love. The female

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[73] [Bu roman] onulamaz, çifte bir aşkın romanıdır. Bir tanesi bir kadın aşkı, ötekisi bir kavganın aşkı.

[74] Siya evînê.

[75] Di çola kiraç ya welatê xerîbiyê de.

"lover" in exile denotes a "refuge" for the male lover with which, he hopes, he may deliver himself from the sufferings of being bereft of a homeland and continue to struggle for a political ideal:

> When miseries and sorrows make him suffer, when he faces unbearable difficulties of the life [in exile], he takes refuge in the shade of love. He keeps his heart and soul in the coolness of the shade of love. The shade of love; the place of silence, delight and happiness. (p.105)[76]

This nuanced explanation for the title of the novel is vital for two reasons. First, it shows that what "siya evînê" refers to is not a lost object of love but rather, one which would be lost by the male character, who has already invested in another love-object (the political ideal of a free homeland) and is in the process of waging a political struggle for this object of love. The second point this passage highlights about the "siya evînê" is that it also implicitly demarcates the status and identity of the female character in the novel, who is represented merely as an object of a masculine love-desire rather than an active subject of a (melancholic) "love". The basic identity of Feriha is to be the "beautiful" fiancée and lover of Memduh Selim Beg. Thus, unsurprisingly, her melancholic grief for a love separation and lost lover is underrepresented in the novel, a topic to which I shall return later in this section.

The motif of love in *Siya Evînê* is situated not merely, to borrow Fredric Jameson's terms, in "sexuality" or "libidinal dynamic" (1986, p.69), but also in the "political dynamics", involving the difficult political, social and cultural life of the Kurds, in a form that Jameson describes as

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[76] Çaxa derd û kul lê leylan didin, germî û qijeqija mesele û zehmetiyan bi ser wî re tên, ew xwe davêje bin siya evînê. Ew dil û ruhê xwe dide bin hûnikahiya siya evînê. Siya evînê. Warê rehetî, dilxweşî û bextiyariyê.

a narrative habit of "third-world texts".[77] For the male character engaged with the national struggle, the happy love is "impossible to be actualised"[78] due to the political "reality of Kurds" (p.172),[79] which is represented as a situation determining "the reality of life of Memduh Selim Beg" (p.172).[80] The following dialogue in the venue of the engagement ceremony of Memduh Selim Beg and Feriha on New Year's Eve of 1927, just before he will be participating in the ongoing Ararat rebellion in Kurdistan, can be read as a relevant example of the representation of the primacy of "the public" over "the private", of "the political" over "the libidinal", of the collective over the "personal" in the life of this male character. The voice of Kurdish desire for a free homeland is echoed in the description of the setting where the male character is engaged:

> A long table and smiling people around it. Turkish and Kurdish music of the country. Several bards (*dengbêj*) and stringed instrument players. All kind of foods and drinks. Absolutely, raki as well […] Laughter. 'Enjoy it. A toast for all our

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[77] In his essay 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism' (1986), Jameson has used the term "national allegory"' as a main analytical concept and master-key to comprehend third-world literary texts. Jameson suggests that "all third-world texts are necessarily […] allegorical and in a specific way: they are to be read as what I will call national allegories" (p.69). Jameson argues that "one of the determinants of capitalist culture, that is, the culture of the Western realist and modernist novel, is a radical split between the private and the public, between the poetic and the political, between what we have come to think of as the domain of sexuality and the unconscious and that of the public world of classes, of the economic and of secular political power: in other words, Freud versus Marx" (p.69). According to Fredric Jameson (1986), different from "first-world" cultural forms, "third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic – necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: *the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society*" (p.69).

[78] Hay lo gidiyo hay looo!

[79] Rastiya kurdan.

[80] Rastiya jiyana Memduh Selîm Begê.

happiness and of our homeland'. Homeland. Unfortunate homeland. Lonely,

ruined and destroyed homeland. Ignorant and subordinate. Fragmented and

shivering homeland. Teardrops, blood, mourning. Gallow trees in a row. Dungeons

and prisons. Homeland. 'Memduh Beg, we have to do something. The homeland

has been waiting for us and our efforts. Most of the intellectuals and fighters who

escaped from the homeland are now in Syria and Lebanon. We have to get

together.' Homeland. 'That is true my sir, that is true. It is a big shame for us to be

sitting in this way in our homes. We have to do something.' It is the new year of

1927. Joy, jokes and laughter. The new year celebration. The ceremony of

engagement. Eating and drinking… and homeland. 'Comrades! A toast to

happiness and wealth of Memduh Selim Beg… My sir, a toast for the victory and

prosperity of the homeland. (pp.42–44)[81]

For the male character, the "shade of love" which he finds in Feriha is persistently interrupted

by the "love" for another love object (the ideal of a free Kurdistan). He finds himself in "an

unpleasant dilemma [berberiyeke nexweş]" (p.72) between his "mind [mêji]" (representing

his political commitments) and his "heart [dil]" (representing his individual desires), "each of

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[81] Maseyeke pir dirêj û li dor wê jî merivên rûken. Bi tirkî û kurdî musîka welêt. Çend dengbêj û sazbend. Her texlît xwarin û vexwarin. Bê guman, araq jî […] Ken. 'Noş mîrê min, ji bo serfiraziya me û welêt.' Welat. Welatê siûdxirab. Welatê bêkes, xirbe û kavil. Şewitî. Nezan û bindest. Welatê perçekirî, jihevxistî. Hêstir, xwîn, şîn. Sêdar û sehpayên li pey hev rêzkirî. Girtîxane û zîndan. Welat. 'Memduh Beg, me xebat divê. Welat li hêviya me û xebata me ye. Piraniya bîrewer, ronakbîr û şerwanên ku ji welêt reviyane, niha li Sûriyê û Lubnanê ne. Em divê bicivin ser hev.' Welat... 'Rast e, mîrê min, rast e. Me şermeke mezin e ku em weha destgirêdayî li malên xwe rûdinin. Me xebat divê'. Sersala 1927 an. Kêf, henek û ken. Şênahiya sersalê. Dawet û dîlana nîşanê. Xwarin û vexarin... û welat. 'Hevalno! Noş... ji bo selametî û serfiraziya Memduh Selîm Begê'. 'Mîrên min, Noş... ji bo selametî û serfiraziya welêt.

which wishes another thing" (p.72)[82] during the meetings of *Xoybûn* he participates soon after his engagement to Feriha. His "dilemma", ambivalence and inner tension represent the dilemma faced by the committed intellectual stuck between his individual desires and political desires: "He knows something [a rebellion] will happen in the homeland. Where will he be at that moment?" (p.23).[83] In his Istanbul years, "he had desired and was working for such a revolution […] Now the warming lightning of revolution is reaching him" (p.118).[84] Not "shade of love", but "the Ararat [rebellion] and Ihsan Nuri [the leader of rebellion] shape Memduh Selim Beg's life and destiny" (p.118)[85] after his engagement to Feriha. The "reality" of homeland helps "the voice of the mind"(p.168)[86] to suppress "the voice of the heart"(p.168).[87] Upon his travel to Kurdistan, where the rebellion is underway, for a mission, he is stuck there and cannot return; in 1930, after the rebellion is crushed and he manages to return to the Syrian city Antakya, he learns that his fiancée Feriha has married an old man and left the city after having receiving news of his death on the battlefield. "The loss of a love; a hearty, beautiful and pleasant love"[88] (p.167) for the male character is situated in a such political setting. In this way, the novel imparts that the loss of "shade of love" for the male character is the particular individual price he paid for the sake of homeland and nation.

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[82] Her yek tiştekî daxwaz dike.

[83] Tiştine dê di welêt de biqewimin. Ilam. Hingê ew dê li kû be?

[84] Wî şoreşeke weha dil dikir û ji bo şoreşeke weha dixebitî […] Niha, germiya çirûskên şoreşê xwe digihînin wî.

[85] Niha Agirî û Ihsan Nûrî […] jiyan û siûda wî dikin.

[86] Dengê mêjî.

[87] Dengê dil.

[88] Windabûna evînekê […] Evîneke paqij, delal, xweş.

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3.7. The Representation of Male Love-Melancholy as an Emotional Response to Loss of a Love Object

The male love melancholia is represented as that of a sane character who is, at once, in love-melancholy for his lost love(r) but also "does not want to forget himself and his [political] responsibilities" (p.182).[89] *Siya Evînê,* however, also develops as a representation of how this lost love leaves a deep mark on the life and personality of the lover, facilitated by the motif of emotional impasses of the male character. The loss of "shade of love" "turns Memduh Selîm Beg's life upside down, leaves a deep mark in his life"[90] (p.167). The "wound" of love separation is depicted as an incurable wound for the lover: "The wound [of the lost love] in his heart cannot be recovered; it is always fresh" (p.182).[91] Suffering these effects, the melancholic lover is further described as a faithful mourner who rejects investing in a new love-object: "Memduh Selim Beg believes that no one can replace Feriha, no one can come close to her. The place of Feriha is in the depths of Memduh Selim Beg's heart (p.205)".[92] This stubborn attachment to the lost love(r) is depicted as an emotional fidelity to the love(r), deeply shaping his emotional world and sexual life: "Memduh Selim Beg does not abandon Feriha until death (p.180)".[93]

Siya Evînê also makes the argument that the sexual desires of the man suffering from love melancholia are stifled by a constant desire for the lost love(r). The implication of the particular representation of the character's sexuality in the novel is that for the melancholic

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[89] Ew naxwaze xwe û mesûhyetên xwe ji bîr bike.

[90] Jiyana Memduh Selîm Begê ser û bin dike, di jiyana wî de şopin kûr dihêle.

[91] Birîna ser dilê wî naceribe. Ew her teze ye.

[92] Wî biryar daye, tu kes nikare dewsa Ferîha'yê bigire, tu kes nikare nêzîkî lê bike. Cîhê wê kûrahiyên dilê Memduh Selîm Begêye.

[93] Heta mirinê [...] Ew dev jê bernade.

male lover, sexuality with other women is a means of reaching the body of the lost lover. Hence, the emotional and sexual life of Memduh Selim Beg is divided between the needs of his "body [beden]" and those of his grieving *ego*, suggesting that the man in love-melancholy loses "the capacity to love" (Freud 1917, p.244) other women; yet, he does not lose his sexual desire for other women: "when his sexual desire becomes more intense, he rushes to the hotels of Damascus, Aleppo and Beirut. Sadly, he cannot resist the desires of the body"[94] (p.195).

For the novel's melancholic male lover, the bodies of prostitutes are the objects through which he could reach the body of the lost lover. The description of the character's sexual relations with young prostitutes contributes to the development of the idea that (male) love melancholia is the relentless pursuit of a lost object of desire in the bodies of other women. However, additionally for the melancholic lover, other women's bodies become the object of bodily rather than psychic pleasure:

Memduh Selîm Beg […] leaves his body to a delicate body; he is amazed by the fragrance of the merging of two bodies; flies with pleasure and excitement. But his mind takes a flight in another direction, towards Feriha, fair Feriha. He thinks about her; he imagines Feriha. As though his body unites with hers. As if this

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[94] Gava daxwaza bedenê li Memduh Selîm Begê tê xezebê, ew xwe davêje otêlên Şam, Heleb û Beyrûdê. Mixabin, ew nikare xwe li ber daxwaza bedenê ragire.

fragrance belongs to her body. As if this warmth is rising from her body. As though

he is releasing himself into her depths…[95] (p.196)

The novel further conveys the disappearance of the possibility of sexuality that includes love

for the melancholic lover. The character's marriage with a single aged lady (Wildan Xanim) in

his old age is presented only to demonstrate that no marriage can be a "love" marriage for a

melancholic lover who is unable to reunite with the woman he loves. The narrator describes

Memduh Selim Beg's marriage:

> It is a marriage which took place due to the pressure of his friends and comrades.
>
> Memduh Selim Beg did not want to marry. He wanted to wait for his lover forever;
>
> until death. Therefore, the aim of this marriage is just to be friends. Not love. Not
>
> the fire of love. Not the pangs of passionate love. Not the madness of love. Just to
>
> be friends (p.204). [96]

The closing section of the novel describing Memduh Selim Beg on his deathbed signifies the

endless devotion of the melancholic lover to his lost love. While his wife, Wildan Xanim, is

grieving for Memduh Selim, who is on his deathbed, Memduh Selim mourns for "the shade

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[95] Memduh Selîm Beg […] bedena xwe teslîmî bedeneke narîn dike, bi bîhna yekbûna bedenan sersem dibe, ji zewk û heyecanê difire. Lê belê, mêjî jî ber bi alîkî din difire; ber bi Ferîha'yê. Ber bi Xezala narîn. Ew li wê difikire û wê xeyal dike. Wekî ku bedena wî bi bedena wê re yek dibe. Wekî ku ev bîhn bîhnên bedena wê ne. Wekî ku ev germî ji bedena wê radibe. Wekî ku ew xwe berdide nav kûrahiyên wê.

[96] Zewaceke ku bi daxwaz û xîreta heval û dostan hatiye pê. Zewaceke ku ji tirsa tenêbûn û bi tenê mirinêhatiye pê. Memduh Selîm Begê dil tunebû ku bizewice. Wî dixewst her û her li hêviya evîna xwe bûya. Heta mirinê [...] Belê, amanca vê zewacê; heval û hogir bûyin. Ne evîn. Ne agirên evînê. Ne ew taya dijwar. Ne dînîtiya sewdayê. Lê heval û hogir bûyin.

of love" he had lost because of joining the national struggle. There are "locks of Feriha's hair" in the envelope that Wildan Xanim finds under the pillow of Memduh Selim Beg after he dies.

3.8. The Representation of Female Love-Melancholy as an Act of Killing Sexual and Emotional Desire

In *Siya Evînê*, while the male character's grief for a lost love(r) is represented in detail along the axis of the character's sexuality, inner feelings, emotional paradox and social relations, it is exceptionally difficult to find the same in-depth representations of love melancholia performed by the female character for the lost love(r). In *The Gendering of Melancholia*, Juliana Schiesari (1992) offers a feminist critical insight into Freudian psychoanalysis of loss and the motif of melancholy in Renaissance literature by questioning the cultural status of melancholia as an affect: "when it comes to the rubric of melancholia as an expression of a cultural malaise embodied within a particular individual or system of thought, women do not count so-called great melancholics" (p.4). Schiesari (1992) argues that in Freud's theory of melancholia as well as early modern thinking on the subject, it is described as "[men's] creative lack" (p.xi) or "the disease of great men" (p.x). She remarks that "the cultural expression of women's losses is not given the same […] representational *value* as those of men within the Western canon of literature, philosophy, and psychoanalysis" (1992, p.13). Complementing this argument, Matthew Bell (2014) argues that female melancholia was often underrepresented in early modern literary texts. Bell's example for this trend is Goethe's novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, which tells the tale of a melancholic love. Bell (2014) highlights that whereas the male character (Werther) "runs the full gamut of melancholic types", such as "love melancholia" and "the philosophical male melancholic role" (p.91), the melancholia of the female character (Lotte) is underrepresented: "while Werther

is allowed to perform his melancholia in a number of frankly quite stagey ways, Lotte has (or desires) no such opportunity. She is something of a repressed melancholic" (2014, p.91).

In *Siya Evînê*, we hear Feriha's name throughout the pages, but cannot find an expressive voice of the other party of this "lost love". Indeed, as Aydoğan (2014) has also noted, *Siya Evînê*'s Feriha is nothing more than "a name" (p.265). Feriha, who is described as "well-educated, musically skilled and having a taste of life and sentimental emotions" (p.178),[97] emerges merely as an object of male character's melancholic love, rather than a subject of this relationship. What defines Feriha's subjectivity is that she is a melancholic fixation for the male character; she is merely a "sweetheart of soul of Memduh Selîm Beg"[98] (p.182). She marries "a man like Edîb Aswar" (p.178),[99] an "illiterate [nexwenda]", "surly [rûtirş]" man, living a "Bedouin/nomadic life [jiyaneke bedewî]" (p.178) and leaves Antakya when she learns that her fiancé had allegedly died during Ararat rebellion in Kurdistan. To marry "an old man" as his third wife, Feriha not only kills her emotional desires, but also kills her sexual desires. In this way, she manifests her melancholic fidelity to her fiancé: "I have not been with Memduh but I have also not been with anyone [either]…" (p.184).[100] She does not blame her ex-fiancé for this unwanted marriage but only reproaches their lot: "I don't blame anyone, nor you" (p.189).[101] She describes her marriage as an act of symbolic suicide. Several years after her marriage, when she meets Memduh Selim Beg (through the mediation of a common friend), she explains the symbolic meaning of her marriage: "Memduh, I have not been a lover

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[97] Xwedî zewk û tahm, xweşperwerdebûyî, musîkşînas, xwedî hîsên zirav.

[98] Zimanşêrîna ber dilê Memduh Selîm Begê.

[99] Merivekî wekî Edîb Aswar.

[100] Ez ji kekê Memduh re nebûm yar, lê ez ji kesekî din re jî nebûm.

[101] Ez gazinî li kesi nakim, li te jî nakim.

to anyone. I would have killed myself if I were to. But I am a hen-hearted person, so I killed myself in this way" (p.190).[102] For the female character, melancholic fidelity to the lost lover means forbidding oneself from investing in another emotional and sexual object.

Feriha's symbolic melancholic suicide is suggestive of melancholic love being a more complex and challenging dilemma for women, involving not only the domain of sentiments, but also the domain of bodily desires. But in *Siya Evînê*, the female character is not allowed to reveal her melancholy experience like the male character whose grief for a lost object of desire is manifested in many ways throughout the story. Although we learn the answer to the question as to "why Feriha sacrificed herself in this way" (p.178)[103] from her few short dialogues in the novel, there is no detailed account of the reflection on this melancholic suicide on her emotional, sexual and family life.

Neither her story nor her melancholia is given "the same representational *value*" as done with the male character in *Siya Evînê*; Feriha's melancholic subjectivity finds its place in the novel to the extent that it implies the importance of Memduh Selim Beg's loss of "shade of love". In this sense, Uzun's novel can be considered another example of "a long literary tradition of female representation in masculine texts that, as Winifred Woodhull has described, is a tradition energised through its need to create female characters who are malleable and come to stand in for anything *but* specificity" (Valassopoulos 2008, p.113).

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[102] Memduh abi, ez ji kesî re nebûm yar. Eger min quwet û hêz hebûya, min dê xwe bikuşta. Lê ez tirsok derketim û min xwe bi awayekî din kuşt.

[103] Çima wê weha xwe feda kir.

As highlighted by this critical examination of love-melancholy in *Siya Evînê*, the first modern Kurdish novel that affords a reflective account of the melancholic love, the motif is used by Uzun not only to represent the emotional life of an individual experiencing the grief of love separation, but also to signify a socio-political situation. The evidence and discussion provided demonstrates that in Uzun's utilisation, a love-melancholy fashioned along the axis of irreplaceability of the lost lover also reverberates in the memory of Kurdish national resistance, political defeats, lost homeland as well as sadness of the exile. Permeating the content of the narrative in this way, the motif turns into a multi-functional literary device, dealing with a loss-oriented individual affect in its historicity as well as within a concrete contemporary setting. The overt socio-political connotations that love-melancholy gains in this setting and the aesthetic preferences motivating its articulation which clearly overlap with and reflect the socio-political realities of Kurdish life (in Turkey) illustrate that, for modern Kurdish authors, melancholy generally implies an emotional index of the losses inflicted on the individual(s) by the colonial situation. As the foregoing discussion demonstrates, the motif of melancholy is not conceived merely as one's affective condition or the individual melancholic temperament, but also as a political-origin phenomenon. The discussion in the following section highlights that this form of socio-political imagination of the loss and grief by *Siya Evînê* also manifests itself in the representation of the nostalgia motif, yet another lost-oriented affect subjected to treatment in *Siya Evînê*; it provides an examination of use of the nostalgia motif as a sentiment that echoes the lost happy moments of the *past* against the unhappiness of the *today* both for the Kurdish (political) individual and community. To complement the discussion in a way which pays due attention to all its major

dimensions, the section as also provides a consideration of the aesthetic reflections of this lost-oriented mood as constructed by Uzun.

3.9. Representing the Empire's Time and its Multicultural Space as an Object of Nostalgic Yearning

This section focuses on the motif of nostalgia deployed by Uzun to represent the (male) character's sentimental longing for the late Ottoman era and Istanbul. In *Siya Evînê*, the Ottoman Istanbul is represented as a lost object of nostalgic yearning for the character; it is not only described as the place where the character's happy memories of the past are lived. Rather, it is also depicted as a place of multiculturalism, ethnic diversity and religious tolerance as well as the site of the proclamation of the Republic and the seizure of power by Turkish nationalist elite, signifying the end of this multiculturalism. The motif of Empire's linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity is especially foregrounded in the representations of the character's nostalgic performance towards the Ottoman Istanbul. With these nostalgic allusions to an imagined happy past, Uzun's work also exemplifies a form of "aesthetic of nostalgia" (Trilling 2009) in *Siya Evînê* by engaging in the tradition of "literary nostalgia", what Renee R. Trilling defines as "an aesthetic project that makes use of pre-existing forms [...] in order to distance the reader from the present" (2009, p.4). The following discussion highlights not only the emotional meaning of the character's nostalgic performance for the Ottoman Istanbul where he used to live before exile, but also the political and cultural connotations of this nostalgic yearning for the Empire's multicultural time and space. As its overall objective, the discussion examines how *Siya Evînê,* as a historical novel, attempts to (re)imagine the Ottoman past in "conversation with the present" (Clewell 2013, p.2), that is, the Republican era, and highlights the repercussions of the tension between the two for Kurds.

The term "nostalgia" can be defined as an emotion of wishful longing for a place and past, triggering "sadness and sense of loss" (Wilson 2005, p.22); as a way of remembering, it "typically conjures up images of a previous time when life was 'good'" (Wilson 2005, p.21). However, it is important to note that the term is used disparately in various contexts in the modern scholarship. As Tammy Clewell (2013) argues in *Modernism and Nostalgia*, nostalgia can be described "as a felt emotion that may be both painful and pleasurable, as a form of private memory with connections to the social and collective, as a type of fixation that entails consciousness and the unconscious" (p.2). What connects nostalgia and melancholia is that they comprise emotional responses to the loss of a certain love-object. As noted by Clewell (2013), "like mourning and melancholia, nostalgia involves an interiorisation of memories and emotional attachments to others, places, ideals and practices" (p.6). While melancholy as an affect also includes psychic suffering, emotional impasse and painful memories in relation to a lost love object and could "reconfigure the self in the light of the past" (Clewell 2013, p.6), nostalgia as a sentiment is often "associated with the pleasurable idealisation of a Golden Age" (Edwards 2016, p.xvii). In this sense, nostalgia can be described as "a selective memory and a selective amnesia that deals only with sweet remembrances" (Yuichiro 2004, p.137).

In *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym (2001) describes nostalgia as "a yearning for a different time" (p.xv). Boym argues that "unlike melancholia, which confines itself to the planes of individual consciousness, nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups or nations, between personal and collective memory" (2001, p.xvi). In *Postcolonial Nostalgias*, Dennis Walder (2010) describes nostalgia as "a longing for an experience – subjective in the first place and yet, far from limited to the individual" (p.4). Walder (2010) argues that "nostalgia is not innocent – least of all, perhaps,

when indulged by those who have benefited from past structures of oppression" (p.18). On the other hand, describing nostalgia as a yearning and desire which stems from the tension between the turmoil of the "present" and the pleasant experiences of the "past", Andreea Deciu Ritivoi (2002) suggests that "what triggers nostalgia in the first place, making it into a distinct aspect of memory, is precisely a critical discrepancy between the present and the past" (p.30). Boym (2001) also highlights this critical potential in the nostalgic (re)imagination of the past as a response to the turbulence of the present: "nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the presents have direct impact on realities of the future" (p.xvi). Similarly, for Boym, "creative nostalgia reveals the fantasies of the age, and it is in those fantasies and potentialities that the future is born. One is nostalgic not for the past the way it was, but for the past the way it could have been" (2001, p.351). In the same vein, noting the creative potential of nostalgia in relation to the modern literature, Clewell (2013) points to the critical potential of "modernist nostalgia" as a way of thinking about the past and the present in "dialogue".[104]

Lending itself to be deployed for diverse literary strategies, in *Siya Evînê*, the motif of nostalgia is primarily used to represent the mood of exile for the male character. The novel is direct in making the point that exile turns the native *home* into a nostalgic object of desire for the

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[104] According to Clewell (2013), "far from being simply an idealised memory of lost homes, lost others and lost histories, modernist nostalgia involves a tension between past and present that structures many of the most well-known texts of the period" (p.2). Clewell describes the domain of this tension, which is assumed to be inscribed in the very notion of nostalgia (Boym, 2001; Ritivoi, 2002), as a domain of "dialogue" between the *past* and *present* for modernist writers: "In the tension between a backward-looking and forward-looking impulse, modernist writers have discovered the potential for a productive dialogue where the past is brought into conversation with the present" (2013, p.2).

exiled. It contends that "everyone can be cheerful and happy only in his home" (p.31).[105] In this specific setting, the native *home* for the character manifests "multi-locationality" (Brah 2005, p.191), suggesting "multi-placedness of 'home'" (Brah 2005, p.191) for the character located in Istanbul: one is "the place and land of fathers and ancestors" (p.66),[106] the place of origin (Van), and, the other is the capital city of the Empire, where he lived before exile and with which he has deep emotional connections. Memduh Selim Beg is represented as "a frequenter of Galata's taverns" (p.73)[107]; as "he is on the way to exile" (p.20)[108] in one of Istanbul's ports, his last words to his relatives are: "save my books and home. I will return" (p.21).[109] His current "home" is in Istanbul.

The place of exile is described as a "wasteland" (p.105) and exile as a state of "orphanhood and despair" (p.123) for the exiled subject, creating an endless state of nostalgia in the individual. The exiled subject is described as a nostalgic individual living with the agenda of his country and waiting in a nostalgic longing to return to his native *home* and country: "Memduh Selim Beg's body is here [in exile] but his mind is in the country" (p.33).[110] Through flashbacks, we often hear the voice of a nostalgic yearning for both Van and Istanbul; but especially the character's yearning for Ottoman Istanbul is placed at the centre of this nostalgic performance. For instance, shortly before he joins the ongoing rebellion in Mount

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[105] Her kes di hêlîna xwe de kêfxweş û dilşa ye.

[106] Cîh û warê bav û kalan.

[107] Pêxasê meyxanên Galatayê.

[108] Ew li ser riya welatê xerîbiyê.

[109] Li mal û kitêbên min miqayite bin. Ez dê vegerim.

[110] Beden li vir, heş li welêt.

Ararat in 1927, he has a dream in which he returns to the Ottoman Istanbul with his fiancée Feriha:

> They have returned to Istanbul. The exile is left behind. Both lovers are hand in hand and are taking a walk around the city […] There seems no obstacles to interrupt their delight… Traveling and walking in Istanbul… Who could have believed that they would return? Scents of spring are rising from the earth. The Istanbul spring. A return of heaven. (p.113)[111]

At the end of novel, when he is on the brink of death in 1976, his wife, Wildan Xanim, tries to awake him, reminding him of his happy times in Ottoman Istanbul: "Memduh beg, please move yourself, say something, talk about [your] days of Van and Istanbul" (p.11).[112] What makes this nostalgic performance for Ottoman Istanbul instrumental for a socio-political reading is not merely the emotional contrast it constructs through the text, but its clear political references to the happy moments in the Empire's past which are deemed as worthy of remembering by the character. In *Siya Evînê*, the motif of character's nostalgic yearning of "returning to heaven" is used not only to represent his longing for a city that occupies an important place in his biography, but also to describe a yearning for a time when there were political "hope" for Kurds. Further representations of Ottoman Istanbul through happy memories of the character about the city reveals that this nostalgic yearning articulates not merely "a longing for a place", but also "a yearning for a different time" (Boym 2001). In the

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[111] Ew vegeriyane Stembolê. Welatê xerîbiyê li pey wan maye. Her du evîndar di piyên hevûdu de, li bajêr digerin […] Ji kêfa wan re payan tune. Li Stembolê ger û meş... Ma kê bawer dikir ku ew dê bikaribûna vegeriyana? Ji erdê bîhna biharê radibe. Bahara Stembolê. Vegera bihuştê.

[112] Memduh beg, xwe bilivîne, tiştekîbibêje, behsa rojên Wanê û Stembolê bike.

portrayal of the scene when Memduh Selim Beg and Celadet Ali Bedirxan meet in exile (in

Beirut) in 1927, the character's nostalgia for the Ottoman Istanbul turns into nostalgic

yearning for a time when a collective "hope" was alive. Each individual lost pleasant moment,

for which the text provides a detailed account, also alludes to the historical background of

the recent Kurdish national awakening and turns nostalgic remembering into a functional

device for a historical and socio-political inquiry about the situation of the Kurds in Turkey in

the early twentieth century. This can be observed clearly in the following dialogue:

> His friend [Celadet Ali Bedirxan] appears in the street. It is an old friendship. Those
>
> days of Istanbul. Struggle and desire. The hope of an independent and united
>
> Kurdistan […] Galata's and Beyoğlu's taverns. Beautiful women; Greek, Italian,
>
> Belarussian, Armenian and French belles. Mingled and different kinds of
>
> languages. A vivid and excited life. The years of 1918 and 1919 in which *Jîn*
>
> magazine was published (p.50).[113]

For Memduh Selim Beg and his political generation, the late Ottoman era meant not only a

possibility of free political association for Kurdish ethnic and cultural rights as well as free

Kurdish publishing, "banned" (p.53) by the new regime, but also a "hope" of a free Kurdistan.

The political and cultural allusions in descriptions of Ottoman Istanbul show that the

character's nostalgic yearning for the Ottoman past and Istanbul expresses not merely a

longing for the Empire's time, but a longing for a hopeful epoch that emerged during the

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[113] Hevalê Memduh Selîm Begê dê ji kuçeyekê bixuye. Hevaltiya, dostiya kevn. Ew rojên Stembolê. Xebat, best, daxwazî. Hêviya Kurdistaneke xweser û yekgirtî [...] Meyxanên Galata û Beyogluyê. Jinên spehî, dîlberên rûm, îtalî, rûsên spî, ermen û fransiz. Zimanên têkel û cûrbecûr. Jiyaneke rengîn û heyecantijî. Robara Salên 1918 û 1919 ku kovara "Jîn" diweşiya.

Empire's time and was then destroyed by the Republic. The following reflections from the

character's inner dialogues, as he thinks about "the days in the past" (p.98)[114] in exile,

represents not only the critical importance of the Empire's capital in the emergence of

Kurdish national consciousness, but also reveals that the character's nostalgia for late

Ottoman era and Istanbul involves a past time when Kurds' political "hope" for future had

blossomed:

> Istanbul, 1912. The hum of the wind of freedom and liberty. The awakening of the
>
> subordinate peoples under the Ottoman rule. The exhausted and weakened
>
> Ottoman State. Kurds in the hum of the wind of freedom and liberty. The notables
>
> of the Kurds. Leading Kurdish families […] Each of these families rebelled against
>
> the Ottoman Empire, failed in these rebellions, and were expelled from Kurdistan.
>
> They all now live in Istanbul under [Ottoman] state surveillance. Istanbul, the
>
> bridge connecting Asia and Europe. The centre of science and knowledge. Kurdish
>
> youth. Students from wealthy Kurdish families. Abdullah Çawiş's coffee house.
>
> Conversations and discussions. 'Can the Kurds also benefit from this climate of
>
> freedom and liberty?'. Kurdish Students Association, Hevî (Hope). The launch day
>
> of Hevî. 'Hevî [Hope] is our hope; Hevî [Hope] is the hope for the future of our
>
> homeland'. Those hopeful and exciting days when Roji Kurd magazine was

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[114] Rojên rabirdû.

published. Early summer of 1913. Kurdish doctors, professors, writers, journalists, emirs, aghas, sheikhs, workers and students (pp.98-99).[115]

As this inner monologue of nostalgic memories clearly reveals, *Siya Evînê* does not only produce an "aesthetic of nostalgia" by depicting a lost hopeful era through a distinctly poetic form of reflection, but it also provides an authentic panorama of the era and Empire's capital for the Kurds. Through the character's nostalgic remembrance of late Ottoman Istanbul, the novel highlights both the critical function the city played in Kurdish intellectual enlightenment as well as the historical opportunities and political "hopes" that arose for the Kurds in the last period of the Empire. Memduh Selim Beg remembers the late Ottoman era and Istanbul with nostalgic longing because the period signifies a time when "the Treaty of Sèvres […] which had paved a way that the Kurds too could establish their own state step by step" (p.15),[116] whereas the Republican present represents the vision of the Treaty of Lausanne "in which the rights of Kurds are not mentioned" (p.15)[117] at all. While the late Ottoman era represents a "hope" for the character, the present connotes political despair: "[In exile] Memduh Selîm

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[115] Stembol, 1912. Fîzîna baya azadî û serbestiyê. Hişyarbûna gelên bindest yên dewleta Osmanî. Dewleta Osmanî ya nexweş. Di nav fîzîna baya azadî û serbestî de kurd. Gire girên kurdan […] Hemûyan jî li dijî dewleta Osmanî serî hildane, bi ser neketine û ji welatê Kurdistanê hatine bidûrxistin. Hemû jî, niha, li Stembolê, di bin çavnêriya dewletê de dijîn. Stembol. Pira navbera Ewrûpa û Asiyayê. Warê îlim, îrfan û zanînê. Xortên kurdan. Xwendevanên ji malên dewlemend. Qahwexana Ebdullah Çawişê Erxeniyî. Xeberdan û munaqeşe. 'Ma kurdan jî ji awayê azadî û serbestî sûd wergirtin navê?' Komela Xwendevanên Kurd HEVI. Roja damezrandinê; 'HEVI, hêviya me ye.' 'HEVI, hêviya pêşeroja welatê me ye...' Ew rojên rengîn yên weşîna ROJI KURD. Destpêka havîna 1913 an. Doxtor, profesor, nivîskar, rojnamevan, mîr, axa, şêx, karker û xwendekarên kurdan (pp.98-99).

[116] Peymana ku li Sevresê […] hat pê û rê dida ku Kurd jî, gav bi gav, ji xwe re dewletekê ava bikin.

[117] Tê de behsa mafên Kurdan nabe.

Beg is still continuing his political activities. He has still political contacts and connections. But the hope, eagerness and excitement of the 1920-30s is not there" (p.197).[118]

In the novel, contrasts are continually drawn with the former context of Kurds in the late Ottoman period, which, albeit relatively, "allowed the ethnic, religious and cultural communities of the 'periphery' to be articulated within the centre" (Yeğen 1999-B, p.557). Furthermore, while the Empire's time and space (Istanbul) embraces "different kinds of languages", "cultures" and "nations", offering some space for Kurds to embody their ethnic and cultural "differences" in its loose political and social system, the Republican present represents the political and social turmoil in which "the evils of under and over-ground have become wrathful in the form of the new sovereigns and rulers of Turkey" (p.20).[119] The depiction of Ottoman past as a time when different ethnic and religious groups had been living in harmony implies the loss of multiculturalism of the Empire with the establishment of the Republic. "Memduh Selim Beg loves the Galata district [of Istanbul]" (p.17),[120] because, as quoted by the narrator from the Ottoman traveller, Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*: "In this city [in Galata] there are sixteen Muslim, seven Greek, three European, one Jewish and two Armenian neighbourhoods. The city and its residents have always been living in peace and happiness" (p.17).[121] *Siya Evînê* is explicit in stating that with the collapse of the Empire the

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[118] Memduh Selîm Beg hê jî xebata xwe ya siyasî didomîne. Hê jî peywendiyên wî yên siyasî hene. Lê bê guman, ew hêvî, şewk û heyecana 1920–30 an nemaye.

[119] Şeytanên sererd û binerd di kincên serdest û karmendên nû yên Tirkiyê de hatine xezebê.

[120] Ew ji Galatayê hez dike.

[121] Li vî bajarê (li Galatayê) hijdeh taxên muslimanan, heftê taxên Rûman, sê taxên Frenkan, taxeke Cihuyan û du taxên Ermenan hene... Bajar û rûniştevanên wi her gav di nav kêfxweşiyê de ne.

era of "kings and emperors" is not over, but the era of more oppressive "emperors" has begun

for Kurds:

> 1923, the new year. Night-time. Istanbul, the city of a thousand nations,
>
> cultures and languages is enjoying […] The era and times have been changing
>
> […] Kings and emperors have gone. Long live new ones! The fire has ignited
>
> and incinerated old maps. New ones are on the way, about to arrive.[122] (p.15)

With the motif of "city of a thousand nations, cultures and languages", *Siya Evînê* also

implicitly asserts that the Turkish nationalist political elite eradicated the Empire's legacy of

ethnic and cultural diversity and signifies this as a loss for Kurds. It represents a version of

recent history along great political "changes" transpiring in the first quarter of the last century

involving the "drawn new maps" and how this did not lead to a positive development for the

Kurds; it further details how, on the contrary, with the emergence of "new emperors", the

Kurds lost what they had in the Ottoman era.

Using nostalgia as "a type of remembrance" (Clewell 2013, p.6) focussing on a specific

historical period, *Siya Evînê* provides a "productive dialogue where the past is brought into

conversation with the present" (Clewell 2013); it enacts this "dialogue" with the Empire past

around the theme of "the Kurds and their homeland?"[123] (p.15). The nostalgia of the character

for Ottoman Istanbul is used to represent "a critical discrepancy" (Ritivoi 2002) emerging in

the transition from the Ottoman past to Republic present for Kurds. Through the character's

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[122] Sersala 1923-an. Şev. Stembol, bajarê hezar neteweyî, hezar kulturî û zimanî kêf dike. Dewr û dewran diguherin […] Qiral, keysar û împarator çûn. Bijî yên nû. Agir bi xarîtên kevn ketin, ew çûn. Yên nû li rê ne, ew tên.
[123] Kurd û welatê wan?

happy memories about the Empire's time and its multicultural space, which are then complemented with the description of Republican era as a political turbulence, the novel develops as an argument that Kurdish nostalgia for the Empire's time and space is not merely "about the past" (Boym 2001), but also that, this nostalgic remembrance is also "determined by needs of the present" (Boym 2001). And indeed, the character's nostalgia emerges not merely as a "backward-looking" search for the past, but a "forward-looking" search (Clewell 2013) for the just present, characterised as an engagement with the political and cultural critique of present-day Turkey.

However, while the novel provides a critical account of the Republican present for the Kurds through the character's nostalgic yearning for the Ottoman Istanbul, its idealization of Empire's time and space as a paradise of multiculturalism, multilingualism and religious tolerance and pluralism provides a contrast: *Siya Evînê* (re)imagines the Empire's history "in highly selective terms" (Kaljundi et al. 2015) only to suit the "present" needs of the Kurds in modern Turkey. In doing this, it implicitly overshadows the pasts of the non-Muslim ethnic subjects of the Empire, particularly of Ottoman Christian ethnic minorities who experienced the last century of the empire not as a historical stage to be yearned nostalgically, but as a tragic episode of systematic religious discrimination, forced conversion, massacre, ethnic cleansing and genocide, as detailed by Benny Morris and Dror Ze'evi's (2019) recent study, *The Thirty-Year Genocide: Turkey's Destruction of Its Christian Minorities, 1894–1924*. These absent historical references of *Siya Evînê,* as a historical novel, to the Empire's history makes a point Walder proposes in *Postcolonial Nostalgias: Writing, Representation and Memory* relevant to the utilisation of motif as a literary device and its aesthetic and cultural shortcomings in retaining the histories of others: "if there is an element of temptation,

difficult to resist, about our personal pasts when we think of looking back, this tenderness towards ourselves may easily blind us to the pasts of others" (2010, p.7).

As the examination of the political and cultural implications of nostalgia as a literary motif in this section highlights, the aesthetic of nostalgia formed by Uzun in *Siya Evînê* emerges also as a form of describing a Kurdish historical period and mood of a political generation. What this shows is that the motif of loss in the modern Kurdish novel, whether emerging as an object of melancholic grief or as an object of nostalgic remembrance and yearning for the character, always echoes a socio-political reality; what makes nostalgia, as a loss-oriented affect, useful literary device for modern Kurdish novelists is not merely its potential to mark an individual sentiment, but also its functionality in narrating the nation's hopes destroyed by the project of a modern nation-state.

3.10. Concluding Remarks

This chapter dealt with the use of melancholy as well as nostalgia motifs in Uzun's historical novel *Siya Evînê* with specific attention to the political and cultural connotations of these motifs. The discussion drew particular attention to the aesthetics of melancholy and nostalgia provided by Uzun, shedding light on two crucial literary motifs of the novel often neglected by critics and literary scholars. Through a nuanced reading of the text along the axis of melancholy and nostalgia, it attempted to reveal the potentials of Uzun's novel for the literary representation of loss-oriented subjectivities and the forms they take in an authentic socio-political reality. To this end, the discussion first offered an examination of Uzun's historical fiction and highlighted how he uses the potential of the historical novel not only for recording the history of Kurdish political struggles for a free homeland from the perspective of Kurds,

but also as a cultural means of commemoration to signify the political and cultural legacies of the Kurdish historical personages. As a distinction, it does this for very contemporary Kurdish national purposes too. Identifying memorial representations of actual Kurdish personalities in Uzun's historical novels, the discussion attempted to reframe both the cultural as well as the literary locale of Uzun's historical fiction; it highlighted points of confluence and divergence of Uzun's historical fiction with "resistance literature" as well as its formal aspects overlapping with "obituary narratives" (Fowler 2007).

With respect to the use of melancholy motif in the novel, the discussion has provided an account of representation of melancholic attachment in two different settings: first, it examined the use of melancholy motif as the intellectual's melancholic insistence upon the ideal of a free homeland and nationhood; second, it provided an examination of representation of love-melancholy as a persistent attachment to a particular individual, manifesting the irreplaceability of a lost love(r).

The discussion provided adequate evidence to show that Uzun uses melancholy motif, specifically, to represent the Kurdish desire and commitment to the ideal of a free homeland and nationhood in Turkey. The melancholic attachment in this setting is not a pathological act; instead, it bespeaks an intellectual and political "resistance" emerging as a means of preserving a collective ideal (the ideal of free homeland) in the "hard times" of the nation when the political struggles for national liberation waned in decisive defeat. The discussion has demonstrated that *Siya Evînê* represents the melancholic persistence of the Kurdish political and intellectual subject upon the ideal of a free Kurdistan as a "movement of fidelity" (Derrida 1989, p.31); it depicts the intellectual's act of bearing a collective political ideal "in himself", to use Derrida's figurative words, "like an unborn child, like a future" (1989, p.35),

representing it as a form of intellectual "resistance" that aims to transfer the legacy of nation's resistance to "new generations".

The chapter also examined the use of motif of love-melancholy by paying particular attention to the locale of love in modern Kurdish novel as well as the presentation of male and female love-melancholy. It has demonstrated that locale of love is the resistance struggle for a free homeland in modern Kurdish novel; as such, the love involves not only an intimate love affair between individuals, but also implies the political and social conditions of the nation that make happy love impossible for the lovers. The discussion has underlined that the (male) character's melancholic refusal to admit the loss of a love(r) and invest in a "new object of love" (Freud 1917) is represented not as a pathological state, but as an emotional fidelity to a naive love lost during the national struggle. In particular, the assessment of the novel also drew attention to the gendered nature of the novel's engagement with melancholia; it highlighted that in *Siya Evînê*, arguably the first astute novel focusing on melancholic love in the modern Kurdish literature, the love-melancholy is mainly represented as male love melancholia, suggesting limited ability to reflect love-melancholy also as a female and gendered experience.

The final section of the chapter dealt with a motif of nostalgia, emerging as character's nostalgic yearning for the (late) Ottoman time and Istanbul. The discussion mainly focused on the symbolic meaning of character's nostalgic yearning for the Ottoman time and Istanbul for the Kurdish community in Turkey by devoting particular attention to the political and cultural connotations enunciated with the character's nostalgia. The political implications detailed in the representation of melancholy motifs unsurprisingly emerge also in the nostalgia motif in *Siya Evînê*; the character's nostalgic yearning for Ottoman Istanbul is put to use as a critical

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motif to construct a representation of what the Kurds lost with the establishment of the Republic. The discussion further demonstrated that Uzun uses nostalgia motif methodically as a Kurdish collective yearning for a "different time" (Boym 2001) when there was political "hope" for the freedom of the homeland and when Kurds had the opportunity to live out and fulfil their ethnic and cultural identity. In this way, as another overall conclusion to this part of the discussion, the forgoing examination of the nostalgia motif has also shown that, as a historical novel, *Siya Evînê*, on the one hand, provides a "productive dialogue" between the Ottoman past and the Republican present from the perspective of Kurds, evoking the Ottoman past as a better-off time for the Kurds; but on the other hand, by idealizing the Empire's time and space as a paradise of the religious tolerance, cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity, it pays little regard to the historical experiences of non-Muslim ethnic subjects of the Empire.

Chapter Three

Loss, Melancholy and Martyrdom in İbrahim Seydo Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî*

Based on Derrida and Freud's accounts of mourning and melancholy, this chapter provides an examination of the representation of melancholy as a response to the loss of a loved one in the resistance struggle in Aydoğan's novel *Reş û Spî*. As the discussion will make clear, what makes this novel a pertinent basis for this discussion is its development as a revelation of the complexity of the work of mourning for a "martyr" whose loss brings with itself not only an inner mourning "duty" (Derrida 2001, p.95), but also a political "duty" involving the work of engagement in the legacy of the lost other. The aim is to elucidate how the motif of melancholy is utilised by the modern Kurdish novelists for representing the pain and grief of losing a loved one in the resistance struggle, whose death and loss is laden with political significations and generates a greater obligation for the bereaved survivor rather than facilitating their introspective grief work. The discussion pays particular attention to the symbolic meaning of martyrdom, its conceptualisation in the Kurdish (political) community and the reflections of this cultural and political outlook in the work of mourning performed for the death of a martyr in this setting. The examination of the motif of grief for the death of a political subject and melancholy of bereaved survivor, reflected in the novel around a motif of impossibility of engagement with the legacy of a political subject, is the focus of discussion.

Working through the pain of losing a loved one killed in the "unknown murders" of the 1990s ('faili meçhul cinayetler' as they are known in Turkish),[124] *Reş û Spî* provides a useful literary case study for understanding the emergence of new modes of representation of grief for a political subject in the modern Kurdish novel, which also presents a contrast with the early Kurdish novel in terms of the representation of the martyrdom and the grief of the survivor for the loss of a loved one in the resistance struggle and/or due to state violence. The discussion provides an examination of the use of melancholy motif in the two different settings: first, it deals with the use of melancholy motif rendered in the novel as an interminable and inconsolable grief for the loss of a loved one in the resistance struggle; second, it examines the utilisation of this motif constructed around the question of political engagement with the legacy of the lost other.

Reş û Spî's focus on the symbolic meaning of the death and loss for both the deceased and the bereaved survivor, the incommensurability between bereaved survivor's grief rituals for the martyred other and the martyr's wishes and expectations for a grieving to be performed for himself alongside the novel's specific concern with the political and cultural locale of engagement with the legacy of a Kurdish martyr, they all, make Derrida's writings on the "lost other", "mourning" and "duty" (Derrida 2001, p.95) particularly relevant. On the other hand, the novel's representation of the survivor's attempt to engage and/or inability to engage in

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[124] The term "faili meçhul cinayetler" (murders by unknown assailants) refers to "political murders that people actually know who [...] was responsible for" (Aras 2014, p.98). As Nicole F. Watts (2010) notes, "the term 'unknown assailant' murders referred specifically to deaths [...] carried out for political purposes, and to the fact that the perpetrators were almost never publicly identified or prosecuted. By far the majority of such deaths involved pro-Kurdish or left-wing victims, and it came to be widely assumed that the assailants were linked to the Turkish security forces and intelligence apparatus" (p.100).

the political legacy of the martyred other around the motif of a pathological "ego splitting" also makes Freud's (1917) account of the "ego splitting" in melancholy a useful concept for the examination of this melancholy motif.

The present chapter is organised as follows. The discussion starts with a brief account of the historical era (the 1990s) represented in the novel, a period which is described by Kurds as an 'era of unknown murders' and which has left a lasting mark in the Kurdish collective memory. Then, a brief examination of modern Kurdish novels focusing on this period is provided for two reasons: first, to demonstrate how modern Kurdish novelists, writing both in Kurdish and Turkish, deal with the legacy of the 1990s using almost the same motifs such as loss, pain, grief, fear and trauma; second, to situate Aydoğan's novel in the broad context of a common literary trend emerging in the representation of loss, pain and grief in the Kurdish novel in Turkey after 1990s. Following a plot summary of *Reş û Spî*, the discussion first provides a general analysis of Aydoğan's novel, pointing to intersections between the text and the author's life, who lost his older brother in an "unknown murder" in the 1990s; it then moves on to the main discussion of the representation of melancholy in the novel. Starting with the meaning of the terms, "martyr" and "martyrdom" in the Kurdish political and cultural setting, the examination of melancholy motif effected in the novel will focus on three points. First, it engages with a range of cultural and ethnographic studies focusing on the political and cultural meaning of "martyrdom" for the Kurdish political community (Weiss 2014; Rudi 2018) and mourning rituals of the Kurdish families of martyrs (Özsoy 2010; Aras 2014; Koefoed 2017) in Turkey. Second, it highlights how Aydoğan represents the pain of losing a loved one in the political resistance as a particular wound for their loved ones and offers "an anti-consolatory practice of ongoing mourning" (Clewell 2009, p.10), describing the "lost other"

as "unique" (Derrida 2005, p.140) and the grief for the lost other as inconsolable. The novel's representation of the grief for losing a loved one in political resistance as an individualized as well as inconsolable grief is in sharp contrast to previous forms of grief represented in the early Kurdish novel which utilises the motif of political resistance "to neutralize bereaved sadness and bring mourning to an end" (Clewell 2009, p.2) for the bereaved survivors. Third, the discussion reveals how the novel represents the political legacy of a "martyr" not as a consoling symbolic *capital*, but as an uncarriable psychic burden for the bereaved survivor living in a (political) community in the violent liberation struggle which make the work of claiming the legacy of a martyr all the more challenging for the bereaved survivor. Mediating between literary representation of grief and melancholy as well as its adaptation in the psychology of characters, and the political, social and cultural repercussions of the characters' grief rituals, the discussion illuminates both the political and social milieu of the grief and dilemmas of the relatives of Kurdish martyrs, who find themselves in a site of a double-edged loss and melancholy situation after their loss.

4.1. The 1990s: An Era Defined by "Unknown Murders", Loss and Mourning

The 1990s constitutes one of the darkest and most destructive pages in the modern history of Turkey's Kurds. It was the bloodiest episode of the armed conflict between the PKK and Turkish security forces stationed in the Kurdish regions of Turkey. It was a period when conflict was particularly intense: "The Kurdish regions were under emergency rule throughout this period and the conflict has cost the lives of more than 45,000 people, including soldiers, guerrillas and civilians" (Güneş and Zeydanlıoğlu 2014, p.1). Forced migration of Kurdish civilians and evacuation of Kurdish villages became one of the parameters characterizing this period and as noted by Adnan Çelik, "in the process of forced displacement carried out by the

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state in the early 1990s, approximately 1.5 to 3 million civilian Kurds had to leave their rural communities and migrate to urban centres" (2014, p.110, [translation my own]). Beginning in the early 1990s, "another aspect of the state's combat against PKK activities involved murdering PKK sympathisers and civilian Kurds" (Güneş 2012, p.131). As Çelik emphasised, "as a part of special war methods" against PKK activities, thousands of "unknown murders" and "enforced disappearances in detention" (2014, pp.120-21) were committed against Kurdish civilians by the state in Kurdish regions at this period. During the 1990s, many "unknown murders" were carried out against PKK sympathisers, ordinary Kurdish political activists, pro-Kurdish trade-unionists, journalists, politicians and businessmen in the Kurdish cities by the Turkish clandestine security organization, JİTEM (Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele - the Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Gendarmerie) and Kurdish Hizbullah, an Islamist group supported by the Turkish "deep state" to fight the PKK. While one aspect of these widespread unknown murders of the 1990s involved a "new type of intra-Kurdish conflict" between Hizbullah and the PKK (Çelik 2021, p.39), the other was that the Kurdish Islamist organisation Hizbullah, which had "evident ties to the state" (2021, p.39) and shared a political agenda with it in its fight against the secular Kurdish movement, "also operated as a subcontractor to the JITEM" (Kurt 2017, p.31).

The perpetrators of many of these murders committed "by the state-sponsored agents, secret groups, contra-guerrillas and paramilitary groups" (Aras 2014, p.38) were never identified and prosecuted by the Turkish authorities. The "disappearances and murders by unknown assailants became two destructive, new forms of state violence in Turkey in the 1990s" (Aras 2014, p.97). In the Kurdish cities, "the murders on the streets by known and 'unknown' perpetrators were becoming routine occurrences of everyday life. People were being dragged

in the middle of the night from their homes and taken to detention centres and were later 'disappearing'" (Aras 2014, p.99). Although the precise number of political unknown murders carried out in the 1990s in the Kurdish cities is still *unknown* and there is a discrepancy between data presented by Turkish official authorities, Kurdish political movement and human right organizations, such as İHD (*İnsan Hakları Derneği* [The Human Rights Association]) and TİHV (*Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı* [The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey]), the number of *known* "unknown murders" conducted between 1990 and 2000 reached nearly 2000 in Turkey.[125]

Documenting the traumatic impacts of unknown murders, disappearances and extrajudicial killings of the 1990s on Kurdish society, Aras (2014) notes that sufferings of the 1990s, or in his words, the "lived experiences of pain" of this era "on the social body" had a great effect on the formation of Kurdish "social memory" (p.3); it resulted in a (political) community in endless "grief" for its lost loved ones.

4.2. The Representation of the Legacy of the 1990s in Kurdish Novels

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[125] In Kurdish political and public discourse as well as a section of academic studies (e.g. Aras 2014; Kurt 2017), the estimated number of unknown murders conducted during three-decade-old armed conflict in Kurdish regions is presented as 17,000. It is unclear whether this figure refers to estimated civilian casualties or "unknown murders", "disappearances" and extrajudicial killings. Thus, I have considered the figures presented by two well-known human rights organizations based in Turkey. According to the data presented by İHD, 1964 "unknown murders" were carried out between 1989 and 1999, a period during which clashes between Turkish security forces and PKK escalated dramatically. The data from another reliable human rights organization, TİHV, suggests more or less a similar picture, showing that 1748 "unknown murders" took place between 1990 and 2000 in Turkey. TİHV data also documents that 1221 people, the majority of whom were political activists or sympathisers of the Kurdish political movement, were extrajudicially killed and that 214 were caused to disappear by JITEM, the state-sponsored paramilitary units and agents such as *korucular* (village guards), *itirafçılar* (former PKK militants) and the state-sponsored Hizbullah. The perpetrators of the majority of these systematic "disappearances" and extrajudicial killings also remain "unknown".

The reflection of the 1990s in the Kurdish novel has become a form of aesthetic dealing with the meaning of death, loss, grief, suffering and fear. The modern Kurdish novelists critically engaged with legacy of this era, constructing representations of how the Kurdish "social memory" have been shaped by the experience of loss, grief and despair during the 1990s. Alongside Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî*, a considerable number of Kurdish novels, both written in Kurdish and Turkish, have focused on the devastating effects of these political unknown murders. Their focus mediates between a realist description of the era and reflections of its legacy on the individual's psychology, often constructed around the motifs of loss, mourning, trauma, fear and anxiety.

Aras (2014) argues that the climate of social fear generated by state violence and terror in Kurdish regions was one of the main motifs defining the 1990s: "in a community shattered by state violence and terror, fear is not just inscribed in individual bodies and memories; it is inscribed in the collective forms of narrative and memory and engraved in the social body" (p.99). Suzan Samancı's 2004 Turkish-language novel *Korkunun Irmağında* (*In the River of Fear*) deals with the climate of "fear" created by state terror in the region in the 1990s, articulating the reflections of fear, state violence, death, loss and grief on the individual's psychology and the "social body". In the novel, Rodî, a painter, remarks that "art is restorative, redemptive" (p.10)[126] and asks the first-person female narrator "won't you write?" (p.10),[127] hoping that she would testify all the deaths, pain, suffering and traumas experienced in the dark years of the 1990s. The unnamed first-person narrator of the novel

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[126] Sanat onarıcıdır, kurtarıcıdır.

[127] Yazmayacak mısın?

remarks that "we had been locked in the castle of fear" (p.35)[128] in the 1990s in Diyarbakır. "The fear", she describes, "was like quicksilver" (p.42).[129] Around the stories of several Kurdish university students (e.g. Yekta, Dara, Mizgin, Kendal and the unnamed female narrator, all of whom are pro-Kurdish political activists), *Korkunun Irmağında* represents systematic state violence emerging in the forms of unknown murders, disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, sexual abuse and political oppression. The narrator remarks that "even though we don't tell each other, we could not stop ourselves from counting the dead. We too were making a list and talking about whose turn might come" (p.35).[130] Elderly women tease young girls over the shortage of men, due to widespread unknown murders, disappearances, extrajudicial killings and the fleeing of men from the city: "don't behave coquettishly in vain, you will have no husband, is there a man left?" (p.29).[131] By the allegory of "cemetery of unknown murder" (p.135),[132] Samancı not only represents the banalization of experience of loss of loved ones in the 1990s, but also describes a community in endless grief for its loved ones killed by the state-sponsored assailants: "My feet were taking me to the city cemetery, as if it were not a cemetery but a street fair. Together with the smell of vintage, the laments were going on and on. Women with bloodshot eyes were mumbling while looking away" (p.23).[133]

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[128] Korkunun kalesine kilitlenmiştik.

[129] Korku cıva gibiydi.

[130] Birbirimize söylemesek de ölüleri saymaktan geri kalmıyorduk. Biz de kendimize bir liste yapıyor, sıranın kime gelebileceğini konuşuyorduk.

[131] Boşuna kıkırtmayın, kocasız kalacaksınız, erkek mi kaldı?

[132] Faili meçhul mezarlığı.

[133] Ayaklarım beni kent mezarlığına götürüyordu. Mezarlık değil bir panayırdı sanki. Bağbozumu kokusu ile birlikte ağıtlar uzayıp gidiyordu. Gözleri kan çanağı kadınlar, uzaklara bakarak mırıldanıyorlardı.

Along the same lines, narrating the stories of relatives of disappeared political activists and victims of unknown murders, Dilawer Zeraq deals with the legacy of the 1990s in his *Loss Trilogy* (*Sêyîneya Winda*), consisting of *Şevên Winda Wêneyên Meçhûl* (*The Lost Nights Unknown Pictures*, 2005), *Mirina Bêsî* (*The Shadowless Death*, 2011) and *Nexşên Li Giyan* (*The Pictures on the Grass*, 2014). In *Şevên Winda Wêneyên Meçhûl*, we find a representation of loss and mourning as a woman's experience around the story of Seyranê, a female Kurdish activist of *Cumartesi Anneleri* (Saturday Mothers), whose both first and second husbands are detained and disappeared by Turkish security forces. In *Mirina Bêsî* (2011), Zeraq fictionalises the life of well-known Kurdish politician and human rights activist, Vedat Aydın (represented as Hogir in the novel), who was detained from his home by a Turkish contra-guerrilla unit and soon after killed in a suburb of Diyarbakır in 1991. *Mirina Bêsî* presents an image of collective mourning performed by the wider Kurdish political community for Hogir's death and loss. Resembling an "obituary narrative" (Fowler 2007) about the life and death of Vedat Aydın, Zaraq's novel attempts to inscribe a dedicated national figure into the political and collective memory of Kurds. The third volume of the *Loss Trilogy*, *Nexşên Li Giyan*, provides a literary representation of the collective mourning of Kurdish mothers, who lost their beloved sons and daughters in unknown murders or in clashes between Turkish security forces and PKK during the 1990s.

In another novel dealing with similar questions, Mehtap Ceyran's 2017 Turkish-language novel *Mevsim Yas* (*Mourning Season*), the legacy of the 1990s is not dealt merely with as a painful and sad page of the past characterised by death, loss, pain and grief, but also as a passage of trauma and traumatic haunting which descends on the "today" and the "future" of the Kurdish individual and community. For Ceyran, the 1990s is an endless *Mourning*

Season for the Kurdish community; her account of interminability of this *Mourning Season* is mediated between the individual's psychology haunted by memories of the past and the current political realities of the Kurds in Turkey, which makes it impossible to end this mourning for the losses of the 1990s.

Set in Kurdish city of Batman in the 1990s, Ceyran's novel provides a realist account of the period based on stories of psychologically wounded characters (e.g. Fesla, Taha, Medet, Zehra and Sait). The novel comprises an aesthetics of loss, mourning and trauma, bringing the reader into the dark days of the 1990s and the unhealed wounds inflicted on the Kurdish individual and community. Sait, whose son is disappeared (and killed) by Turkish paramilitary forces or Hizbullah militants in the 1990s, is still seeking to find "the bones" of his son in the middle of the 2000s in order to bury them in a marked grave so as to find some kind of consolation for his inconsolable grief. He has only one agenda in life more than a decade after the disappearance of his murdered son: to track down mass graves which are found from time to time inside and outside the city, where the disappeared pro-Kurdish political activists were supposedly buried by unknown assailants.

The lives of Fesla and her cousin Taha, who had witnessed the killing of their uncle, Medet, in an unknown murder in the early 1990s by Hizbullah militants, are turned into tragedies, not only because of the death of their uncle but also due to all the killings and traumatic events they experienced in their childhood and adulthood. In his dairy in December of 2006, Taha notes that: "every morning I wake up to yesterday" (p.79).[134] Fesla, twenty-five-years old, who writes to Zehra (and to the reader) in a 2006 dated letter, reminds that she is not writing

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[134] Her sabah düne uyanıyorum.

"her memoirs but her memory" (p.41).[135] Through the memory of her childhood, she "…remember[s] those days filled with news of deaths and suicides" (p.11).[136] In Fesla's memory, the 1990s remains as the "smell" of death: "the smell of death had permeated everywhere, the city was smelling like a corpse" (p.145).[137] She remarks that "we were in an everlasting mourning" (p.11),[138] in a never-ending *Mourning Season*. Fesla's wounded memory becomes an artistic expression of the legacy and memory of the 1990s, representing the impossibility of freeing the present and the future from the sway of the past: "The dusts of the past were not only permeating today but also tomorrow; today and tomorrow were smelling of the past" (p.121).[139]

As this examination of novels dealing with the legacy of the period highlights, navigating through the legacy of the 1990s, modern Kurdish novelists produced an oeuvre of literary narratives revolving around the motifs of state violence, pain, loss, mourning and trauma both at individual and collective levels. Their works turn into the artistic expressions of the fear, loss, mourning and trauma saturating the Kurdish political and social reality. Furthermore, in novels engaging with the legacy of 1990s, the representation of legacy of the political subjects killed in unknown political murders of the 1990s emerges, to varying degrees, as one of the main points of interest for modern Kurdish novelists. In *Mirina Bêsî*, Zeraq represents not only the grief of losing a loved one, but also attempts to highlight the political legacy of Hogir (representing Vedat Aydın), whose death and loss has left not only suffering and grief for his

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[135] Hatıralarımı değil, hafızamı yazıyorum.

[136] O günleri cinayet ve intihar haberleriyle hatırlıyorum.

[137] Ölüm her yere sinmişti, şehir ceset kokuyordu.

[138] Uzun bir yas tutuyorduk.

[139] Geçmişin tozu bugünün hatta yarının da üzerine siniyordu, geçmiş kokuyordu bugün ve yarın.

loved ones, but also an honourable political legacy appropriately claimed by both the bereaved relatives and the whole Kurdish political community. In Ceyran's *Mevsim Yas,* Medet's intellectual and political legacy and humanistic cause helpfully guides Fesla in her later life, despite the continuing deep traumatic effect of his death over his niece.

However, contrary to the accounts presented by Zeraq and Ceyran, Aydoğan pays attention to another aspect of the legacy of the political subjects killed in the resistance struggle, developing as it does as an argument that what remains of a "martyr" is, in fact, not a consoling symbolic *capital* which can relieve the bereaved survivor, but an uncarriable psychological burden haunting them like a spectre in the Kurdish political and cultural setting. As points of departure from these novels in its treatment of these motifs as well as its focus, *Reş û Spî* critically deals with the meaning of martyrdom in the Kurdish political community; the given forms of engagement with the (political) legacy of a martyr in this setting are subjected to question as are the psychological and cultural dilemmas of bereaved relatives of a martyr alongside the mood of melancholy caused by the inability of claiming and engaging in the legacy of a political agent. The novel amounts to an argument that the work of mourning for a political subject killed in the resistance struggle involves a double-edged melancholy situation for the bereaved survivor. On the one hand, it connotes an inconsolable grief for losing a loved one; on the other, it turns into the bereaved survivor's melancholic torment of not being able to claim the legacy of the lost other. *Reş û Spî*'s engagement with this double-edged melancholy situation in the work of mourning for a political subject renders it an exemplary text in Kurdish literature, reflecting the psychological and cultural complexity of grief for a political subject.

4.3. Plot Summary

Reş û Spî centres around the story of a Kurdish family who lose one of their sons, Seydo, in an unknown murder in Diyarbakır in early 1990s; the family then migrates to İstanbul in the wake of this event. Seydo is "a well-known martyr" (p.137) in the homeland. Robîn, the younger brother of Seydo, finds himself burdened with a moral obligation after the death of his brother: to engage with his martyred brother's political legacy. He decides to join the Kurdish (armed) struggle soon after the killing of his brother; however, as he prepares himself to join to the armed struggle, his father Resûl Beg falls sick, "so, Robîn was compelled to change his decision and remained in the city" (p.158).[140]

Feeling that he has failed to engage with the political legacy of his martyred brother, he lives in İstanbul in a melancholic torment, often escaping from the real world into the refuge of an imaginary world and constantly thinking of returning to the homeland. The narrator quotes Lord Byron's well-known lines, "I stood among them, but not of them" (p.105),[141] to describe Robîn's psychological estrangement from the social world in İstanbul. Robîn describes his own life as an absent life due to the grief he experiences after the loss of his brother: "I am not living in this world. Yes, I am in this world, yes, my body is here and yes everyone thinks that I live like them; however, I have no association with the life of this world" (p.105).[142] Eight years after death of his brother, one day, he has a dream about Seydo. The deceased brother complains about his "loneliness" in the afterlife and desperately asks his younger brother to "visit" him in the homeland. After the call of his brother in the dream, his life turns into a

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[140] Robîn jî mecbûrî biryara xwe guhertibû û li bajêr mabû.

[141] Ez di nav wan de me, lê ez ne ji wan im.

[142] Ez li vê dinyayê najîm. Erê, ez li vê dinyayê me, erê bedena min li vira ye û erê herkes dibêje qey ez jî wek wan dijîm; lê dîsa jî tu têkîliyen min bi jiyana vê dinyayê re tune ye.

"nightmare". Robîn, who has devoted himself to poetry and literary activities in Istanbul, finds himself in a state of limbo between "returning" to the homeland to engage with the political legacy of his brother and "staying" in İstanbul, "forgetting" everything about political events in the homeland.

Meanwhile, he meets a Turkish girl, Gülcan, and they fall in love. However, Seydo's call begins to haunt this love relationship and does not allow Robîn to make a new start and leave behind the grief of loss. Vacillating between the call of his brother and the promise of his new lover, Robîn finally decides to return to Diyarbakır, hoping to find "a remedy" for his psychological sufferings. Spending several days in Diyarbakır, he realises that living in the homeland is impossible, as the homeland has turned into a dystopic realm where pro-Kurdish political activists and ordinary people have been killed in "unknown murders" or systematically "disappeared" by state-sponsored paramilitary groups. During his visit, Robîn himself is unlawfully detained and ordered to leave Diyarbakır by the Turkish secret police. Confronting the reality that engaging in the political legacy of his brother is a difficult and risky plight, he comes to the verge of suicide. At the end of the story, Gülcan and Robîn's family members find him on the bastions of Diyarbakir Fortress, where he first seeks refuge upon arriving in Diyarbakır. The story ends with a scene conveying the main character's decision to make a new start in life; Robîn decides to return to Istanbul with Gülcan to do this instead of participating in the political struggle in the homeland.

The formal structure of the novel should be particularly noted. Robîn's dreams, nightmares, hallucinations and fantasies comprise the bulk of the narrative and emerge as an integral part of real events. The formal structure of the novel is fashioned as an aesthetic form of the character's melancholic torment about the political legacy of his brother; it emerges as a

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reflection of the character's inner world. As the narrator remarks, "none of Robîn's dreams and nightmares had emerged purposelessly. After each of them, somehow, something was evolving" (p.127)[143] in the story. The domain of dreams and nightmares emerges not only as a space where the dialogues between Robîn and his dead brother is taking place but also as the only place where some characters make an appearance. Together with real characters (e.g., Gülcan, Nûşîn, Resûl Beg and Leyla Xanim), *Reş û Spî* consists also of several imaginary characters, such as Bişar and the Old Man, who are the products of Robîn's fantasies, emerging only in the unconscious domain. Bişar appears as the other personality of Robîn, in one respect, as one of his alter-egos, representing his tendency and desire to engage with the political legacy of his martyred brother. The rapid transitions from the domain of consciousness to unconscious (the daydreams and nightmares) in the novel makes it difficult for the reader to identify whether some of the scenes described in the novel are real or products of Robîn's fantasies. The border between reality and daydreams or nightmares is often blurred. Because, for Robîn, "the nightmare is another life" (p.39).[144] His nightmares and dreams are represented both as his fears of the state-sponsored violence (e.g., fear of being killed like his brother) as well as his melancholic dilemma about engaging in the political legacy of the martyred brother.

4.4. To Mourn the Loss of Dead Other with the Literary Work

İbrahim Seydo Aydoğan has published only two novels so far: *Reş û Spî* (1999) and *Leyla Fîgaro* (2003). *Reş û Spî* is one of the first novels providing an account of the personalised form of

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[143] Tu xewnên wî an jî kabûsên wî belasebeb nehatibûn pêşiya wî. Di pey her yekê re, bivê nevê tiştek derdiket.

[144] Kabûs jiyanake din e.

grief for a "martyr" in Kurdish literature. It also includes some reflections from the author's own experience of the grief of loss, who lost his elder brother, Seydo Aydoğan, a pro-Kurdish teacher and member of Eğitim-Sen – the Education and Science Workers' Union, in an unknown murder by state-sponsored assailants in the Kurdish town of Kızıltepe in 1992. After the murder of his brother, İbrahim Aydoğan not only "took the name" of his brother, "who taught [him how] to read and write in Kurdish" (Aydoğan 2014, p.5 [translation my own]), as a second name for making "the other a *part* of [himself]" (Derrida 1989, p.35), but also gave the same name to one of the central characters in his first novel. This character, Seydo, is represented as a pro-Kurdish political activist killed in an unknown murder in Diyarbakır in the early 1990s. While all events and characters are entirely fictional in *Reş û Spî*, Seydo's name and the circumstances of his murder (in an unknown murder) demonstrates that Aydoğan's novel is not just a fictional work dealing with the pain of losing a loved one in the resistance struggle, but it, also, is a literary means of an actual mourning performed by the author himself, through an artistic work. In this regard, the novel, which features salient elements from the author's own life, can also be read as a mourning form "to allow [the lost other] to speak" (Derrida 2001). It can be considered as an aesthetic form of grief aiming the lost other's "voice be heard" (Derrida 2005, p.141) as well as an aesthetic of dealing with the grief of loss. Utilising the aesthetic form as a means of signifying the lost other and his legacy and coping with the grief of loss, Aydoğan points at the possibilities of creative and intellectual ways, outside radical political engagement, for keeping the memory of a "martyr" alive.

4.5. The Representation of Martyrdom and Mourning for a Martyr

The issue of martyrdom and the political legacy of a martyr is at the centre of Aydoğan's novel. *Reş û Spî*'s description of Seydo's death highlights both the symbolic meaning of martyrdom

and the politics of grief constructed by the Kurdish political community around this notion in the last four decades in Turkey. It asserts that the political and cultural treatment of martyrdom in the Kurdish cultural setting involves the politics of memory and national identity; in this setting, the martyr is an object of public mourning and he or she is declared as an immortal figure for the nation:

> Seydo was murdered eight years ago, and he was a well-known martyr. Everyone knew his name in Diyarbakır. When he was killed, most shops were closed for him for a week [to protest his killing]. A great demonstration had taken place. Even those who did not know him had enlarged his photo and hanged it on the walls in their houses. Many songs and stories were told to his memory. People had named their children after him (p.137).[145]

The term martyrdom is attributed to "those who sacrifice themselves or have been victims for a cause" (Fields 2004, p.xvii). Rona M. Fields (2004) argues that "whether any individual or group is ascribed martyrdom has been the function of the politics of memory. Contemporaneous ascription of martyrdom implies deliberation and determination of act" (p.xviii). Focusing on the links between "martyrdom and politics", the cultural studies show that "the figure of martyr is revealed as particularly useful to maintain national identity" (Fields 2004, p.xxii). Examining the use of the motif of martyrdom in the Kurdish community, Nerina Weiss (2014) argues that "as the highest and purest sacrifice, martyrdom has been

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[145] Seydo heyşt sal berê hatibû kuştin û şehîdekî bi nav û deng bû. Li Diyarbekirê herkesî navê wî dizanîbû. Gava ko hatibû kuştin, ji bo wî, hefteyekê dikan giş hatibûn girtin. Meşeke mezin çêbûbû. Yên ko ew nas nedikir jî wêneyê wî mezin kiribû û li malên xwe daliqandibû. Li ser wî gelek stran û çîrok hatibûn gotin. Xelkê navê wî li zarokên xwe kiribû.

highly valorised as a political strategy in a number of liberation struggles […] The concept of martyrdom and heroism have also been used […] throughout the Kurdish revolts and liberations struggles" (p.171). Weiss (2014) correctly notes that, in the Kurdish (political) community in Turkey, the term *şehit* (martyr) has been used for defining not only those who have offered their lives for the cause of the nation in the armed resistance, but also those who have died at the hands of the Turkish state and state-sponsored paramilitary groups due to their political affiliations or peaceful political activities. Complementing this argument in his examination of the political instrumentalization of the Newroz and martyrdom motifs by the PKK, Axel Rudi highlights another aspect of the notion of martyrdom in Kurdish socio-political setting in Turkey, arguing that "death and martyrdom may in fact contribute to radical social transformation and change, when considered outside of the ritual context, rather than only as structural maintenance" (2018, p.94). Rudi further suggests that "through controlling the transformative functions of death, the PKK never permits the dead to die" (p.95); the martyrs are "re-animated as a moral […] force" (p.107) in its political struggle, emphasising that "death is conceived of in relation to life has borne revolutionary and transformative connotations in this context" (p.110). On the other hand, Minoo Koefoed (2017) draws attention to the intersections "between emotions and resistance in the particular context of martyrdom" (p.186) in Kurdish socio-cultural setting. Based on an ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Kurdish region in Turkey, Koefoed's survey reveals also how the Kurdish community turns the work of mourning for their martyrs into a site of "emotional resistance" (p.186) manifesting itself in an affective form of refusing to publicly reveal their pain and grief for their martyred loved ones. Describing this "emotional management" by the bereaved families as a "*hidden emotional resistance*" to the "power of

the Turkish State" (p.196), Koefoed highlights the multifaceted meaning of the martyrdom in Kurdish setting: "the martyrs embody both victimhood and agency, and reaffirm a dual Kurdish identity or self-image of being both victims as well as resisters. In this way, they presently play an important role in the Kurdish resistance struggle despite being physically absent. The political symbolism of the martyrs is therefore paradoxical, partly contradictory, and, loaded with meaning […] The martyrs thus become a political intermediary between injustice and victimhood on the one hand – and resistance and hope on the other" (2017, p.192).

Hişyar Özsoy's ethnographic survey, *Between Gift and Taboo: Death and the Negotiation of National Identity and Sovereignty in the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey* (2010), provides a more nuanced account of the question, contending that "Kurds resurrect their dead through a moral and symbolic economy of martyrdom as highly affective forces that powerfully shape public, political and daily life, promoting Kurdish national identity and struggle as a sacred communion of the dead and the living" (p.1). This study also highlights the psychological and socio-political implications of the state policy over the Kurdish dead bodies "in order to prevent their symbolic construction as martyrs and assimilation into the regenerative realms of Kurdish national-symbolic" (p.1), which includes a set of the practices such as refusing to deliver the dead bodies to their families for burial, "secret interments, burials in unmarked mass-graves, banning funerals [and] punishing funeral participants" (p.2). Considering the notion of martyrdom "as a central symbolic and semantic field constitutive to [Kurdish] national identity" (p.ix), Özsoy's survey affords not only a critical account of the "politico-symbolic deployments of death" by the Kurdish political movement, but also draws attention to the psychological effects of these struggles over the dead bodies for the bereaved families

of Kurdish martyrs who were deprived of their final obligation ("a proper burial") to their dead, therefore, living with an unsettled "debt" to them. His study pays particular attention to the incommensurability of loss and mourning for those Kurdish families, whose losses are not recognised as "a genuine loss" (Özsoy 2010, p.27) and not "qualified as grievable" (Butler 2006, p.32) by the state and the wider Turkish "public discourse" (Butler 1999). On this basis, it highlights the perpetual melancholy of the Kurdish families living in a never-ending grief for not being able "to shroud" their loves ones with their "'own hands' as an attempt to bring a symbolic closure" (2010, p.27). With this distinct attention, Özsoy's work reveals an important aspect of the question of the symbolic reconstruction of dead political bodies that has not been sufficiently addressed by the scholarship; it offers an authentic picture of the bereaved subjectivities of families of Kurdish martyrs whose losses and grief are "squeezed into limit zones of dominant politico-discursive formations" (p.203) in the Kurdish setting in Turkey.

Aras' (2014) study, which also contains useful fieldwork interviews conducted with the families of martyrs, provides yet another convincing analysis of the meaning, significance and functionality of the martyrdom in Kurdish socio-political and cultural setting, by paying particular attention to "consoling" aspect of the notion of martyrdom in the work of mourning for the bereaved survivors. Importantly, Aras observes that, in the Kurdish setting, the families of martyrs tend to narrate their individual sufferings "through a general form of discourse about political conditions and war [in the homeland], using a collective language instead of narrating [their] own [stories] with [their] own words" (2014, p.104). They often integrate their subjective experiences of pain of loss and grief "into a discourse of a 'suffering nation'" (Aras 2014, p.111). The "shared domain of Kurdishness", reconstructed on the sense

of a "suffering nation", helps those families of the victims of state violence to come to terms with the pain of loss of their loved ones:

> The shared experiences of pain, loss and mourning homogenize a community that has a communal fate. The collectively shared experiences and memories connect the survivors and families of the murdered, disappeared, humiliated, tortured political and ordinary subjects around the same destiny (Aras 2014, p.146).

The martyrdom of the lost loved one provides a psychological means for the bereaved relatives of martyrs "to alleviate their burden of pain and trauma" (Aras 2014, p.193). By sublimating the loss of their loved ones into "a grand narrative of public loss" (Aras 2014, p.114), they find not only a consolation in the "good deaths" of their loved ones, but also an honourable legacy worth preserving in the martyrdom of the deceased "who sacrificed himself for his people, for his homeland" (Aras 2014, p.143).

Although in *Reş û Spî* the public grief for martyred subject (Seydo) functions on the same cultural framework in which the death of lost other is situated within the wider context of a "suffering nation", the novel provides a challenge to the convention with the idea that martyrdom of the lost other may provide a site of consolation for the bereaved survivors. The novel asserts the ineptitude of the political mourning rituals in alleviating the grief of "those left behind". For Aydoğan, the death of the martyred other bespeaks merely a "disaster" for their loved ones; neither the symbolic meaning of martyrdom is able "relieve" the pain of death (Aras 2014), nor can a "hidden emotional resistance" help cope with the grief of death and loss (Koefoed 2017). The fifth sub-section of the novel, entitled "everything started with

a murder" (p.22),[146] begins with a quotation from the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus: "death is not a disaster for the one who dies but for those left behind" (p.22).[147] The "disaster" of losing a loved one is depicted through the motif of an interminable and inconsolable grief for the bereaved survivors whose lives turn into a passage of mourning, suffering and despair after the loss. It is evidenced in two settings in the characters' lives: first, it is represented through a motif of inconsolable grief of the bereaved survivors for loss of a loved one, which is predominantly represented by the mourning of Seydo's parents; second, it unfolds through a motif of melancholic torment of the younger brother, who mourns not only for the loss of his brother, but is also at odds with his political legacy with which he is unable to engage. The implication of the bereaved survivor's inability to create some form of engagement with the legacy of a martyred subject is the emergence of another loss in loss itself, thus, another layer of grief in grief. As this necessitates, the following discussion will first examine the motif of grief for the loss of a loved one and then the motif of melancholy effected around the political legacy of a "martyr".

Seydo's family settle in İstanbul soon after the death of their son in order to save the lives of their other children, whom they believe may share the "fate" of former. Their life becomes overwhelmed by the grief of loss. They have few friends, the majority of whom "were those who were forced to abandon the homeland like them" (p.16).[148] Seydo's father, Resûl Beg, who was "a husky and imposing looking man", falls weak and loses his vigour after the death of his son. As depicted, "Resûl Beg, who has had many great difficulties in life, has never been

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[146] Hertiştî bi kuştinekê dest pê kir.

[147] Mirin ne ji bo yê ko miriye, ji bo yên ko li dû mane felaket e.

[148] Piranî ew kes bûn ko mina wan mecbûr mabûn ji welêt derkevin.

so helpless; he used to lean his back against the wall, bow his head, and cry secretly for his helplessness over the death of his son and his grief" (p.40).[149] With the death of Seydo, Resûl Beg losses "interest in the outside world" (Freud 1917, p.244): "He would sit down with no one as though he had offended the whole world after the death of his son" (p.40).[150] He lives merely with the grief for the loss of his son and memories of the past:

> Were it not for the [tape] cassettes of traditional Kurdish bards songs Resûl Beg was listening to, he would probably have been devastated by the suffering and died [in Istanbul]. Those traditional songs he was listening to reminded him of his scattered homeland, his land to which he could not return and take refuge with his children, his deceased [loved ones] and the memories of his childhood and youth which was spent in the Diyarbakir plain and in the historical streets of the city (p.45).[151]

Similarly, Seydo's mother, Leyla Xanim, losses her will to live after the death of her son. By the side of the dead body of her son, the initial reaction of Leyla Xanim to the death of Seydo was a feeling of rage and revenge; she had called her younger sons, Robîn and Mitani: "you have to burn this city [..] You have to take Seydo's revenge […] Otherwise I will not give you a

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[149] Resûl Begê ko gelek caran tengasî kişandibû, lê tû carî weha belengaz nebûbû, dê pişta xwe bidaya dîwarekî, serê xwe bera ber xwe bidaya û digel neçariya xwe ya li hember kuştina Seydo û kerba xwe, bi dizî bigiriya.

[150] Piştî kuştina lawê xwe, weke ko ji hemû dinyayê xeyidîbe, li cem tu kesî rûnedinişt.

[151] Ne ev kasetên kilamên dengbêjan jî bûna, Resûl Beg belkî dê ji qehran biheliya û bimira. Ew kilam û stranên ko wî lê guhdarî dikir, welatê wî yê jihevbelavbûyî, warê wî yê koniha nikare tevî zarokên xwe vegerê û tê de bistire; miriyên wî, bîraninên wî yên zaroktî û xortaniyê ko li deşta Diyarbekirê û kolanên bajêr ên dirokî derbas bûbûn, dianîn bîra wî.

blessing. If Seydo is dead, you too die!" (p.27).[152] But after she gets through the initial shock

of pain of losing her son in an unknown murder, Leyla Xanim suppresses her anger and pain

and ceases to say anything further in front of her children either about "revenge" or the death

of her son. For the sake of her other sons, she expresses her anger, pain and grief through a

silence. She is a skilful storyteller and used to tell fascinating folk stories to her children before

the death of her son. After the loss of her son, she never recites those charming stories again.

By refusing to tell stories and sinking into silence over the loss of her son, Leyla Xanim

manifests her interminable and inconsolable grief.

Likewise, Seydo's younger brother, Robîn, is unable to cope with the death and loss of his

brother and move forward. After emigrating to İstanbul with his family, Robîn starts university

and dedicates himself to literary activities instead of getting involved in Kurdish political

activities. He writes poems in Kurdish and publishes in literary magazines. The narrator

describes: "Robîn resembled Seydo. When Leyla Xanim looked at him, she remembered

Seydo. He too was interested in reading and writing in Kurdish like Seydo […] Leyla Xanim

sometimes […] worried that Robîn's fate too might be like Seydo's (pp.122-123).[153] In Istanbul,

he lives "like a shadow, like a spectre" (p.109).[154] "What happened to us?", he asks himself

and the reader, and then provides a poignant description of the political and psychological

reasons behind his grief and despair:

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[152] Divê hûn agir bi vî bajarî bixin […] Divê hûn heyfa Seydo hilînin! […] yan na ez şîrê li we helal nakim. Hema Seydo miriye, hûn jî bimrin!

[153] Robîn dişibiya Seydo […] Her gava ko li wî diniherî, Seydo dihat bîra wê. Ev jî mîna wî bi xwendinê mijûl dibû û bi kurdî dinivîsand. Carinan […] ditirsiya ko kedera Robîn jî bişibe ya Seydo.

[154] Wek siyekê, wek xeyalekê.

The fire engulfed a homeland […] A page of exile [opened]. A cataclysm of fear […]

A flood. A red flood. A flood which turned the heart into a grave […] Two eyes

[Seydo's eyes] which left me in a great yearning, stared at the world for the last

time […] The wounded hearts found themselves in the darkness of the hard-

hearted foreign land (pp.109–110).[155]

For Robîn, losing a loved one turns "the heart into a grave". He experiences the loss as a

passage of emotional and psychological stuckness: "As if I am stuck between two walls, as if I

am stuck in the bottom of a deep well… I am surrounded by darkness. I raise my head to look

at the sky, but the sky is out of sight" (p.105).[156] He mentions how he has lost his will to live

after the death of his brother: "Now, I have become like a corpse. Nothing is left in me"

(p.107).[157] He pities himself because of his "loss of capacity to adopt any new object of love"

(Freud 1917, p.244) and rebuild his life after loss: "when I see myself, I pity myself" (p.106).[158]

In 'Post-apartheid literature as rite of mourning' (2013), Paulina Grzeda provides "some

illuminating congruencies in the way Zakes Mda and J.M. Coetzee engage with legacies of

South Africa's violent past in their effort to reclaim space for expression of personal grief"

(p.31), arguing that these two novelists' works "reclaim space for expression of personal grief,

usurped by apartheid literature and later also the TRC narratives" (p.33). Mda and Coetzee's

works, Grzeda (2013) argues, offer "alternative ways of working through loss and traumatic

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[155] Agir bi warekî ket […] Pêleke koçberiyê… Tofaneke tirsê […] Lehîyek. Lehîyeke sor. Lehîyeke ko dil kirin gor […] du çavên ez bi hesreta xwe hiştim, cara talî li dinyaya gewrik niherî […] dilên peritî xwe li tariya biyanistana bêbext girt.

[156] Mîna ko di nava du dîwaran de asê bûbim, mîna ko di binê bîreke kûrde mabim… Hawîrdor reş û tarî. Serê xwe radikim ko li ezmanan binerim, lê ezman xuya nabin.

[157] Aniha ez bûme wek miriyekî. Tiştek di min de nemaye.

[158] Gava ez li xwe dinerim, dilê min bi min dişewite.

events of the past" (p.33); they deal with the losses of South Africa's violent past beyond "the collective history of heroism and martyrdom" (p.30) and "outside of the instrumentalising context of the resistance struggle" (p.29). In a similar vein, Clewell (2009) argues that the modern novel has played a critical role "in forging an anti-consolatory practice of ongoing mourning" (Clewell 2009, p.10) for the "wartime deaths" in the opening decades of the twentieth century.

With its "rejection of consolation and closure" (Clewell 2009, p.15) of grief for the death of a martyr, *Reş û Spî* asserts that the death of a political subject in resistance struggle means an interminable grief for "those left behind". It deals with the grief of the death of a political subject beyond the political and cultural instrumentalization of martyrdom. In doing this, the novel attempts "to reclaim space for expression of personal grief" (Grzeda 2013, p.31) usurped by the political and cultural discourses of the martyrdom in the Kurdish socio-political setting. It attempts to offer a new language for descriptions of the pain of losing a loved one in the resistance struggle.

Indeed, Aydoğan's novel not only offers a more authentic mode of grieving for a lost loved one, but also reveals the psychological anxiety and dilemma in which the bereaved survivor finds himself after the loss of a "martyr"; it deals with issues of martyrdom, the political legacy of a martyr, and the cultural and psychological dynamics that shape the mourning practises of the relatives of martyrs in the Kurdish cultural setting in a palpably more realist fashion. The story of the younger brother in the novel, which forms the main focus of the novel, is also the narrative of the life experiences of several generations of youth who have grown up in this political and cultural milieu in the last four decades in Turkey. The younger brother's melancholic subjectivity is embodied by Aydoğan as a form of Kurdish youth subjectivity

which Leyla Neyzi and Haydar Darıcı (2015) describe as an aspect of the subjectivity of a "generation in debt", who feel themselves indebted to those sacrificing themselves for the sake of Kurdish political ideals.

Neyzi and Darıcı (2015) argue that Kurdish young people who "identify themselves with Kurdishness are burdened with this historical debt, through which they are expected to build their morality" (p.67). Based on the ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Diyarbakır, their survey examining the family, politics and Kurdish youth subjectivities, provides a nuanced account of "the political subjectivities of Kurdish youth [...] through the interplay of kinship and politics" (p.55). Based on their findings, they propose that "today's Kurdish youth constitute a generation in debt" (p.74) to "a lost generation" sacrificing themselves for the Kurdish political ideals during 1980s and 1990s.[159] Although their survey does not specifically focus on the relation in between the notion of "*Bedel*, through which [young] people make sense of politics and familial relations" (2015, p.67), and how this sense of "indebtedness" could influence and shape the work of mourning for the martyred relatives, its findings

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[159] Neyzi and Darıcı's 'Generation in debt: Family, politics, and youth subjectivities in Diyarbakır' (2015), is one of the rare studies providing useful insights into the political Kurdish youth subjectivity in Turkey. Their ethnographic work reveals that Kurdish youths "feel indebted to those who sacrificed themselves for the emancipation of the Kurds", arguing that theme of "indebtedness" in Kurdish youth narratives is often "framed around the notion of *bedel*" (2015, p.56), the term used to mean 'paying the price' for the Kurdish cause. Paying particular attention to the effects of loss of a loved one in resistance in the politicization of the young members of Kurdish families, their study expose a connection in between intimate experiences and political mobilization in the Kurdish youth setting, developing an argument that in Kurdish setting, "the family is inseparable from politics because both the victimhood that stems from state violence and resistance to the state are experienced in the familial realm [...] Kinship, then, becomes about absence as much as presence, as it is the loss of family members that makes individuals belong to the family" (2015, p.58). Their survey also reveals that "Bedel" is a critical motif for understanding the Kurdish youth political subjectivity; in this particular setting, the term refers both to "obligation and loss, to what the Kurdish community sacrificed, particularly in the late 1980s and early 1990s" (p.67).

provide a substantial basis for highlighting one of the immanent motifs in the work of mourning experienced by the Kurdish youths in relation to the deceased other.

In *Reş û Spî*, the story of the younger brother is set as a narrative of youth political subjectivity in a crisis of self for being unable to fulfil his moral obligation towards the dead other. As the experience of the novel's protagonist, it forms a literary account of the political youth subjectivity experiencing the loss of a loved one in resistance in two respects: first, not only as introspective passive grief, but also as the dilemma of political mourning "duty" requiring some form of active involvement in the ongoing resistance struggle, and second, as the fragile shapes that this subjectivity takes in a political setting shaped by armed political conflict and harsh colonial oppression and violence. Involving these two aspects of the question, *Reş û Spî* reveals the tension between the work of mourning and the notion of political responsibility towards the lost other along the axis of youth and adolescence subjectivity. For instance, feeling that he has failed to claim the political legacy of his martyred brother, Robîn experiences the loss of his brother not only as an inconsolable grief, but also as a melancholic torment in which he constantly questions his life and self. His life in Istanbul revolves around a set of moral questions about the notion of mourning for a martyr: what is "the best sign of fidelity" (Derrida 2001, p.36) to a martyred brother for a young man? Is it "interioriz[ing] within us the image" of the lost other (Derrida 1989) or is it claiming the political legacy of the other? How can one mark one's fidelity to "a well-known martyr" and their legacy, which gains its basic meaning in a political resistance, without involving political resistance? This is also one of the distinct aspects which distinguishes this novel from those dealing with similar questions as a thoroughgoing effort to respond to them, and which enables the reader to be immersed in its subject matter.

4.5. The Locale of the Legacy of a Martyr in the Kurdish Political Community

This section of the discussion deals with a melancholy motif set around the issue of legacy of a martyr in the light of Derrida's consideration of mourning as a "duty" of carrying "the image" and "memories" of the lost other and as an act of keeping alive "*the* world that has disappeared" (Derrida 2005, p.140) with the loss of the other. Derrida argues that "there is no longer any world, it's the end of the world, for the other at his death. And so, I welcome in me this end of the world, I must carry the other and *his* world" (2005, p.160). For Derrida, "the movement of interiorization keeps within us the life, thought, body, voice, look or soul of the other" (1989, p.37). Derrida's mourning model at once manifests "the necessity of speaking not simply of the dead, of the 'dead themselves,' but of their works, their deeds, or their signature" (Brault & Nass 2001, p.20). In this model of mourning, the grief also comprises a "duty" to let the lost other "speak" (Derrida 2001). As noted by Joan Kirkby (2006), "a continuing engagement with the legacy of the dead" (p.461) marks one of the main features of Derrida's mourning theory.

As demonstrated in the examination of the grief of Seydo's parents, while Resûl Beg and Leyla Xanim's grief for their dead son is represented as interminable and inconsolable, this is not depicted as a pathological labour, but as a non-pathological grief for the loss of a dead son, which spans over time yet is psychologically endurable. Their pain of losing a loved one is always fresh; but their motivation of protecting their other children from the state violence turns their grief for a martyr into a form of silence and fortitude. However, for the younger brother, who is delegated to undertake the present and ongoing work of mourning as the novel's main character, the grief for the dead brother takes a pathological form because the haunting of his brother's martyrdom and political legacy is a distinct aspect of his grief.

The symbology of his dreams about the dead brother suggests that his self is not only overwhelmed by the grief of loss of a loved one but is also haunted by the political legacy of a martyr who feels "alone" at his own death as his legacy remains unclaimed in the homeland. Aydoğan utilizes a form of prosopopoeia to embody this double-layered melancholic subjectivity; the deceased is given a voice to talk about both the meaning of death in general as well as the specific meaning of his own death. The term prosopopoeia is described by Paul de Man as "the fiction of voice-from-beyond-the-grave" (1984, p.77). In his literary theory, it indicates "the fiction of an apostrophe to an absent, deceased or voiceless entity, which posits the possibility of the latter's reply and confers upon it the power of speech" (1984, pp.75-6). Taking de Man's account as basis, Kenneth Gross describes prosopopoeia as the "hallucinatory figure by which poets lend a voice, face, or apparent subjectivity to things in themselves inanimate, absent, or lost – the wind, a dead child, a past self, an ideal of liberty" (1992, p.149). On the other hand, Gana (2011) draws attention to the relationship between prosopopoeia and mourning, arguing that "the narrative plot or dialectic of prosopopoeia can be aligned with Freud's theory of mourning as a piecemeal process of remembering and severing the ties with the dead" (p.14). Following de Man's account further, Gana contends that prosopopoeia as the figure of personification "can be seen as the master trope of narrative mourning" (2011, p.30).

Two literary concerns come to the fore in Aydoğan's utilization of this hallucinatory figure: first, to articulate the deceased's uneasiness about his (political) legacy and the dilemmas of the survivor with respect to this legacy; second, to highlight the interminability of the work of mourning for the survivor through a motif of the survivor's continuing dialogue with the dead.

In a dream eight years after death of his brother, when Robîn asks Seydo about his "life" in the afterlife, Seydo complains about his "loneliness":

I crave a human voice, Robîn […] I am so lonely [...]. Robîn asked him: 'You do not have any friends here? For example, those who were killed like you?' […] Seydo thought a little. 'I sometimes hear the sound of some people. At that moment I excitedly get up and look at the surroundings, but […] no one comes' (p.21).[160]

Then, Seydo asks his younger brother in a condemnatory tone: "why don't you visit me sometimes?" (p.21).[161] Surprised and feeling guilty at this unexpected question,

Robîn did not answer […] They both remained silent for a while. Robîn was staring at him from under his eyelashes. The place of that terrible bullet was not visible. He raised his head and looked at [Seydo's] forehead. He looked at the mark of the fatal bullet. It had to be the trace of that wound above his right eye. Because on that black day, on that black day which had dragged a city into mourning, that deadly bullet had entered the nape of the neck and he had collapsed there. But now the line that the bullet followed had closed (p.21).[162]

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[160] Ez bi hesreta dengê însanekî me Robîn […] Ez pir bi tenê me… Robîn […] jê pirsî: - Ma qey tu havalên te li vira tune ye? […] - Mesela, yên ko mina te hatibin kuştin… Seydo bêhnekê fikiri […] – Carinan dengê hin kesan tê min. Wê gavê, ez bi heyecan radibim û li dora xwe digerim […] Lê tu kes nayên.

[161] Çima tu carninan bi ser min de nayî?

[162] Robîn bersiv nedayê […] Herdu jî bîstikekê bê deng sekinîn. Robîn di bin mijangên xwe re ziq li wî diniherî. Şûna mîrata guleyê nexuya bû. Serê xwe rakir û bala xwe da eniya wî. Li şûna guleya mirinê geriye. Divê li ser çavê wî yê rastê dewsa derbê hebûya. Ji ber ko wê roja reş, wê roja ko bajarek di şînê de vegevizandibû, guleya xezebê ji xafil de li paş stuyê wî ketibû û di wira re derketibû. Lê a niha, dewsa wê hatibû girtin.

Robîn's dream ends with Seydo's call, inviting him to the homeland: "Robîn! Somehow, find a way and come [to homeland]. Do not leave me alone" (p.22).[163] The younger brother is alerted by the wishes of the dead brother who expects his younger brother to "find a way" to return to the homeland. With this particular embodiment of the lost other, Aydoğan's novel seems to propose that a martyr expects more from his relatives than an introspective passive grief. This expectation by the martyr, which remains ambiguous throughout the novel, is represented as "an impossible object of grief" (Butler 1999, p.171) for the bereaved character; the implication of this "ungrievability" (Butler 1999, p.170) is a constant hauntological return of the dead brother into the life of the younger brother through dreams and nightmares. Drawing attention to this aspect of engagement with the legacy of a lost loved one, the novel implicitly asserts that "an ungrievable loss" (Butler 1999, p.170) is destructive for the bereaved survivor: "Robîn was drifting into destruction step by step" (p.115).[164] And as noted by commentary, it looms as "a state of limbo, during which grief lurks somewhere like the Sword of Damocles" (Berezin 1977, p.27). Finding himself with an ambiguous duty, Robîn takes pity on his own desperate situation:

[In the morning] He looked at himself in the mirror. His hair ruffled all over. He carefully looked at that person who appeared in the mirror as though he was not looking at himself but a stranger [...] He thought about himself crying and his own psychology about the killing of his brother [...] He pitied himself (p.27).[165]

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[163] Robîn! Tu çi dikî, bikî û were. Min bi tenê nehêle.

[164] Hêdî hêdî ber bi têkçûyinê ve diçû.

[165] Di neynikê re li xwe niherî. Porê wî tev li hev bûbû. Weke ko ne li xwe binere, lê li yekî xerîb binere, bala xwe baş da wî kesê di neynikê de [...] Giriyê wî û psîkolojiya wî ya kuştina birayê wî, anî ber çavên xwe [...] Dilê xwe bi xwe şewitand.

By allowing the dead other to "speak" about both the meaning of being dead as a "martyr" and to enunciate his wishes that the grief for his loss should also include some form of engagement with his legacy, *Reş û Spî* provides a critical account of the psychological and cultural locale of the mourning for a martyr in Kurdish (political) community. In this way, it constructs a convincing and immersive representation of how this society has built a culture of mourning on the notion of martyrdom and resistance in the last four decades.

The implications of the figurative dialogue between the mourner and the dead other are twofold. The first involves a cultural critique of "conception of death as the great social leveller" (Clewell 2009, p.3) in a community saturated with a violent political struggle in which the death of the individual loses its uniqueness and in turn, the loss of uniqueness of the death of other becomes a source of consolation for the bereaved survivors. While Robîn reminds his dead brother that many people "were killed like him" in the resistance struggle and that he should not be so "alone" in the other world, the dead brother prompts him to remember the singularity of his death and hence, his loss, averring that "each death is unique" (Derrida 2001, p.193) and is "the end of the unique world" (Derrida 2005, p.140), even if it emerges as a part of a greater "public loss". The dead other resists the closure of grief through "a grand narrative of public loss" (Aras 2014); his critical words challenge the idea that "collectively shared experiences" of loss (Aras 2014) provide a form of consolation for families of "martyrs" to come to terms with their burden of grief. Describing "a well-known martyr" as "alone" and unaccompanied by those who were killed "like him", Aydoğan's novel seems to hint the necessity of a "personalised grief" for each of those lives lost in the resistance struggle, their singular irreplaceable preciousness both in their own right as well as for the nation itself.

The second connotation of the dialogue between Robîn and Seydo is the tension emerging between the mourning performed by the mourner for lost other and the form of mourning the deceased other anticipates for himself. While the younger brother is presently in an interminable grief for the loss of his brother, the deceased brother still feels "alone" and has different wishes regarding the mourning enacted for himself. In *Signifying Loss*, Gana (2011) argues that Ben Jelloun's novel, *The Last Friend*, "points at limits of ethics of mourning that does not take into account the wishes of the mournee, only those of the mourner, or those of the mournee as constructed by the mourner" (p.121). Based on this argument, Gana (2011) draws attention to another integral dimension of the question by emphasising that the wishes of the mournee remains "almost completely overlooked and unaccounted for in the assemble of current theoretical, literary, and cultural studies of mourning" (p.121).

In relation to this dimension of the work of mourning, although Aydoğan's novel, to some degree, is concerned with the representation of the meaning of death and loss from the perspective of "those left behind", it also distinguishes itself as a rigorous attempt to cover the deceased's reflections about and expectations from a mourning, reflecting "the challenges of mournership" (Gana 2011, p.121) in Kurdish political and cultural setting. Through the equivocally expressed expectations of the "mournee" from the work of mourning, *Reş û Spî* fluctuates between the desires of the lost other who expects from the mourner a kind of engagement in his legacy and the mourner's culturally constructed mind-set about a work of mourning for a "martyr", which perceives the wishes of the martyr as an invitation for participation in a (violent) political struggle in the homeland. The character's melancholy concerning the legacy of the martyred brother operates and unfolds in this

fracture between the mournee's ambiguous wishes on the one hand, and mourner's emotional and intellectual inability to construe and fulfil these wishes on the other.

The dramatic changes in the character's life, psychology and personality after dreams about the dead brother reveals the "aporia of mourning" (Derrida 1989, p.35) constructed around motifs of martyrdom and resistance by the Kurdish political community; it highlights the tension and discrepancy regarding the meaning of martyrdom and political legacy of a martyr that emerges in the deceased's, the mourner's and the Kurdish society's world of meaning. Paying due attention to all these subjectivities, the novel implies that the form of mourning that is expected to be performed for a "martyr" in the Kurdish political community creates a psychological impasse and trap for the bereaved survivor, resulting in a melancholic personality split for the bereaved individual. The tension between the wishes of a "martyr" as constructed by the Kurdish political community and the bereaved survivor's inability to fulfil these desires is the site of the pathological "ego splitting" for the survivor.

The anticipated wishes of martyred brother transform the young brother's work of mourning into a clinical disorder, leading to baseless fears and phobias, a form of necrophobia and a dissociative identity disorder in his personality. Evidencing this is the distinct use of the motif of melancholic "ego splitting" in the character's personality to represent the contradictions between the desires of the survivor and the wishes of a martyr as constructed by the Kurdish political community; the "ego splitting" in this context is presented as an inner conflict taking place between the voice of a radical revolutionary agent (Bişar), who wants to fulfil his "duty" against his martyred brother by participating in the armed resistance in the homeland, and the voice of a moody and introspective young poet (Robîn), who seeks "another way" outside armed struggle, to engage in the legacy of martyred brother.

4.6. Representing a Revolutionary Agent as a "critical agency" in the Kurdish Setting

Before moving onto an examination of the motif of the melancholic "ego splitting" in the novel, it may be useful to note a few points concerning the novel's particular way of creating characters and its use of dreams and nightmares as connotations of the character's psychology. The motif of "ego splitting" emerges as an aesthetic form of the pathological melancholy experienced by the character who suffers from a personality split (between Robîn and Bişar) upon being urged by his dead brother to "return" to the homeland and to "visit" him. First, Bişar and then the Old Man, both of whom are products of Robîn's imagination, join the universe of novel. Throughout the novel, Robîn alternates between the voice of Bişar, who wants to "return" to the homeland and engage in the (armed) resistance, and the voice of Old Man, who counsels him to overcome the pain of loss and make a "new" start in life by inviting him to the "realities" of life. This motif of "ego splitting" in the character's personality emerges as an allegory of character's melancholic dilemma. Furthermore, the character's dreams and nightmares are used "as the prototype" to represent his "mental disorders" (Freud 1917, p. 243); they emerge as reflections of his "ego", representing the character's melancholic inner conflict concerning the political legacy of the martyred brother.

Considering the symptoms of an ego splitting as a defining feature of pathological melancholy, Freud (1917) describes melancholic suffering as a tension-filled conflict between the "critical agency", which is "commonly called 'conscience'" (1917, p.247) and "the censorship of consciousness and reality-testing" (1917, p.247). Freud argues that "in mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself" (p.246). This motif of "ego splitting" in which "one part of ego sets itself over against the other, judges it critically" (Freud 1917, p.247) is utilised by Aydoğan to represent the

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melancholy of *Reş û Spî*'s hero as a psychological dilemma about the political legacy of the dead brother. The implication of the artistic use of "ego splitting" in the novel is that the same character echoes the voice of three different characters: Robîn, Bişar and the Old Man.

The day after a dream, when Robîn goes to city centre (Taksim), he suddenly loses consciousness and has another long dream in which he finds himself in an "empty" city (Istanbul), which is otherwise lively and crowded, with Bişar, who lives in the city in a melancholic torment because he cannot take part in the ongoing political struggle in the homeland:

> Robîn looked around. Streets, roads and parks in the vicinity, telephone boxes, squares, stone benches around [Taksim] square which those tired people sat on and looked around […] were empty. No human voice was around […] Everywhere was empty like in a painting which contains no human figures (p.33).[166]

Surprised by the emptiness of the city, Robîn meets only with Bişar, who is running away from "something" just as he is. They start to talk as if "they had known each other" before. Bişar is the other voice of Robîn himself as he remarks: "I am you, you are me" (p.65).[167] He is represented as, to use Freud's phrase, a "critical agency which is […] split off from the ego" (Freud 1917, p.247):

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[166] Li dora xwe niherî. Kolan, rê û park-markên der û dorê, hindurê bufeyan, ber qulubeyên telefonê, meydan, kevirên dora meydanê ko kesên diwestiyan li ser rûdiniştin û li dora xwe diniherîn, kuçeyên ko derdiketin kolanê... Giş vala bûbûn. Û li wê derê pêjina însanekî jî nedihat […] Her der mina ko di tabloyeke bêînsan be, vala bû.

[167] Ez tu me, tu jî ez…

They were looking at each other as though a great war had erupted around them

that they had just noticed. Neither knew they would often see each other in

similar situations, and they would become friends. Robîn was able to guess that

the troubles they had were the same, but he was not able to name the situation

(p.34).[168]

Bişar embodies Robîn's "painful dejection" (Freud 1917); he often voices Robîn's

"dissatisfaction" with his own "ego" (Freud 1917, p.247), condemning him for failing to

engage in the political struggle in the homeland. He has lost his love for the outside world and

the city he is living in: "I hate this city Robîn. Not because of any reason. I do not like any city.

Everywhere is the same. I hate this world […] Believe me, I sometimes think about killing

myself […] Yet, I cannot bring myself to do that" (p.94).[169] Bişar echoes Robîn's guilty

"conscience" felt for the political legacy of his brother, implying that he perceives his grief as

an insufficient response to the loss of "a well-known martyr". Although writing poems "in

Kurdish like Seydo" also bespeaks a form of engagement with the legacy of the dead brother,

he seems not to find this sufficient as he "always comes to his dreams and calls him" (p.99)[170]

to return to the homeland.

Encouraging Robîn to return to the "homeland" and engage with the Kurdish political struggle

for which his brother and friends lost their lives, Bişar is depicted as Robîn's voice of

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[168] Mîna ko şerekî mezin li dora wan çêbûbû, lê ew nuh lê hay dibûn, li hevdu diniherî. Herduyan jî nizanîbû ko ew ê bi dû re hevdu gelek caran di rewşên weha da bibînin û ew ê bibin hevalên hev. Robîn dikarîbû texmîn bikira ko belaya li ser serê wan, yek e, lê nikarîbû nav lê bikira.

[169] Ez ji vî bajarî hez nakim, Robîn. Ne ji ber tu sedeman. Ez ji tu bajaran hez nakim. Her der mina hev in. Îmana min ji vê dinyayê diçe […] Ez carnan li kuştina xwe jî difikirim, weleh […] Lê ez cesaret nakim.

[170] Hertim tê xewna wî û bangî wî dikir.

continuing "moral judgment" (Lifton 1996, p.172) about his life bereft of his brother. Living in

Istanbul in a safe environment, Bişar feels guilty and condemns himself for still being "alive"

in the midst of deaths and devastated lives. *Reş û Spî*, in this way, represents the "death

guilt", which Robert Jay Lifton (1996) regards as a key theme in "the psychology of the

survivor" (p.163),[171] as an integral part of the melancholy of the relatives of the martyrs.

Evidencing this is also the construction of the representation of Bişar's psychology around

three feelings: "grief, resentment and death" (p.95).[172] He feels alone in the world because

his "friends" have been killed in the resistance struggle and wants to engage in the same

struggle. As revealed in one of Robîn's agitative poems: "I stayed by myself alone in the middle

of a tough struggle / most of my friends have been killed / oh God, don't leave me in shame

before the memories of my friends / and don't let me return alive from this struggle" (p.94).[173]

Thus, for Bişar, a life outside the political resistance ongoing in the homeland is a meaningless

and aimless life:

> I came here [to Istanbul] and put myself into this hidey-hole. I am stuck in this
>
> hidey-hole. I don't know where I should go. I do not get any joy out of life anymore.

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[171] In his study, *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life* (1996), mapping out "the psychology of the survivor", whom he defines as "one who has come into contact with death in some bodily or psychic fashion and has remained alive" (p.169), Robert Jay Lifton defines "death guilt" as an attitude of self-blame and "feelings of pity and self-condemnation in the survivor" (p.172). Lifton argues that in survivor's mind there is always a self-blame question: "why did I survive while he, she, or they died?" (p.171). Lifton notes that "the image-centered version of that question is: 'why did I survive while letting him, her, or them die?'" (p.171). Lifton argues that the "experience of guilt around one's own trauma suggests the moral dimension inherent in all conflict and suffering" (p.172). Thus, Lifton suggests, "there is an inseparability between psychological and moral dimensions of guilt" (p.172).

[172] Kerb… Kîn… Mirin

[173] Di şerekî dijwar de, ez bi tena serê xwe mame / hevalên min giş hatine kuştin, ya rebbi / tu min li ber bîraninên wan fedîkar dernexe/ u ji wî şerî bi saxî venegerîne.

All paths are closed, Robîn. I am stuck. Most of the time I, myself, say that 'I live

without a sense of purpose' (p.96).[174]

Using ethnographic insights to shed light on the political and psycho-social dynamics shaping the symbolic relationship between the dead and the living in the Kurdish setting, Özsoy argues that within an "ethos of patriotic self-sacrifice, the dead retain a powerful affective, spiritual and even magical hold over the living, leading to a moral obligation to reciprocate in ways conducive for promoting the struggle" (2010, p.59). The overall conclusion of his discussion is that, in the Kurdish political and socio-cultural setting, "by gifting his/her life the martyr obtains moral superiority over the community, leaving them indebted, a particular kind of moral debt to be paid in the form of a commitment to the ideal for which he/she had died" (Özsoy 2010, p.59). Forming this socio-political affair as a characterising motif of the work of mourning, *Reş û Spî* illustrates how grief for a martyr also becomes the basis of radical political engagement. Bişar's physical immensity symbolizes the Kurdish political community, which expects an active engagement in the political struggle from the relative of a martyr: "Bişar was twice the size of Robîn. He was too tall in length. Robîn seemed like a child next to him" (p.65).[175] The "black and white" painting hanging on the wall in Bişar's living room, which depicts a "fighter with a rifle on his shoulder […] looking at the dark sky" (p.94),[176] represents the conventional form of claiming the political legacy of a martyr in the Kurdish socio-political setting. In this way, the novel develops these questions to convey that in the Kurdish political

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[174] Ez hatime vira, min xwe xistiye quncikekê û ez di vê quncikê de, asê bûme. Ez nizanim, ez ê bi kû de herim. Ez ji vê jiyanê, tahmê hew distînim. Rêkên min giş xetîmîne, Robîn. Ez asê bûme. Tew carinan, ez ji xwe re dibêjim ko 'ez belasebeb dijîm'.

[175] Herçî Bişar bû, du caran li Robîn bû. Qama wî pir dirêj bû. Robîn li cem wî mîna zarokekî xuya dibû.

[176] Le ser hespê xwe bû û tivingek li milê wî bû […] û li ezmanê tarî diniherî.

and cultural setting, the death of a political subject brings with itself not only pain, suffering and grief for the survivor, but that it also becomes a source of political rage for the bereaved survivor and functions to provide new recruits for the (armed) political resistance. Based on this dual characterisation of the question in the Kurdish political setting, the novel also contributes to our general understanding of how "emotional spaces" formed around the work of mourning for a martyr turn into complex "emotional […] spheres within which political resistance is articulated and nurtured" (Koefoed 2017, p.197).

As conveyed through the voice of Bişar, a side of Robîn considers joining the political struggle in the homeland as the only way of relieving his melancholic suffering about his dead brother: "I may find a remedy for myself there [homeland]. Maybe I will suffer much more from this severe grief and sorrow […] But I have to go. If not, I will go mad from my grief and will harm myself" (p.98).[177] As revealed in an inner dialogue, Bişar represents "his desire to return [to the homeland] he concealed from everyone so far" (p.99);[178] Robîn's thought of returning to the homeland would not have recurred "if he had not received this letter from Bişar" (p.99).[179]

However, his other side displays an ambivalent attitude to the idea of "returning" (p.115)[180] to the homeland and "fighting" (p.96)[181] for the political ideals his martyred brother died for: "Should I return? Yes. For what? Liberation [of the homeland]. How?" (p.115).[182] For Robîn

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[177] Belkî ez li wan deveran, ji xwe re çareyekê bibînim. Belkî jî ez bêtir di nav vî derdê giran û kerba dilî de vegevizim […] Divê ez herim. Yan na, ez ê ji kerba xwe dîn bibim û tiştin xerab bi xwe bikim.

[178] Xwastina wî ya çûyinê ko heta niha ji herkesî veşartibû.

[179] Heke ne ji vê nameya Bişêr bûya.

[180] Vegere.

[181] Şer.

[182] Ez werim? Belê. Ji bo çi? Rizgarî. Çawa?

involvement in the "liberation" struggle in the homeland means sharing the same fate with his dead brother. The realist side of his "ego" tells him that the question of the "lost" homeland and its "liberation" transcends the will and capacity of an individual. As embodied with the voice of the Old Man: "Your homeland was swept away by a storm but none of you acknowledged it. You had all scattered elsewhere, joined in foreign lives and have changed. Then you woke up and regained your consciousness; however, there was nothing left from the beauty of your homeland then" (p.127).[183] He tries to console himself with the political and social reality of the "suffering nation", that losing a loved one in the resistance struggle is a common experience of the Kurds in Turkey. The Old Man remarks: "there are many people like you in a homeland like yours. Do you think only you, yourself, are in this [psychological] state?" (p.127).[184]

This tension between the wishes of the deceased as constructed by the Kurdish political and cultural milieu and desires of the mourner to adapt into a new life in Istanbul is represented by Aydoğan as a state of melancholic stuckness for the bereaved relative of martyrs. While as a young poet, Robîn desires to find "another way" of engagement with the legacy of his martyred brother to ease his grief, the conventional mourning rites of the Kurdish community for Kurdish martyrs diminish his intellectual ability to imagine an alternative form of grief for his martyred brother since it is limited by a radical engagement with the (violent) resistance struggle. The constructed politics of grief framed around martyrdom by the Kurdish (political) community leaves the bereaved relatives of a martyr with two options: "Returning? Staying?

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[183] Welatê we ber bi bayekî ket, hayê wê kesî jê çênebû. Hûn herkê di deverekê de belav bû, ketin nav jiyanin biyanî, hatin guhertin. Bi dû re hûn li xwe vegeriyan û hatin ser hişê xwe. Lê wê gavê, ji wê bedewiya welatê we tiştek nemabû.

[184] Di welatekî mîna yê we de, kesên mîna te pir in. Ma tu dibêjî qey tu bi tenê weha yî?

[…] Each one is worse than the other. He was about to go mad. Both returning or staying meant death. No other solution came to his mind. Another way. Another remedy. A remedy for this pain" (p.114).[185] Robîn feels that "staying" in Istanbul means "abandoning everything" (p.144)[186] and "forgetting" (p.144);[187] it is an act of betrayal to the dead brother and his legacy. It means "the suffering of heart and mind in an endless longing" (p.114)[188] in "a foreign land".

Placing this duality at the centre of the character's grieving, Aydoğan's novel seems to hint that the revolutionary and radical character of "critical agency" in Kurdish political and cultural setting nullifies any possibility of a more "productive" and "abundant" (Eng and Kazanjian 2003, p.ix) form of mourning for a martyr. The novel represents the character's psychic dilemma as a state of limbo for the relatives of Kurdish martyrs, thereby, amounting to a cultural critique of the Kurdish "critical agency", which Aydoğan facilitates around a fictional radical revolutionary agent keeping the bereaved survivor in a relentless and destructive restlessness. The love story (of Robîn and Gülcan) integrated in the novel emerges as yet another useful motif to represent this melancholic deadlock and how it hinders the creative individual from more productive forms of grief for a martyr. The creative agent in this love story is a young poet who desires to invest in a "new object of love" (Freud 1917) for overcoming the grief of loss.

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[185] Çûyin? Mayin? […] Yek ji yekê xerabtir […] Dikira dîn bibûya. Çûyin û mayin, bûbûn mirin û mirin. Tiştekî din nedihat bîra wî. Rêteke din. Dermanekî din. Merhemek ji vê birînê re.

[186] Terikandina hertiştî.

[187] Jibîrkirin.

[188] Her û her di nav bêrikirinê de helandina dil û mejî.

4.7. The Love Motif as an Emotional Shelter of the Political Subject in Psychological Impasse

The discussion of the second chapter highlighted that in Uzun's *Siya Evînê* love is represented as an emotional "shelter" for the male political subject in the resistance struggle; this was specifically in relation to rendering life bearable and meaningful "in the wasteland of exile" for a character shaped by political ideals and commitments and psychological dilemmas over his libidinal desires. Operating virtually along identical aesthetic considerations, in *Reş û Spî* the love affair is mainly formed as an emotional *shelter* in the "foreign land" for the male political character whose subjectivity is stuck between a difficult moral and political obligation and his suppressed libidinal desires. As the following discussion of this example will also show, it can be suggested that, in general, the consideration of the meaning of love and intimacy for the modern Kurdish individual in modern novels by Turkey's Kurds is substantially operated within the emotional domain of a (male) *politicized-ego* performing his unsolvable political, socio-cultural and psychic predicaments through a devoted (female) lover.

When Robîn first meets Gülcan, a Turkish girl, he hopes to be able to make a "new" start in his life after death of his brother: "I have almost forgotten the feeling of love; [but thanks to Gülcan], I am myself again" (p.56).[189] Gülcan is represented as a new love object for Robîn who could help him get rid of the melancholic dilemma he experiences in Istanbul. When he is with Gülcan, Robîn feels as though he is "purified" from all "those grievances" and "nightmares", in which he often dreams scenes from "unknown murders" and extrajudicial killings:

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[189] Hindik mabû min evîn ji bîr bikiriya, ji nû ve ez hatim ser hişê xwe.

I had not slept so peacefully and calmly for a long time. Strangely, I did not have any nightmares that night. It was as though I was rid of all my troubles and sorrows and was purifying myself from those grievances when I went to bed with Gülcan. It was as though I had been in heaven, I felt so happy and comfortable. She makes me feel at ease. Thus, I was committing to her a little more with each passing day (pp.84-85).[190]

For Robîn, Gülcan is a "lover and friend of lonely days" (p.104)[191] and can help him overcome his grief for the loss of his brother. His desire to make a "new start" and leave the spectres of the past in the past with the help of Gülcan is represented through the voice of an Old Man. The Old Man bespeaks the voice of Robîn's desire for newness, criticising him because of his persistent attachment to the spectres of the past. He reminds him that the love objects of the past no longer exist, thus, he should "change the direction of [his] life […] and walk forward" (p.127) in order to get rid of the melancholic mood in which he found himself after death of his brother: "Why are you so stubborn? You always live in fantasies […] Do something […] something new which can change all your life" (p.152).[192]

However, the spectre of martyred brother and his political legacy loom over Robîn and Gülcan's love relationship, rendering it fragile, constantly menaced by the desires of the revolutionary "critical agency", Bişar. The dialogue between Robîn and Bişar about life, love

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[190] Ji zû ve, ez ewqasî bi rehetî û ji ber xwe ve neketibûm xewê. Ecêb e, min wê şevê tu kabûs jî nedîtin. Gava ko ez diketim himbêza Gulcanê, mirov digot qey min hemû kul û kederên xwe ji ser xwe avêtine, min xwe ji wan şuştiye. Ez mîna ko di bihuşê de bim, dilgeş dibûm, bêhna min fireh dibû. Gulcanê ez rehet dikirim. Bi vî awayî, her ko diçû, ez bêtir bi wê ve dihatim girêdan.

[191] Yar û hevala rojên bitenêtiyê.

[192] Tu ji bo çi ewqasî rikî? Tu hema xwe bi destên van xeyalan de berdidî […] Tiştekî bike […] Tiştekî nû ko bikaribe hemû jiyana te biguherîne.

and intimate relationships represent this inner tension. Bişar is very critical: "life is degenerating more day by day. There are no intimate relationships. People have fallen away too much from each other. There is no friendship like in the past" (p.67).[193] For Bişar, Robîn's love towards this "brunette" and "beautiful" girl is an impossible love, because "the ruined walls [of Diyarbakir Fortress] were calling him. Seydo was looking at him from the rubble of its walls" (p.129).[194]

On the other hand, for Robîn the idea of returning to the homeland and joining the political struggle is also the source of fears and death anxiety. The anxiety and restlessness of returning to the homeland appears in his dreams as a motif of a "river of blood" (p.83),[195] turning his life in Istanbul into a nightmare: "because of these nightmares my nights and days are all jumbled. I could not understand what happened to me. These nightmares scourged my mind as if my sufferings [of grief] were not enough for me. I did not even know which was the nightmare which not" (p.63).[196] As put succinctly in this passage, the character's desire to engage in the political legacy of the deceased brother is represented not only as a destructive desire to hold the bereaved survivor in an unstable and unbearable psychic position, depriving him of a "new start" in life, but also as a psychic state that makes it impossible for the mourner to have a healthy inner "dialogue" (Derrida 2005) with the lost other.

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[193] Herçî jiyan e, her ko diçe, bêtir diherime. Têkîliyên germ nemane. Insan ji hev pir bi dûr ketine. Hevaltî mevaltiyên mîna berê jî nemane.

[194] Bircên xerabe bangî wî dikir. Seydo ji wira li wî diniheri…

[195] Çemê xwînê.

[196] Piştî van kabûsan, şev û rojên min giş tev li hev bûbûn. Min nizanîbû, bê çi bi serê min de hatiye. Ji xwe derdê min ne besî min bû, îcar ev kabûs li serê min bûnûn bela. Êdî min nizanîbû, bê kîjan kabûs e; kîjan ne kabûs e jî. Ji ber van kabûsan, min gelek caran xwast ko ez xwe bikujim.

4.8. Does the Possibility of a Non-pathological "Dialogue" with a Martyr and His Political Legacy Exist?

In *Reş û Spî*, the repercussions of the politics of grief constructed on the notion of martyrdom and resistance in the Kurdish political community are twofold: on the one hand, it undermines the "interior dialogue" (Derrida 2005, p.139) of the bereaved survivor with the lost other and does away with the possibility of carrying "the other in himself" (Derrida 2005, p.139) as a healthy act of mourning; on the other hand, it deforms the image of lost other, turning the lost other into a spectre who invites his bereaved relatives to share the same fate as him. So constructed, the overall effect of *Reş û Spî*" is to assert that the interpretation of a martyr's wishes by the Kurdish political community makes the grief for a martyr a risky endeavour for the bereaved survivor and keeps him in a tiresome melancholic paradox.

Robîn's concern for the fate of Bişar as he returns to homeland represents the risks that given grief forms for a martyr can lead to for the bereaved survivor: "his destiny merges with someone else's [Bişar's] and whatever that person did [in Diyarbakir] he would do the same. But what if Bişar has done something that he would never do? He was afraid" (p.149).[197] The "something" refers to the act of participating in the armed resistance, where this particular "fear" too instantiates his fear that he could be killed like his brother in the homeland. The further implication of this particular understanding of a martyr's wishes is the deformation of the "image of the other" (Derrida 1989); it causes the spectre of the lost other to be turned into a dreaded political figure, to a deceitful figure inviting the character to the resistance

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[197] Qedera wî bi ya yekî din ve dihat girêdan û wî yekî çi kiribe, ew ê jî eynî tiştî bike. Lê, le ko Bişêr tiştekî ko ew ê tu carî neke jî kiribe. Tirsiya.

struggle, so to "death," as the final dream in the novel figuratively hints: "come Robîn, come next to us" (p.181).[198]

Aydoğan's novel concludes with a happy ending when the character makes a choice between the call of martyred brother and the voice of his new lover. Robîn wakes up from a nightmare to the "pleasant voice" of Gülcan in the bastions of Diyarbakır Fortress, where he earlier in the events, sought refuge: "He became petrified […] He immediately hugged Gülcan's neck and cried: 'get me out of here [Diyarbakir] Gülcan. Take me, don't leave me' […] And an Old Man. He was leaning on his walking-stick and looking at them" (p.183).[199] With this finale, Aydoğan does not offer a way of working through the grief for a martyr and his legacy, but only a way of surviving for the bereaved hero who chooses life and the possibility of a "new" start in life rather than committing suicide or joining the resistance struggle.

Reş û Spî" does not hint at the possibility of an "uninterrupted dialogue" (Derrida 2005) with a lost political subject and their legacy in the Kurdish cultural setting; nor does it provide an account of "new, intellectually and emotionally nuanced model of mourning, a model wherein healthy psychic functioning depends neither on a refusal to mourn or abandoning the dead" (Kirkby 2006, p.469). However, despite not providing an elaborate prescription as to how the bereaved character's melancholic "ego splitting" can be resolved and overcome, *Reş û Spî*, nonetheless effectively exposes the melancholic dilemmas of the bereaved families of Kurdish martyrs whose grief is drawn into the "limit zones of dominant politico-discursive formations" (Özsoy 2010). As the foregoing discussion demonstrates, *Reş û Spî* does this by

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[198] Were Robîn, were ba me…

[199] Xwîna wî sekinibû […] Hema xwe avêt sitûyê wê û giriya. – Min ji vira bibe, Gulcan. Min bibe, min bernede […] Û Zilamekî kal. Xwe dabû ser gopalê xwe û li wan diniherî.

conveying that the possibility of a heathier "model of mourning as an ongoing conversation" (Kirkby 2006, p.461) with a political subject and their legacy does not depend only on the bereaved survivor's emotional and intellectual capacity, but also requires a radical change in the notion of "fidelity" (Derrida 1989) and "moral debt" (Özsoy 2010) to a martyr and their legacy in the Kurdish political and cultural setting.

4.9. Concluding Remarks

This chapter provided an account of the representation of the grief of losing a loved one in the process of political resistance in Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî.* The discussion focussed on the use of the melancholy motif in two settings: first, melancholy as an inconsolable grief for the loss of a loved one killed in the political resistance; second, as a melancholy motif set around the political legacy of a "martyr" by paying particular attention to the meaning of martyrdom as well as politics of grief constructed on the notion of martyrdom and resistance in the Kurdish (political) community in Turkey.

The discussion has highlighted that modern Kurdish novelists represent the grief of losing a loved one in the political struggle or due to colonial violence outside the instrumentalization of individual grief; this is quite contrasting to the pervasive use of the motif in the early Kurdish novel to represent either "the agony of people" and the political subject's psychological motivations to participate in the armed struggle for a free homeland (e.g. Îbrahîm Ehmed's *Jana Gel*) or the determination and persistence of the nation in the political struggle for the freedom of the homeland (e.g. Xemgîn Temê's *Pala Bêşop*). With the examination of the grief of relatives of the dead other in *Reş û Spî*, the discussion demonstrated that modern Kurdish novelists attempt to offer "space for expression of

personal grief" (Grzeda 2013) for the loss of loved ones in the resistance struggle; the representation of the pain of losing a loved one constructed comprise authentic human experiences, alternating between the individual's psychology in grief, the political and social milieu that leads to the loss and grief, the cultural reality that shapes the individual's grief work, and the meaning and limits of mourning for the lost other in a social and cultural climate characterized by state terror and political violence.

With its specific focus on the motifs of martyrdom and legacy of a martyr presented in *Reş û Spî*, the chapter has also examined a melancholy motif utilised for representing the dilemmas of those who lost their loved ones in the resistance struggle and find themselves faced with a difficult mourning "duty" to engage in the political legacy of their lost loved ones. In examining this melancholy motif, the discussion highlighted two salient aspects of the novel: first, the novel's formal strategy in representing melancholy as a pathological condition and the second, its content in this melancholy alternating between the character's psychology and the Kurdish political and cultural milieu. The discussion has demonstrated that, in the formal sense, Aydoğan's novel suggests certain features of the modernist trend as emphasised in its representations of grief and melancholy. In a way which complements this, as the discussion on the representation of melancholic attitudes of the character (Robîn) has shown, the novel attempts to engage with the "private zones of bereaved consciousness" (Clewell 2009) through an unconscious domain (e.g. the character's dreams and nightmares). In this way, it reveals "a notion of privatized grief […] taking place in the hidden recesses of […] consciousness" (Clewell 2009, p.13). With respect to the content of the character's melancholy about the legacy of a martyr, which is alternated by the novel between the individual's psychic domain on the one hand, and the political and cultural milieu surrounding

the individual on the other, the discussion has engaged with and provided an analysis of the iterations of both Derrida and Freud's accounts of mourning and melancholy; this was complemented by insights from ethnographic and cultural studies dealing with the symbolic meaning of the martyrdom and politics of grief in the Kurdish community (Özsoy 2010; Weiss 2014; Aras 2014; Koefoed 2017; Rudi 2017).

Through a critical reading of the character's melancholic paradoxes over the legacy of the lost other, the discussion also demonstrated that, in the Kurdish political and cultural setting, the grief for the loss of "other and *his* world" (Derrida 2005, p.140) in the political resistance involves a double-layered state of melancholy for those who are left alone as well as the challenges of engaging with political legacies of their loved. As the discussion about the character's "ego splitting" has particularly shown, the impossibility of engagement in the legacy of their loved ones creates a permanent domain of melancholy for the bereaved survivors, oscillating between the life instinct and the melancholic desire for some form of engagement with the legacy of their loved ones. This has also highlighted that the given form of politics of grief constructed by the Kurdish political community around the notion of martyrdom and resistance not only make the grief for a martyr a laborious burden resulting in pathological "ego splitting" for the bereaved survivors, but also removes the possibility for the survivors to enter into a non-pathological "dialogue" (Derrida 2005) with their lost loved ones. The discussion further evidenced this with the argument that while Aydoğan's novel cannot offer "another way" to grieve for and engage with a martyred other and their political legacy, it critically highlights the need for new forms of moral commitment and grief for martyrs in the Kurdish socio-political setting for the wellbeing both of the bereaved survivor

and the "mournee", who otherwise might turn into a deceitful spectre, inviting "those left behind" into "death" as seen in the finale of the novel.

The discussion in the following chapter provides a further examination of the modern Kurdish novels' use of melancholy motif alternating between psychology and politics on the one hand, and the individual grief and social and cultural reality on the other. As a contrast, not only does it point out to how modern Kurdish novelists use melancholy as a critical motif to represent the individual's psychology of inability to overcome losses caused by the state violence, but also to the cultural resistance of the Kurdish intellectual subject; a relentless yet lonely struggle for preserving Kurdish culture, language and literature and recovering the cultural losses of the nation (e.g. mother-tongue and literature in mother-tongue) through persistent melancholic attachments to those lost love objects.

Chapter Four

The Legacy of State Violence, Melancholic Murder and Potentials of Melancholic Attachment in Fırat Cewerî's *Ez ê Yekî Bikujim* and *Lehî*

This chapter provides an account of three different forms of the representation of melancholic response to loss present in Firat Cewerî's novels *Ez ê yekî bikujim* (*I Will Kill Someone*, 2008)*,* a crime fiction, and the continuation of this story in a separate novel, *Lehî* (*Lehi*, 2011): first, melancholy as a violent response to loss of a political and cultural ideal; second, as an endless grief to the loss of female "honour" in a traditional and patriarchal community; and third, as a site of intellectual insistence upon creating a literature in the native language prohibited by the situation in Turkey. Constituting clinical, affective and intellectual forms of melancholic response to loss respectively, *Ez ê yekî bikujim* (henceforth *EYB*) and *Lehî* can be read as further examples of modern Kurdish novels which appropriate the melancholy motif as a multi-functional device for describing the losses, sufferings, despair as well as the intellectual resistance of Kurds in Turkey. Just as other modern Kurdish novelists examined in previous chapters, Cewerî also posits melancholy as constitutive of authentic political, cultural and social subjectivities, utilising the motif to represent a broad range of melancholies mediated by the Kurdish political, social and cultural context.

Examining these diverse uses of the melancholy motif by Cewerî, the discussion pays particular attention to the political, social and cultural connotations of loss and melancholy articulated in the texts. To this end, the discussion engages with a range of psychoanalytic, cultural and postcolonial readings including Freud's (1917) account of melancholy, Bernard

Hollander's (2014) and Nikola Schipkowensky's (1968) psychological accounts of melancholic subjectivity and the act of murder, Butler's critical concept of the "ungrievability" (1999) of particular losses as well as David L. Eng and David Kazanjian's (2003) postcolonial accounts of the cultural and "political potential" (2003, p.ix) of certain melancholic attachments.

The discussion starts with a general consideration of Cewerî's literature, comprised of an examination of his novels as well as the use of melancholy motif in these texts, followed by a critical account of the motif in *EYB* and *Lehî*. The first section of the discussion provides a consideration of melancholy represented as a violent response to the loss of a political and cultural ideal, causing a familial "melancholic murder", a term proposed by Schipkowensky (1968). Based on psychoanalytic approaches to these questions (Schipkowensky 1968; Hollander 2015), the discussion demonstrates how the motif of "melancholic murder" is animated by Cewerî to represent the legacy of the Diyarbakir military prison, believed to be one of the worst prisons in the world during the 1980s under the 12 September 1980 military regime, as well as the disappointments of the Kurdish political prisoners who were taken there charged with involvement in pro-Kurdish political activities and then faced the disappearance of the political and cultural ideals they once fought for after being released.

Based on the critical theories of trauma (Caruth 1996; LaCapra 1999), loss and melancholy, the second section of the discussion provides an account of the representation of melancholy as an interminable grief for a traumatic loss effected around the story of a PKK female guerrilla captured by the Turkish security forces in a conflict, who is then raped and forced into prostitution by a Turkish (undercover) counter-guerrilla unit. The discussion elicits how Cewerî deploys the motif of a traumatic loss and the subject's melancholic response to this loss as a cultural critique of both the state sexual violence and the patriarchal Kurdish

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community by asserting that working through a loss related to female "honour" is impossible in a tradition-governed society where women are codified as an object of "honour".

The third section of discussion provides an account of the representation of melancholy as an "active rather than reactive, prescient rather than nostalgic" (Eng & Kazanjian 2003, p.ix) response. This productive form of melancholy is utilized by Cewerî to highlight the intellectual resistance of the Kurdish authors to preserve a "prohibited" language (Kurdish) through literature produced in this language; it presents an account of the cultural motivations of the Kurdish authorship about creating a literature in the mother-tongue as well as the constructive potential of some of the melancholic attachments in sustaining an oppressed national culture, language and literature. This section also provides an examination of the intellectual dilemmas of the melancholic act of engaging in the creation of a national literature in an unread(able) language for Kurdish authors. In *EYB* and *Lehî*, the implication of this intellectual dilemma is represented through a motif of the melancholic mood of an exiled author (Alan, one of the three main characters of the novel), who invests all his intellectual and literary "capital" in the unread(able) Kurdish language and lives in a melancholic mood because of the absence of a Kurdish reading public. Set in such context, the discussion in the third section turns to a consideration of two distinct but interrelated melancholy motifs: the first highlights the potentials of a "melancholic consciousness" (Frosh 2013, p.87) in maintaining a national culture and language; the second signifies the melancholic mood of the Kurdish creative agents in literary production in a language that has no reading public, thus, keeping them in a state at odds with their own acts of melancholy about writing in the mother-tongue.

5.1. Cewerî's Literature: A Narrative of Exile, Loss and Melancholy

Translating the works of modern writers such as F. Dostoevsky, J. Steinbeck, S. Beckett, J. P. Sartre as well as the Swedish crime writer Henning Mankell into Kurdish in the 1990s and early 2000s, Cewerî published his first novel, *Payiza Dereng* (*The Late Autumn*) in 2005 in Sweden where he has lived since 1980. *Payiza Dereng* was followed by his other novels: *Ez ê yekî bikujim* (2008), *Lehî* (2011), *Maria Melekek Bû* (*Maria was an Angel, 2015*) and *Derza Dilê Min* (*The Crack of my Heart*, 2020). Cewerî's novels are diverse in type, consisting of a contemporary novel (*Payiza Dereng*), crime fiction (*EYB* and *Maria Melekek Bû*), metafiction (*Lehî*) and romance (*Derza Dilê Min*). Remarkably, motifs of loss, melancholy, trauma and schizophrenia are always at the centre of the plot in all these novels. They provide a broad spectrum of melancholic subjectivities mediated by the Kurdish political, social and cultural milieu. The majority of Cewerî's novelistic characters suffer from either trauma, schizophrenia or melancholy; they are presented as psychologically wounded personalities, often suffering from a sense of loss that they cannot cope with. Despite this, the melancholy, trauma or schizophrenias of these characters rarely stem from their personal circumstances, but mostly from their political lives. A thorough reading of Cewerî's oeuvre shows that despite the disparate forms the telling of the story takes, the thematic focus of the narrative is almost always the same: the exile, loss, melancholy, disappointments and impasses of a political generation (1970s) and the irreparable damage state violence inflicts on the personality of the political individual.

In *Payiza Dereng*, written mostly in an epistolary style, motifs of loss and melancholy are used to articulate the exiled political and intellectual subject's melancholic attachment to the homeland. The melancholy motif turns out to be a useful device in describing both the sufferings of exile and the exiled subject's melancholic longing for the native homeland. The

novel develops as an argument to the effect that exile is a temporary place of stay in which an exile waits to return to homeland. This is exemplified by a citing of a Cavafy poem in the second part of the novel: "Keep Ithaka always in your mind / Arriving there is what you are destined for". For Cewerî, the distinctive feature the exile articulates is a state of melancholy for the subject. Ferda, a Kurdish political activist of the 1970s, who had to leave his homeland for political reasons, lives in Stockholm for 28 years in a mood of melancholy: "It has been twenty-eight years I've been living here [Sweden] with the longing for and hope of returning. My body was here; my mind was in the homeland. Half of me was here, the other half in the homeland" (p.20).[200] As this example shows, furthermore, for Cewerî, the melancholy demarcating an exile's life is about a loss, the loss of something left behind. For Ferda, the homeland is an indispensable love object that cannot be replaced by another love object (e.g. host country). Several months after returning to homeland, he is abducted by a Turkish counter-guerrilla unit and gets to be disappeared; in this way, the story of Ferda's melancholic fidelity to the lost homeland turns into a story of Ferda's own loss.

Cewerî's recent novel, *Derza Dilê Min*, too, is saturated with the motifs of loss and melancholy albeit in a very different setting. In this novel, once again written in an epistolary style, the motif of loss operates within love melancholy; it is used to provide an account of love melancholia as a woman's experience around the story of the leading female character, Malîn. The novel attempts to convey that love is an object that is lost the moment it is found for the exiled subject. A Kurdish author (Alan) living in Sweden finds the love of his life (Malîn) "by great coincidence" (p.128) in Istanbul, where he travels to for a seminar. Shortly after

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[200] Bûn bîst û heyşt sal ku ez bi niyeta vegerê li vir dijîm. Laşê min li vir, serê min li welêt bû. Nîvê min li vir nîvê din li welêt bû.

returning to Sweden, he is mysteriously murdered at home. Unaware of this death, Malîn (a well-educated Kurdish woman living in Istanbul) constantly sends letters to her lover despite never getting a reply. The novel, thus, turns into a narrative of unrequited melancholic love, consisting of one-sided romantic letters by Malîn to her unresponsive lover. Her melancholic letters turn the novel into a narrative of women's sensibility in love-melancholy, purporting to reveal the inner world of an urban woman in grief for a lover that she loses immediately after finding him.

The motifs of loss and melancholy also act as fundamental motifs in Cewerî's crime fictions; they are utilised as instrumental motifs for the narration of the legacy of torture and inhuman treatment exercised by the state during the 12 September military regime against (Kurdish) political prisoners. Cewerî is one of the first, if not the only, novelist to produce crime novels in Kurdish literature; his works, *EYB* and *Maria Melekek Bû,* can be considered as the first examples of crime fiction in Kurdish literature, along with Silêman Demir's novel *Li Parka Bajêr* (*In the City Park*, 2013), another Sweden-based Kurdish author.

In Cewerî's crime fiction, the literary tastes of both Scandinavian and postcolonial crime fictions become clearly evident. Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen argues that "Scandinavian crime fiction is commonly considered obsessed with domestic realism and social critique" (2019, p.16); further, he suggests that Scandinavian crime fiction centres the "social and moral decay" caused by the welfare state and "operates within neoliberal post-welfare state, nostalgic about a utopian golden age and critical of the perceived dissolution of trust and social responsibility" (2019, p.16). In Cewerî's novels, the trace of this aesthetic saturation is evidenced particularly in illustrations of the (individual) crime act, which is often set as an implication of the political and social situation surrounding the individual. Remarkably, most

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of his crime fiction operate within the Kurdish political and social milieu either in diaspora or homeland, providing a critical account both of the legacy of state political violence and the Kurdish political and social "decay". For Cewerî, crime fiction is a literary form to engage with the destructive legacy of the state violence, incarceration and torture experienced by the 1970s political generation, to which he himself belonged, in Diyarbakir military prison after the 1980 military coup.

Stougaard-Nielsen (2019) further observes that in "'Nordic Noir', as used to describe the dark, cold, indignant and melancholic crime narratives" (p.16), detectives are often represented as "troubled by a sense of uncontrollable and irreversible social and moral decay to which they themselves remain mere spectators, leaving them in a firm grip of melancholia" (p.16). In Cewerî's crime fictions, as a contrast, murderers are represented as being in the grip of melancholy. The crime act by the character transpires only within the setting of a melancholic subjectivity; the murderer either suffers from a traumatic loss (e.g. Daniel in *Maria Melekek Bû*) or from the melancholy of the loss of a political and cultural ideal (e.g. Temo in *EYB*).

Distinctly operating in settings of colonial oppression and state-induced violence, his crime fiction often turns into an investigation of state crimes against the victimised murderer involved in the act of killing rather than "medical examination of a body to determine the cause of death" or "criminal detection" (Matzke and Muehleisen 2006, p.8). In their *Postcolonial Postmortems* (2006), Christine Matzke and Susanne Mühleisen distinguish illuminating characteristic features of postcolonial crime fictions, highlighting how "elements of crime fiction" are distinctly utilised for "'social' rather than 'criminal' detection" (2006, p.8) in these texts. The study, comprising a collection of essays focusing on postcolonial crime fiction and its utilization in distinct literatures, affords critical considerations of "how colonial

situations have been re-created and re-investigated from the perspective of colonised" (2006, p.8) in texts of this genre. It is especially illuminating in terms of revealing how "the 'postmortem' of postcolonial not only alludes to the investigation of the victim's remains, but also to the body of the individual text and its context" (2006, p.8). On the other hand, complementing this discussion, Stephen Knight (2006) draws attention to cultural function of the crime fiction by highlighting "the relation between crime fiction and a postcolonial consciousness" (p.17). Knight also argues that postcolonial crime fiction is an effective literary device to feature the legacy of colonial and "quasi-colonial" oppressions; his consideration of Australian and Welsh crime fictions exemplifies "the ways in which crime fiction can operate within a country and its cultures as a way of recognising quasi-colonial oppressions - especially those of gender and race" and how crime fiction can be turned into "a significant cultural contributor" in constructing "a postcolonial consciousness" (2006, p.18).

These considerations about the role and function of postcolonial crime fiction provide yet another useful framework for contextualizing Cewerî's crime fiction and understanding the symbolic meanings it intends and the specific literary strategies informing his crime narratives. In these texts, murderers are themselves victims of a criminal act (torture and inhuman treatment) committed by the state; their lives are always undermined by a set of losses caused by systemic torture and inhuman treatments (e.g. the loss of mental health or loss of trust in society). The inability to cope with loss not only keeps them in the grip of melancholy and post-traumatic haunting, but also results in familial crimes (in *EYB* Temo kills his mother; in *Maria Melekek Bû* Daniel kills his wife). The crime act is situated by Cewerî within the character's loss of sanity, melancholy, trauma and schizophrenia; these

psychological motifs are frequently used to represent not only the unstable mood of the tortured subject, but also the political and social reality giving rise to this mood.

In *Maria Melekek Bû*, Daniel Öztürk, a Kurdish political activist of Armenian origin, suffers mental health problems because of the torture and inhuman treatments experienced in Diyarbakır military prison during the 12 September military regime. He lives in Sweden, where he takes asylum as a political refugee after his release, in a mood of melancholy for his lost "youth" and "self" lost in the prison. He seeks for his "youth" and "self" in the streets of Uppsala: "I have lost my self [in prison], I am seeking my self" (p.108).[201] The memories of torture become a haunting spectre for Daniel in the exile: "Co was not leaving you alone; it was attacking and biting you" (p.87).[202] "Co" is the name of a famous torture dog used by the prison administration against political prisoners in Diyarbakır prison in the early 1980s. Also suffering schizophrenia, Daniel kills his wife (Maria) and commits suicide. After killing his wife, upon going to his former fellow-prisoner's house, he has the blood of his murdered wife on his hand; he explains to his friend: "Don't you know that Co bit me?" (p.118).[203] In this way, "Co" becomes the main perpetrator of the act of a crime resulting in irreparable losses and destruction in the life of victimized characters.

In *EYB,* we find yet another account of the murder act committed by a victimized murderer in a mood of melancholy. The representation of this violent form of melancholy is subjected to analysis in detail later in the chapter; nevertheless, in relation to this point, it should be noted now that Cewerî's crime fictions operates almost exclusively within Kurdish political and social

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[201] Min xwe wenda kiriye, ez li xwe digerim.
[202] Co dev ji te bernedida, bi êrîş dihat ser te û tu didirandî.
[203] Ma tu nizanî ku Co ez dirandime?

reality and the character's violent melancholic subjectivity is presented solely as an implication of this reality. The crime in this setting, connotes both the individual's psychological inability of dealing with loss as well as the legacy of state violence and Kurdish political and social "decay". Just as other forms of melancholy in Cewerî's novels, this violent form of melancholy is mediated by the individual's psychology and wider political and social milieu.

This distinct utilisation of the crime motifs by Cewerî and oddity of his protagonists, (often positioned along the border between being the murderer and the victim, the insane and the social critical, or the schizophrenic and the intellectual), also render his crime fiction open to different readings. With respect to this aesthetic choice in crime fiction, Bocheńska (2014) argues that "inspiration of Dostoyevsky is visible and directly mentioned in his works" (p.44). She considers *EYB* as evidence of this literary influence, suggesting that "to some extent it can be compared with Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground* or Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* where the main character became a kind of anti-hero. It gives the author the good possibility to study the state of ressentiment and hatred" (2014, p.44). According to Bocheńska, "like Dostoyevsky, Cewerî wished to explore the borders of human freedom" in *EYB*; on this basis, she suggests that it "may be considered a modern Kurdish update" of *Notes from Underground*, similarly centred around an "example of the anti-hero" in Kurdish literature (2018, p.77). Bocheńska (2018) further argues that, "being the most important Kurdish desire, exposed and praised in many texts […] freedom is usually evaluated as positive and desirable. Cewerî definitely brings it down, showing that being free also means being free to do evil" (2018, p.77). She reads the motif of character's desire to "kill someone" along the axis of the question of the human freedom and will, proposing that, like Dostoyevsky's *underground*

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man, "Cewerî's protagonist loves his own malice and evil […] He sees his own ill will as a fully justified element of the world's order" (p.78). Another commentator, Çayan Okuduci (2022), also claims the influence of *Notes from Underground* on Cewerî's work, considering *EYB* as an example of "underground literature". Okuduci (2022) suggests that *EYB*'s hero is a "modernised version" of Dostoevsky's work as he is "hopeless, resentful, arrogant, denier and hypercritical" like the *underground man*. On the other hand, Cewerî himself also admits the significance of Dostoyevsky's literature for his authorship, emphasising that Dostoyevsky has always had a "privileged" place among the modern authors he loved: "I endeavour to describe the tragedy of miserable people like Dostoyevsky in my prohibited native language" (Cewerî, 2012, p.55).[204]

With respect to Bocheńska's (2014) discussion about *EYB* and its hero, two objections can be put forward. Although the character's (arbitrary) remarks and thoughts about the relation between the act of "killing someone" and the impossibility of free will to make "decisions" [*EYB*, p.21] about his own life lends Cewerî's work to be read in relation to questions of the limits of human freedom in this specific setting, the distinct thematic concerns of *EYB* and the prominent features of the character provide little basis for parallels with *Notes from Underground*. The crime motif in *EYB* is used neither for questioning the notions of "good" and "evil" nor the meaning and limits of "human freedom" but deployed primarily for investigating the repercussions of a case of palpable colonial violence. It is evident that there are some similarities between two texts with respect to the structure of the story and the way it is told: in both texts, the story is relayed through the first-person narration of main

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[204] Yasaklanmış dilimde Dostoyevsky gibi zavallı insanların trajedisini anlatmaya çalışıyorum.

characters alienated from the societies they live in; both heroes are portrayed as well-read and hypercritical personalities and, interestingly, both heroes try to get out of their psychological predicaments by attempting to "save" a prostitute (in *NFU* Liza, in *EYB* Diana). However, the symbolic meanings these two novels aim to convey are completely different; this clear difference does not provide much room for a commensurate comparative reading. Dostoyevsky's work distinctly deals with a set of philosophical questions framed around dilemmas of human civilization, including the question of human freedom and order, reason and desire, the human race's drive to establish and destroy as well as the complex nature of human psychology (e.g. it is conducive to readings that people may in fact take "pleasure" in "suffering" and act contrary to their own "interests" rather than acting rationally). Importantly, the story also turns into a critical account of the predicaments of the modern (Russian) author, who has taken refuge in the "underground" of his own inner world from the vulgarity and simplicity of the real world. As a contrast, Cewerî's novel distinctly deals with the psychological annihilation state violence inflicts on the psyche of the political individual; its very aim seems to be the presentation of a literary version of the legacy of torture and ill-treatment inflicted on the Kurdish individual. Analogously, the characters presented by the two novels are radically different from one another: while for the *underground man*, a uncommon (retired) civil servant, "every sort of consciousness, in fact, is a disease" (2012, p.10), on the other hand, for Temo, a former revolutionary activist, it is not the consciousness itself, but the consciousness of legacy of state violence that turns into a source of restlessness. By parodying his transcendent "disease", Dostoyevsky's hero is asocial, selfish, sceptical, arrogant and sarcastic; the source of his "disease" mostly lies in his hyperconsciousness. On the contrary, Temo's "disease" is a tangible one (schizophrenia); it stems not from his own

inner psychological traits or delusions, but from concrete experiences of violence; as such, his "demonic" psychology, to borrow Lukács' (2006, p.88) term, alludes chiefly to external political and social "evil". At the very start of the story, we learn that Temo is a severe schizophrenic person who has lost his sanity due to torture and inhuman treatment experienced in prison: "when I wake up and regain consciousness or when I am gently napping again, a loud voice echoes in my ears, telling me that: 'you are going to kill someone today'. Whatever that voice told me so far, it has happened" (p.16).[205] Wounded bodily and psychologically, Temo's monologues about his "disease" and idea of "killing someone" represent the furious delirium of a mind wounded by state violence; his remarks on what it means to "kill someone" go no further than illogical inner dialogues of a schizophrenic person in a melancholic mood. And indeed, at the end of story, he cannot kill "someone", but only the loved one (his mother); a matricidal act which is represented by Cewerî as an "extended melancholic suicide" (Schipkowensky 1968, p.65). With this distinct feature, Temo can be described as a tragic hero rather than an "anti-hero"; his killing act involves both tragedy and melancholy. It instantiates a literary form of tragedy where the mentally-ill son kills the beloved mother not consciously and through his "free will", but unwittingly during a schizophrenic episode. On the other hand, it also suggests a literary rendition of a "melancholic murder" (Schipkowensky 1968) occurring as it does due to melancholic illusions of a victimised murderer: he kills his mother so that she will not "suffer any more" from the colonial violence in an oppressed community that has lost its social and political solidarity values .

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[205] Gava bi ser hişê xwe ve têm, an jî gava dîsa bi nermî xilmaş dibim, dengek dikeve guhên min, dengekî bi zingînî, ji min re dibêje; "Tu ê îro yekî bikujî." […] Heta niha wî dengî ji min re çi gotibe wilo bûye.

As this comparison also underlines, with this particular emphasis on the conditions of schizophrenia and insanity caused by the state violence practices, Cewerî draws attention to the legacy of state violence and its perpetual devastating effects on the psyche of the victim. Constructed along the axis of the psychology of disappointed political individual stuck a sense of loss and abandonment, the melancholy motif is turned into an instrumental device to point not only to the irreparable losses inflicted on the individual by the state, but also, generally, to the political and social "decay" and predicaments of an oppressed community under colonial domination. Subjecting these motifs to discussion in focussed depth and covering various forms of melancholic subjectivity in this way, *EYB* and *Lehî*, provide useful sources to examine the use of melancholy motif by Cewerî in its wide diversity and to highlight their political, social and cultural connotations as representations of the Kurdish setting.

5.2. Plot Summary

EYB and *Lehî* cover the stories of two different Kurdish political generations: Temo and Alan from the 1970s generation, and Lehî, a female character, from the 1990s generation. In *EYB*, the story starts off with Temo's release from Diyarbakır military prison in the middle of the 1990s. After serving fifteen years in prison due to his pro-Kurdish political activities, Temo not only loses his mental health and becomes schizophrenic because of the tortures and inhuman treatments suffered, but also his belief in the Kurdish (political) community, viewing it as a bystander to the torture and atrocities perpetrated in the 1980s. After his release, he also realises that the political and cultural ideals he paid a price for are no longer valued by the Kurdish community and that no one appreciates his dedication to the ideal of a free homeland. He feels alone in his city, Diyarbakir: "Now I am alone in this city where I fought

for its freedom and spent fifteen years in prison for" (EYB, p.43).[206] The sounds of Kurdish language are no longer heard in the streets of the city: "sometimes I think as though I had fled from this city and gone to another time and returned back. As if I am not with my nation but settled in another place. No longer does the sound of my mother-tongue echo in my ears in my city […] Oh dear, how could this nation forget this language so easily" (EYB, p.37).[207]

Temo decides to "kill someone" and return to prison. But when he meets Diana (Lehî), a former female guerrilla, who had been captured by Turkish security forces in a clash and forced to work as a prostitute in Diyarbakır, he postpones his plan to kill, hoping that he can make a new start in life with Diana. However, before his second meeting with Diana, Temo is hit by a car at a traffic crossing. The car that hits Temo has onboard a Kurdish author, Alan, who has been living in Sweden since the 1980s and is in Diyarbakir for a literary seminar. The author (Alan), who learns that Temo was going to meet Diana had he not "died" in that traffic accident, decides to meet Diana, whom he assumes is the lover of the victim (Temo), to inform her of his death. After listening to the story of Diana (Lehî), and learning that she is in a desperate position, Alan decides to help Diana, eventually bringing her to Sweden with himself. Believed to have died in the hospital, Temo somehow recovers, returns home and kills his mother, then goes to the hotel where Alan is staying and stabs Diana who has met Alan only because of the accident involving Temo. In the meantime, Alan learns that Temo is one of his old political comrades when Temo visits him in the hotel after killing his mother.

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[206] Li vî bajarê ku ji bo rizgariya wî rabûbûm û di oxira wî de panzdeh salan di hepsê de mame, niha bi tenê me.

[207] Carina tu dibêjî qey ez ji vî bajarî firiyame, çûme demeke din û dîsa lê vegeriyame. Tu dibêjî qey ne di nava miletê xwe de me, lê min xwe li devereke din daniye. Ras e jî. Niha li bajarê min dengê zimanê min nayê guhên min […] Xwedêyo, çawa vî milletî evqasî zû ev ziman ji bîr kir.

Diana survives and Temo returns back to prison at the end of story. Diana (Lehî) manages to go to Sweden thanks to Alan and settles in Stockholm; but the traumatic events she experienced do not allow her to leave behind the sufferings of the past and make a new start in Sweden. In the meantime, Alan is writing a novel about Diana/Lehî's story. At the end of story, Alan is mysteriously killed at home upon completing his novel, called *Lehî*, which questions armed struggle, state sexual violence and the perception of women's "honour" as a taboo by Kurdish (political) community.

EYB can be viewed as a case of inverted-crime fiction, with events revolving mainly around the question of who Temo "will kill". It follows Temo's one day long, tension-filled trip during which he meets many potential victims in the streets of Diyarbakir in his "mission" to kill someone and return back to prison. The novel ends with an open-ended scene keeping the reader with an unanswered question: whom did Temo kill before arriving at Alan's room in the hotel? While Cewerî keeps the reader in a tense suspense around the question of who Temo will kill at the end of story of *EYB,* in *Lehî,* the second novel in the sequel, we learn that Temo has killed not "someone", but a loved one, his mother. In this way, the focus of Cewerî's novel surprisingly shifts from the act of killing "someone" due to melancholic depression to the "melancholic murder" of a loved one as a result of melancholic depression.

On the other hand, *Lehî,* which opens with the final scene of *EYB,* despite the questions it raises about Temo's crime act, exhibits certain characteristics of metafiction. In *Lehî,* we are continually reminded that what we are reading is a fiction in progress, written by an author (Alan), who is "writing a novel which is narrated through the voice of a first-person women narrator", Diana/Lehî. Towards the end of the novel, we learn that Alan has been trying to

write a novel of a time "in which [he] and [Diana/Lehî] are represented" (*Lehî*, p.214).[208] In *Lehî*, we learn the reasons why Temo kills not just "someone" but especially his mother through his letters from prison to Alan. Utilising dialogues between Alan and Lehî, Cewerî brings readers attention to a spectrum of questions including female "honour" in the Kurdish society, the difficulties as well as potentials of exile for an author whose mother-tongue is banned in his country, the meaning of writing for a subordinate community and the symbolic meaning of producing a literature in an unread(able) language (Kurdish). As a distinct feature, the treatment of these questions in *EYB* and *Lehî*, which can be considered as a duology, is undertaken through the narration of the story by three first-person narrators: Alan, Temo and Lehî. The narrators move back and forth to narrate the events and their stories in relation to the other characters in the course of the two volumes. However, the following discussion does not follow the volumes in strict sequential order; instead, it attempts to examine the story of each character, which spreads over two novels, in its continuity. For quotations taken from the texts, the respective novel's name and page numbers are provided in brackets.

5.3. Representing "Melancholic Murder" as Political and Cultural Protest

This section of the discussion provides an account of the representation of melancholy as a violent response to the loss of a political and cultural ideal. It specifically deals with the motif of "melancholic murder" (Schipkowensky 1968) utilised by Cewerî to highlight the legacy of the Diyarbakır military prison during the 12 September military regime as well as the political and social disappointments of the Kurdish political subjects who were imprisoned during this

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[208] Ez û tu tê de dilivin.

time.[209] In another novel, *Maria Melekek Bû*, Cewerî makes the point that the legacy of state violence and torture causes irreparable losses for the tortured victims (e.g. loss of one's mental health, "youth" and "self") and these lost loved objects become objects of melancholic mourning for the victims in the rest of their lives; the implication of this state of loss and melancholy on the victim's personality is violent acts often directed to their loved ones. While Cewerî situates the act of killing of a loved one within the character's unconscious domain (that Daniel is unaware of what he is doing when he kills his wife during a schizophrenic attack) in *Maria Melekek Bû*, as a contrast, in *EYB,* the same act operates not merely within the character's "unconscious" domain (schizophrenia), but also the "conscious" one (as Temo intellectually defends the act of killing his mother even though he does this during a schizophrenic attack). This is evident in the presentation of Temo's matricide as a conscious "melancholic murder" aiming to "save" the loved one from the evilness of the external world. In this way, the murder motif turns into the political and cultural critique of both the legacy of state violence and of the Kurdish (political) community itself. *EYB* in this way also conveys that the "melancholic murder" is at once a symbolic suicide for the "melancholic murderer", and a form of "self-punishment" (Freud 1917, p.251).

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[209] Diyarbakır prison, where mostly Kurdish political prisoners were held, "has become one of the dark and deathly sites in the contemporary history of the Kurdish people in Turkey" (Aras 2014, p.165) during the 12 September 1980 military regime. In the period between 1980 and 1984, "what has been called 'the period of barbarity'" (Zeydanlıoğlu 2009, p.7), thousands of Kurdish political prisoners became the victims of tortures in Diyarbakır prison. As noted by Welat Zeydanlıoğlu, while systematic torture became a common practice in almost all detention centres and prisons across Turkey following the 1980 military coup, "an intensive 'prison curriculum' aimed at turkifying the incarcerated Kurds" (2009, p.10) through brutal tortures was a practice peculiar to the Diyarbakır prison. Examining the traumatic experiences of former Kurdish political prisoners who served in Diyarbakir prison in the early 1980s, Aras (2014) remarks that "the survivors of Diyarbakir prison, along with those of other prisons, still suffer from physical disabilities and trauma caused by brutal torture, humiliation and severe conditions in the prison" (p.166).

In the clinical sense, both suicide and the killing of a loved one are considered by modern psychoanalysis as two extreme reactions that can emerge from melancholy. While Freud's account pays particular attention to "melancholic's propensity to suicide" (1917, p.427),[210] others highlight the relationships between melancholy and the act of killing of a loved one. For instance, dealing with the issue of familial murder from a psychological point of view, British psychiatrist Bernard Hollander identifies some links between familial murder and melancholy in his 1922 study, *The Psychology of Misconduct, Vice, and Crime*. Hollander argues that "a person suffering from melancholia" may kill his loved ones "because of his abject depression and misery" (2015, p.80), despite not offering an illuminating account of the relationship between murderer's melancholy and the act of annihilation of a loved one. Bulgarian psychiatrist Nikola Schipkowensky provides further detail on the relationship between psychology of loss and the act of killing a loved one in his 1968 article 'Affective Disorders: Cyclophrenia and Murder'. Schipkowensky describes "melancholic murder" as "annihilation of the beloved ones to save them from doom" (1968, p.67), suggesting that "melancholic murder" may, in fact, be considered as an "extended melancholic suicide" (p.65). He argues that if the melancholic "imagines the imminent impoverishment of his family" (p.64), he may kill "his beloved objects". On Schipkowensky's argument (1968), the psychic motivations behind the "melancholic's tendency to murder" (p.65) involve both

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[210] Melancholic's "tendency to suicide" is considered by Freud (1917, p.252) as one of its most harmful implications; the "murderous impulse" (p.252) of the melancholic to kill himself also involves the symbolic killing of the lost loved object. In 'The Libido Theory and Narcissism' (1917), Freud describes the psychology of melancholic suicide as: "The self-reproaches, with which these melancholic patients torment themselves in the most merciless fashion, in fact apply to another person, the sexual object which they have lost […] The subject's own ego is then treated like the object that has been abandoned, and it is subjected to all the acts of aggression and expressions of vengefulness which have been aimed at the object" (p.427).

"indirect suicide" and the murderer's "melancholic delusions" to "save" the loved one from "real or imaginary" perils and sufferings:

> Melancholic may kill the most helpless members of his family to save them from suffering, without any intention of self-destruction (pity murder). When he experiences fear for his own immediate death, he kills his beloved objects so as not to leave them to future peril after his inevitable absence (thanotophobic murder) (p.66).

Arguing from these premises, Schipkowensky (1968) suggests that "the first variety of melancholic murder is determined (the extended melancholic suicide)" (p.65). Providing some psychological insights on the murderous impulses which "burst out […] in the form of a melancholic seizure" (1968, p.161), Schipkowensky's account of "melancholic murder" offers a useful conceptual framework for understanding as well as contextualising the motif of "melancholic murder" effected by *EYB*. Although *EYB*'s purpose of utilization of motif is largely aimed at revealing the political and social "decay" rather than the individual's psychological decay, there are interesting parallels between its depiction of the psychology of melancholic killer (Temo) who murders his mother and Schipkowensky's account of the familicide committed by "mentally abnormal offenders" in a mood of melancholy.

For instance, Temo states the following in a letter written to Alan after killing his mother and returning to prison: "I saved my mother. Now she has been emancipated from all her own and her son's [Temo] sufferings and she is in an eternal sleep. There needs only a grave for

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her, once I bury her my mind will be at ease" (*Lehî*, p.125).[211] He further remarks that his

mother would not be left as vulnerable against the evils of the world outside in his absence:

> Now I am in prison. My condition is well, I am at ease, I did get rid of the disorder
>
> of the city and its peoples. I am no longer concerned about my old mother, what
>
> she is doing, who is looking after her, who is cooking for her, who is washing her
>
> clothes. Now I also know she will not need others. [Hence] I do not regret what I
>
> have done" (*Lehî*, pp.144–5).[212]

He also describes the murder act he committed as an "extended melancholic suicide"

(Schipkowensky 1968): "I had drained my fountain of life and I know I will also be left barren

by this drain" (*Lehî*, p.76).[213] In *EYB*, the murder act is chiefly evoked within this act of

matricide deriving from the melancholic murderer's delusional feelings and ideas of "saving"

his mother.

The term "matricide" refers to the killing of a mother in the literal or symbolic sense. In

'Rethinking Matricide' (2017), Amber Jacobs argues that in feminist theory and

psychoanalysis, the term is used "to point the subordination, the denigration, the

marginalisation of and silencing of the mother in Western discourses, or it is used to describe

a conscious or unconscious fantasy of wanting to kill the mother" (p.25). On the other hand,

Julia Kristeva considers *symbolic* matricide as a vital necessity for the individual to form his or

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[211] Min diya xwe xelas kir. Ew aniha ji êşên xwe û ji êşên kurê xwe rizgar bûye û ketiye xewa herheyî. Tenê jê re gorrek lazim e, ez wê veşêrim êdî wê dilê min rehet bibe.

[212] Ez niha li girtîgehê me. Rewşa min baş e, ez aram im, ez ji xirecira bajêr û ji wan mirovên wê rizgar bûme. Ez êdî nafikirim ka gelo pîra diya min çi dike, kî lê dinêre, kî xwarina wê çêdike, kî kincên wê dişon. Ez dizanim ku ew ê nekeve ber dest û lingan jî. Ez ji ber wê kirinê ne poşman im.

[213] Min kehniya xwe miçiqandibû, ez dizanim ezê jî bi wê miçiqandinê ziwa bibûma.

her own individual personality. In *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1989), Kristeva argues that "for man and woman the loss of the mother is a biological and psychic necessity, the first step on the way to becoming autonomous. Matricide is our vital necessity, the sine-qua-non condition of our individuation" (pp.27-28).

In *EYB*, the character's matricidal act is embodied neither as "denigration" (Jacobs 2017) of the mother by the son nor as symbolic of a melancholic detachment from the mother as argued by Kristeva (1989); instead, it is utilised as a literary device to highlight also the "subordination", "marginalisation" and dehumanization of the Kurdish mothers whose children were imprisoned in Diyarbakır military prison after the September 12 military coup, the psychological sufferings of a political generation (1970s) who lost their mental health due to systematic state violence in prison (e.g. schizophrenia and trauma) as well as the disappointments, dilemmas and melancholy experienced by this political generation after release. Characteristically, in *EYB*, utilising the matricide motif for multiple purposes, Cewerî, provides two different, and indeed, contradictory accounts of the murder act committed by the character, leaving in question whether this matricide occurs as a result of the character's schizophrenia or his melancholy.

The first account of the character's matricidal act is posed in the "unconscious" domain, taking place due to paranoid schizophrenic delusion. In this account, the matricidal act is represented as an unexpected tragic event, which the character unconsciously commits during a schizophrenic seizure. Temo, who is one of the first-person narrators of *EYB* and *Lehî*, in describing what happened at the crime scene, provides two contradictory accounts of the act. Firstly, he writes to the author (Alan) from prison that at the moment of the murder, he was "laughing hysterically" at his mother and it was as if his "lunatic laughing" was

transmitting to his mother. He remarks that his mother seemed to him "like a witch" (*Lehî*, p.70)[214] and that, at the moment, it was "as if a dozen hands held [his] hands" and "took the knife" from his pocket and "stuck it in that witch" (*Lehî*, p.70).[215] After killing his mother, Temo recounts: "she transformed and became my mother [again], I came to my senses and became Temo [again]" (*Lehî*, p.70). In this version of the description of matricide, the act of killing is described as a tragic loss rather than an act of "saving" the beloved mother. The murderer describes his regret once the schizophrenic episode is over and he realises that he has killed her: "I wanted to become a child, return to my childhood, not serve fifteen years in prison, not kill my mother and not to be left alone in the world" (*Lehî*, p.75).[216] This account of the matricidal act is situated by Cewerî in the domain of clinical psychology; the murder is the result of character's loss of sensibility due to torture in prison, highlighting the tragically devastating legacy of the military regime.

The other account of this matricide by Cewerî, which constitutes the large bulk of *Lehî*, suggests that the character's matricidal act is an implication of "a conscious fantasy", emerging as an *intellectual* reaction of the melancholic character both to state violence as well as the Kurdish political and social "decay". The first account of this "conscious fantasy" involves the critique of state violence against Kurds. The circumstances of the mother's life, which is already a "lost" life after endless state violence, constitutes one layer of this melancholic murder. The story of Temo's mother, who "had [once] been regarded like Gorky's

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[214] Wek pîrebokekê.

[215] Di wê pîrebokê re rakir.

[216] Min […] dixwest ez zarokek bûma, vegeriyama zaroktiya xwe, pazdeh salan di hepsan de nemabûma, min diya xwe nekuştiyabûya û li darê dinyayê bi tenê nemabûma.

'Mother' among [Temo's] comrades" (*EYB*, p.50),[217] represents the experiences of the family members of the political activists, who, only because of this, were subject to endless violence during the 1980s. "Her husband and [other] son were killed [by the Turkish counter-guerrilla] in front of her eyes" (*EYB*, p.64)[218] because of Temo's involvement in the Kurdish political struggle. While Temo is in prison, she participates in protests against the torture and inhuman treatments in Diyarbakır prison; "her honour" is trampled upon "under soldiers' boots" (*EYB*, p.19) in these protests. Thus, as he contemplates killing his mother if he were not to find anyone else to kill, Temo asks: "is her life really a life?" (*EYB*, p.64).[219] For Temo, his mother's life cannot be defined as a life; instead, it is a passage of suffering and loss. For this reason, when Temo kills her mother, he contends that "I have purified her from all bodily and psychological pains and sufferings" (*Lehî*, p.113).[220]

The second account of this "conscious fantasy" is situated within the domain of character's mood of melancholy; after he is released from prison, he also loses his trust in the Kurdish (political) community. His concern about his old mother that "she is going to end up in the poorhouse" (*EYB*, p.20)[221] if he kills "someone" and returns to the prison motivates him to kill his own mother. In this account, the murder act is used as a critical motif to articulate the political and social "decay" of Kurdish community; the character is represented not as a mentally abnormal offender, but a social critic who exposes this political and social "decay": "I knew what those who stab their parents or siblings to death are called. I was not one of

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[217] Di nava hevalên me de mîna "Dayika" Gorkî dihat bi nav kirin.
[218] Mêrê wê û kurê wê li ber çavên wê hatine kuştin.
[219] Ma jiyana wê jiyan e?
[220] Min [...] ew ji hemû êş û elemên laşî û ruhî pak kiribû.
[221] Ew têkeve ber dest û lingan.

those types of killer" (*Lehî*, p.113).[222] The murderer, in this setting, is a good reader of books: "if the intellectuals of the city read a book in a month, [Temo] read[s] two in a week" (*EYB*, p.26).[223] Furthermore, he loses not only his mental health and "youth", but also his father and younger brother, who are killed by the Turkish intelligence service, due to his own interest in "reading" books and the resulting involvement in the Kurdish political struggle: "If I had not pursued books and books did not lead me astray, I would not have been the cause of the murder of [my] father and brother and I would have not remained so miserable and sad in the world after them" (EYB, p.62).[224]

Melancholy characterises the subjectivity of the murderer in two settings. First, it is described as the character's grief for loss of his mental health and vitality in Diyarbakir prison. As evidenced by the character's words, the "dark clouds" of the coup had "rained poison" on this political generation: "it wounded both our body and mind" (*Lehî*, p.90).[225] The mental and physical losses inflicted upon the lives of political prisoners by the 12 September military regime are represented as irrecoverable losses. Second, melancholy is presented as the quality of the character's attachment to the political and cultural ideals for which he paid a price; Temo is in a melancholic mourning for the loss of these political and cultural ideals.

His mental state after being released also highlights the impossibility of returning to a normal life for those who have experienced Diyarbakir prison:

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[222] Min dizanîbû ji ên ku bi kêran dê û bav, an jî xwişk û birayên xwe dikujin re çi dibêjin. Ez ne ji van cinsan bûm.

[223] Heke biaqilên bajêr mehê kitêbekê bixwînin, ez heftê du kitêban diqedînim.

[224] Heke min nedabûya dû kitêban û kitêban ez ji rê dernexistama, ez ê nebûma sebeba kuştina bav û biran û li darê dinyayê li dû wan stûxwar nemama.

[225] Hem laş hem jî ruhê me birîndar kir.

I served fifteen years in the prison for the sake of my political ideals […] I was

released and have regained my freedom. However, there is no sign of the

happiness of the regaining freedom on my face. My eyes, which have lost their

liveliness, are suffocating in an acute sadness and there are no signs of desire for

life left in them. My mother knows this; she sees this reality every day, but she is

treating me as though I am the Temo of the past (EYB, p.18).[226]

The legacy of Diyarbakır prison is the irreparable loss of self and mental health for the tortured

victim. As a political activist, Temo was once "like a symbol" among his friends and considered

as "a hero" by his (political) community. After he comes out of prison mentally ill, he turns

into a figure of ridicule in his community: "when I want to participate in discussions and make

comments on political, social and psychological issues, I suddenly miss the point, whatever I

do I cannot remember the words and sentences which I had once used like a master of the

words. Even if I don't forget [my words], they become an object of derision and mockery to

people" (EYB, p.37).[227] Describing his experience of Diyarbakır prison, Temo remarks that

what happened in Diyarbakır prison is an "unspeakable" experience:

A-maddened-state has tested all kinds of torture on my delicate body. If I were to

tell what they did to me in your presence, you would be annoyed and say that it

is not possible for a person to do this to their fellow human being. If you don't

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[226] Ez di ber armanca xwe de pazdeh salan girtî mabûm [...] niha jî gihîştibûm azadiya xwe. Lê misqala
nîşana gihîştina azadiyê di xetên rûyê min de xuya nake. Çavên min, ên ku roniya wan kêm bûne, di
girrika melûliyê de fetisîne, tu şopa şewqa jiyanê di wan de nemaye. Diya min bi vê dizane, her roj vê
dibînê, lê mîna ez Temoyê berê bim bi min re dide û distîne.

[227] Gava dixwazim têkevim şiroveyên siyasî, civakî û psîkolojîkî, tavilê xwe ji bîr dikim, dikim nakim ew
gotinên ku demekê lib bi lib ji devê min derdiketin û wek bilbil lê diçûm, niha ji bîra min diçin. Ji bîra
min neçe jî dibim pêkenokê xelkê.

believe me, ask Mehdî Zana, he is alive, he is going to tell you [what they did]

(p.63).[228]

Through its intertextual reference to Mehdî Zana's account of Diyarbakır prison, Cewerî's

novel, on the one hand, engages with testimonial narratives of Diyarbakir prison written by

former political prisoners;[229] however, on the other hand, by avoiding the detailed

descriptions of torture and inhuman treatment as well as the prisoners' resistances against

these practices through Temo's voice, it implicitly emphasises that its focus is not tortures

and resistances against these in Diyarbakir prison, the two main motifs dominating

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[228] Zirdevletekê hemû celebên îşkenceyê li ser laşê min ê nazik ceribandine. Heke ez kirinên wan di hizûra we de bi lêv bikim, we mahdê we bixele, hûn ê bibêjin ne mimkin e insan van kirinan di hemcinsê xwe de bike. Hûn ji min bawer nakin, ji Mehdî Zana bipirsin, ew sax e, ê ji we ra bibêje.

[229] Mehdî Zana, a Kurdish politician and former mayor of city of Diyarbakır who was imprisoned after the 1980 military coup, narrates the experience of Diyarbakir prison in detail in his testimonial narrative, *Bekle Diyarbakır* (1991). He describes routine torture sessions in Diyarbakır prison during the 1980s: "We were taken into cells, we were put into cesspools, and we were deprived of every human need [...] Putting batons in peoples' anuses, forcing some people with weak personalities to rape each other, sitting on bottles, feeding people human faeces [...] were the usual events of our daily lives" (p.324 [translation my own]). The testimonial narratives of the other Kurdish political prisoners, who served in Diyarbakır prison between 1980 and 1984, confirm Zana's descriptions. Bayram Bozyel, another Kurdish politician describes the Prison as a "hell" which was "working with its own laws" (2007, p.115) in his 1987 testimonial narrative *Diyarbakır 5 No.lu*. In the foreword of the second edition of his testimonial book, Bozyel remarks that: "Twenty years after its first edition, when I read my book in order to re-publish it, I felt great discomfort [...] Many of the events described in the book were unbelievable. Thus, I read them with surprise; have I really experienced all these narrated events?" (2007, p.7 [translation my own]). Similarly, in *Dörtlerin Gecesi* (1990), another testimonial narrative, Fevzi Yetkin and Mehmet Tanboğa remark that, "there is no sign of break, relaxation and respite in Diyarbakir Prison. Every hour, minute and millisecond of prisoners is occupied. [In Diyarbakir Prison] the name of life is lifelong torture" (p.183 [translation my own]). In *O Türküyü Söyle* (2006), Selim Çürükkaya, one of the former central cadres of the PKK, presents the ethnic aspect of torture performed in Diyarbakir prison: "a soldier puts greasy baton into a prisoner's anus. The prisoner's screams reach beyond the courtyard [...] The soldier pulls back himself a bit and shouts [to the other prisoners]: Look, fuckers! This is a Kurd with a tail!" (pp.16-17 [translation my own]). For other testimonial narratives, see for instance, Şerafettin Kaya's *Diyarbakır'da İşkence* (the date of first edition unknown [second edition 2016]), Edip Polat's *Diyarbakır Gerçeği* (1991), Yılmaz Sezgin's *Sayım Düzenine Geç!* (2006), Raşit Kısacık's *Diyarbakır Cezaevi - İşkence ve Ölümü* (2011), Hasan Hayri Aslan's *Diyarbakır 5 No'lu Cehenneminde Ölümden de Öte* (2015) and Rahime Kesici Karakaş's *5 Noluda Kadın Olmak* (2017).

testimonial narratives of Diyarbakir prison, but rather it is the subjectivity of the tortured victim encapsulated by the sense of loss and melancholy. Temo neither wants to "remember" the memories of torture nor talk about the prisoners' resistances against the torture: "the traces of deep wounds opened in my soul and mind have not closed yet [...] I never want to remember that time. When I think of those times, these thoughts cause [me] to lose my way" (EYB, p.30).[230]

There are two issues that Cewerî wants his suffering character to particularly "remember" and recount: the first is the mood of melancholy caused by the feeling of abandonment by the Kurdish (political) community after he is imprisoned for the sake of the ideals of Kurdishness; the second is his melancholic suffering in the face of the loss of these political and cultural ideals after his release. In this way, the novel especially emphasises that the 1970s political generation who lived through the Diyarbakır prison experience found themselves in a double-layered melancholy mood after their time in prison. One aspect of this melancholy mood is represented through the character's loss of trust in his own (political) community. The feeling of abandonment is depicted as a fundamental feeling of this political generation. Temo remarks that after he was arrested because of Kurdish "national cause", people "turned their faces" away from him: "no one wrote to me, [not even] a few lines of a letter that could have eased my sufferings behind those cold walls" (*EYB*, p.16).[231] The implication of this sense of abandonment is the sense of loss and melancholy for the character: "why did all of you leave me? Why didn't you ask after me even once?" (*Lehî*, p.25).

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[230] Şopên birînên kûr ên ku di ruh û mêjiyê min de vebûn hê winda nebûne [...] Ez qet naxwazim wê demê bi bîr bînim. Çaxa lêdifikirim, fikir rê li min şaş dike.

[231] Rojekê kesî ji min re du rêz nenivîsandin da dilê min di nava çar dîwarên sar de hinekî germ bibe.

The other allusions of the character's melancholy mood involve a set of abstract political and cultural losses; the melancholy motif in this setting is utilised to represent the melancholic mourning of a political generation for the lost political and cultural ideals as well as its repercussions. The subjectivity of the 1970 political generation is depicted around motifs of melancholic commitment to political and cultural ideals, their inability to engage in new forms of resistance emerging in the Kurdish political domain after release as well as the social alienation and marginalization caused by the changes in the political and social milieu in which they find themselves.

Temo is embodied as a critical voice of this subjectivity. Although his mental health deteriorates in the prison, he has not lost his critical view of society and events: "I wish I had also lost my ability to think" (p.177).[232] He emerges as a social critic exposing the "ungratefulness" of the Kurdish community for which he has spent fifteen years in the prison "for the freedom of their homeland" (*EYB*, p.32).[233] The unfulfilled desires and ideals for which a great price has been paid is a melancholic torment for the character; the lost ideals are also an object of rageful mourning. Temo's mourning for the lost ideals reflects this twofold impact:

> We were going to emancipate this city [and country] from this situation; we would
>
> rid it of all badness and dirtiness and lived like brothers. Where are all those
>
> ideals? They do not concern the city and its dwellers at all. They don't know how

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[232] Xwezî min qabiliyeta xwe ya fikrê jî wenda bikira.
[233] Ji bo rizgariya warê wan.

my head was smashed into concrete walls and my screams were echoed on the

hands of torturers for their freedom. (*EYB*, p.31)[234]

Furthermore, the character mourns for the loss of the Kurdish language which is no longer

voiced in Diyarbakır's streets; Temo critically describes: "apart from villagers and poor people,

no one speaks Kurdish; the Kurdish language is omitted from the mouths of [Kurdish]

'gentlemen'. Even those who have taken the [Kurdish] name of this city [Amed] and are proud

of carrying that name do not at all value the language of this city itself" (*EYB*, p.52).[235] The

fact that the Kurdish language has begun to lose its importance in Kurdish urban areas is

offered as a further sign of the loss of the ideal of Kurdishness in the community:

> Isn't it a deep suffering that you experience unbelievable tortures continuously
>
> for three months for a cause and ideal and serve fifteen years in prison; then you
>
> are released and now you no longer have any friends; you are in need of a piece
>
> of bread; the language of that people you attempted to emancipate no longer
>
> exists now, so you walk in your city like a stranger? (EYB, p.53).[236]

Throughout *EYB*, we are presented with the character's mourning for the loss of a set of

abstract objects, reflecting the discrepancy between the political desires and ideals of the

1970s political generation and the given political and social reality of Kurds: he mourns for

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[234] Me ê ev bajar ji vê rewşê rizgar bikira, me ê ew ji hemû xerabî û qirêjiyan pak bikira û em ê tê de weke biran bijiyan. Ka? Qet ne xema bajêr û bajariyan e. Ew nizanin ku ji bo azadiya wan serê min li dîwarên betonî ketiye, dengê barebara min di nava pencên îşkencekaran de di felekan re derketiye.

[235] Ji bilî gundî û feqîran kes bi kurdî nepeyive û zimanê kurdî ji devê "efendiya" derketiye. Ên ku navê vî bajarî li xwe kirine û xwe bi navê bajêr qure dikin jî pênc peran bi zimanê vî bajarî nadin.

[236] Ma ev ne ezabek e ku tu ji bo armancekê sê mehan bi şev û roj di îşkenceyeke neddîtî re derbas bibî, panzdeh salan di girtîgehê de bimînî, dû re derkevî, hevalekî te nemabe, tu hewcedarê pariyek nan bî, ew gelê ku tu li dû rizgarkirina zimanê wî bûyî, ew ziman nemabe û tu wilo li bajarê xwe mîna yekî xerîb bigerî.

the loss of the ideal of the social and political solidarity in Kurdish society as though it had only existed before his imprisonment; he grieves for the devaluation of the Kurdish language and its gradual disappearance in Kurdish urban life as though it was valued highly in the Kurdish society before; he depicts the prevalence of prostitution in Kurdish urban life as a social and cultural "decay" and mourns for a virtuous community that has disappeared as though it has existed before imprisonment: "the city, which […] we had once stood up for its freedom […] now openly sells its girls as livelihood" (EYB, p.33).[237]

What is particularly emphasised by *EYB* in its descriptions of character's melancholic torment and rage caused by a set of losses is that the character suffers more not from concrete losses he experiences in prison (mental and physical health as well as loss of his father and brother), but from the loss of abstract ideals he witnesses upon release from prison. His subjectivity is saturated with "a loss of more ideal kind" (Freud 1917, p.245); and further, what renders this subjectivity melancholic is that the objects of love for which it mourns remain on the border of a *loss* and *absence*.

Freud (1917) argues that "a loss of [ideal] kind has occurred, but one cannot see clearly what it is that has been lost, and it is all the more reasonable to suppose that the patient cannot consciously perceive what he has lost either" (p.245). In 'Trauma, Absence, Loss,' (1999), Dominick LaCapra further argues that "when absence, approximated to loss, becomes the object of mourning, the mourning may (perhaps must) become impossible and turn

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[237] Ev bajarê ku […] em ji bo rizgariya wî rabûbûn […] êdî bi awayekî eşkere ji bo têrkirina zikê xwe keçên xwe difiroşe.

continually back into endless melancholy" (p.715). LaCapra describes the dilemma of "absence' and "loss" as follows:

> When absence is converted into loss, one increases the likelihood of misplaced nostalgia or utopian politics in quest of a new totality or fully unified community. When loss is converted into (or encrypted in an indiscriminately generalized rhetoric of) absence, one faces the impasse of endless melancholy, impossible mourning, and interminable aporia in which any process of working through the past and its historical losses is foreclosed or prematurely aborted (1999, p.698).

In *EYB*, two main features are particularly highlighted in the character's narrative of his melancholic torment: first, the objects of love for whose absence he mourns are idealised objects; second, "the distinction between […] absence and loss" (LaCapra 1999, p.699) is blurred in this account of lost love objects' list. According to Temo's critical account of contemporary Kurdish community, the "absence" is defined as the lost object (e.g. a liberated and just community and an appreciated mother-tongue under Turkish political and cultural hegemony); he describes a "fully unified" Kurdish community free from social, economic and cultural decay, dominated by social solidarity as well as one that firmly embraces the political and cultural ideals of Kurdishness as loss, as though the Kurdish community was characterised only with these virtues before.

EYB positions the character's murder act within this kind of melancholic subjectivity shaped by the tension between the individual's desires and ideals on the one hand, and the political and cultural reality of the society on the other. In this subjectivity, unsurprisingly, lost ideals emerge as the object of both a melancholic mourning and anger: "the years of my life that

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passed in prison became the victim of an ideal and that ideal sacrificed me to itself" (*Lehî*, p.156).[238] It is depicted as a state of stuckness, preventing the subject to adapt himself to the new political and social milieu as well as to engage with new forms of the ongoing political resistance: "I have been released but cannot take refuge outside. I feel alone outside" (*EYB*, p.50).[239]

Frosh (2013) argues that "melancholic subjectivity has its attractions, but melancholia is also genuinely a state of stuckness and inward-directed destructiveness; too much of it is around, and it is important to move from it towards a more outward-directed commitment to resistance and renewal" (p.108). Analogously, through the motif of character's desire of killing "someone" and eventual "return to [his] own trustworthy comrades in prison for the sake of these ungrateful people [the Kurds]" (*Lehî*, p.135),[240] Cewerî's novel also highlights that this kind of melancholic subjectivity may result in not only "a state of stuckness and inward-directed destructiveness", but also an outward-directed violence (e.g. the killing of loved ones). In this setting, the crime act turns into a signifier of the character's rejection to detach from lost political ideals and to engage in new forms of resistance to recover the political and cultural ideals which he feels has been lost: "from now on, prison is my land, homeland and place. By serving fifteen years there, I am already accustomed to the prison and apart from prison, I cannot make another place my home, I cannot take refuge in another place;

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[238] Hemû salên min ên bihurî bûn qurbana fikrekê û wê fikrê ez kirim kurbana xwe.
[239] Hatime berdan, lê li derve nasitirim. Li derve xwe bi tenê dibînim.
[240] Vegerim ba hevalên xwe ên dilsoz ku ji bo van mirovên nankor di hundir de bûn.

everything [in the outside life] seems alien and vulgar to me, everything hurts me" (*Lehî*, p.136).[241]

Comprising a multiplicity of meanings in Cewerî's utilisation, the motif of "melancholic murder" thus becomes a functional literary device to reveal both the predicaments of a political subjectivity at odds with the social reality as well as the political and social "decay" of the Kurdish (political) community. The novel seems to assert that in a subordinate community which has lost the notion of social solidarity, it is impossible for the victims of state violence to overcome the legacy of violence and torture and make a new start in life. The scene where the author's car runs over Temo is arguably an allegory of this impossibility; it is not difficult to understand that this scene is the author's deliberate intervention in the story of *EYB*, aiming to highlight that the Kurdish (political) community lacks social and cultural mechanisms that could heal Temo's "wounded" soul. Dialogues in which Temo expresses his desire to make a new start in life and move on also reveal this: "if someone like Diana holds my hands and embeds her heart in my wounded heart, I would immediately forget all [my] sufferings and put my head on her arms and drop off to sleep in a dream of her love" (*EYB*, p.68).[242] The idea of "saving" Lehî and the possibility of a love relationship with Lehî could also "save" Temo: "instead of killing someone, now I am trying to save someone [Lehî]. By emancipating someone I will also save my life" (*EYB*, p.73).[243] With this motif, Cewerî suggests that the Kurdish political and social reality does not offer even a glimmer of hope to the victim

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[241] Êdî girtîgeh warê min, welatê min e, cihê min e. Ez di panzdeh salan de fêrî wir bûme û ji wir pê ve nikarim cihekî din ji xwe re bikim war, nikarim li cihekî din bisitirim; her tişt ji min re xerîb e, xav e, min diêşîne.

[242] Heke yeka wilo bi destê min bigre û dilê xwe bispêre dilê min ê birîndar, ez ê tavilê her tiştî ji bîr bikim, serê xwe deynim ser milê wê û di xeyala evîna wê de xilmaş bibim.

[243] Ji dêla kuştina yekî ez dikim yekê xelas bikim. Bi xelaskirina yekê re ez ê jiyana xwe jî xelas bikim.

of state violence: "if I had hope, if I had a lover with me outside, my hope would have strengthened and I would have been able to stand on my feet [in outside life] thanks to that strong hope. Or that hope would have kept me stronger" (*Lehî*, p.203).[244]

This saturation of the character's crime act with political, social and cultural realities turns crime writing into a useful literary device for Cewerî to reveal a further version of melancholic subjectivities informed by the Kurdish political and social milieu. The crime in this setting is represented not as an act of a criminal anti-hero, but as a violent act of a tragic hero caught in a seizure of an insanity caused by state violence, at odds with the political and social realities; it functions as a political protest aimed at both the political and social "degeneration" of Kurdish community failing to own up its cultural and political ideals and support the victims of Diyarbakır prison as well as of the devastating legacy of state violence in general: "the act (murder) I will perform today is all of our doing, it is a consequence of the humanity of us all" (*EYB*, p.29).[245]

The use of melancholy as a critical literary device to represent the legacy of state violence as well as the social and cultural response of the Kurdish (political) community to those who became the subject of this violence can also be clearly seen in the portrayal of the melancholy of the female character, Lehî, whose life turns into a passage of endless grief after losing her "honour" due to state sexual violence. The melancholy of the female character also emerges as a malady informed by the dynamics of the Kurdish political, social and cultural reality rather than merely by her particular psychological adequacy to deal with loss.

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[244] Heke hêviyeke min hebûya, heke evîndareke min li derve li bende min bûya, wê hêviya min xurt bûya û min ê bi wê hêviya xurt xwe li ser lingan bihişta. An jî wê hêviyê ez xurt bihiştama.

[245] Ev bûyera ku ez ê îro pêk bînim, berhema me hemûyan e, encama mirovatiya me ye.

5.4. The Impossibility of Grieving the Lost Female "Honour"

In what follows, the discussion provides an examination of the representation of melancholy as a response to the loss of female "honour" in a traditional and patriarchal community as well as the motif of trauma deployed to stress the incurability of the sufferings inflicted upon the psychology of those subjected to state sexual violence. In the story of female character (Lehî), both melancholy and trauma motifs are utilised by Cewerî to highlight the plight of being a female political subject in the Kurdish community in a violent political struggle as well as the vulnerability of women's subjectivity according to prevalent notions of "honour" in the Kurdish community. While Cewerî uses the motif of a traumatic loss (the female "honour" as a result of rape and forced prostitution) to highlight the legacy of state sexual violence, the motif of character's inability to cope with loss is utilised to represent the issue of female "honour" in the Kurdish (political) community; the implication is that the state of the Kurdish community leaves no room for the victims of sexual violence to rid themselves of the grief of loss and its perpetual continuity. Indeed, appeal to this literary strategy for descriptions of loss and melancholy, which engages both with the critique of state violence as well as functioning as a self-critique of a victimized oppressed community, evidences itself almost in all of Cewerî's novels.

Providing a historical account of Kurdish women's politicization in Turkey in her *Women in the Kurdish Movement: Mothers, Comrades, Goddesses* (2019), Handan Çağlayan argues that "one of the distinctive features – perhaps the most important feature – of the post-1980 Kurdish movement is its successful collective mobilization of women" (p.4). Although the political mobilization of Kurdish women in Turkey emerged within

the strict framework of the ideological and political agenda of the Kurdish movement, rather than "the women's agenda", "women's participation in the post-1980 Kurdish movement made them visible in the public sphere, when many women took part in street demonstrations and meetings, became active members of various legal political parties as Kurdish women, joined the guerrilla forces, and suffered mass detentions and arrests" (Çağlayan 2019, p.5). On the other hand, Shahrzad Mojab and Susan McDonald (2008) argue that despite increasing political mobilization of the Kurdish women and their participation in the Kurdish national politics particularly in Turkey and Iran in the last three decades, the position of Kurdish women in national movements is still determined chiefly by the "patriarchal" structure of Kurdish national movements. Mojab and McDonald (2008) note that "the patriarchal nationalist movement continues to depict women as heroes of the nation, reproducers of the nation, protectors of its 'motherland,' the 'honour' of the nation, and the guardians of Kurdish culture, heritage, and language" (p.43). They also highlight that "although [Kurdish] women are participant in the nationalist movements, they are subject of gender violence of both their own nation and the nation-states they are fighting" (p.43). Complementing these ethnographic as well as historical considerations, Bocheńska argues, in her work focusing on the notion of "honour" and women "chastity" in the Kurdish community, that "*şeref* and *namûs* are still binding norms" (2018, p.60). She further notes that although Kurdish women have become more visible and active in the political and military arena (e.g. YPJ and women's peşmerge units), "chastity is [still] the unspoken norm, even for lion-like women" (2018, p.60). And she underlines how the same dominant "honour system" in Kurdish community works against women: "Women who

lose chastity, even as the result of rape, for example, in the recent case of ISIS attacks, are no longer considered worthy of respect or life, because, according to [the] honour system [in Kurdish society], they bring shame and damage on the whole family. This approach, though considerably challenged in recent years, still seeks to justify notorious honour killings [...] It could not have been conceived of if a woman's life were considered more important than her chastity" (2018, p.60).

Situated in such a cultural-political context, the story of Lehî provides a critical account of the Kurdish women's politicization in Turkey and diaspora, their participation in the political domain, their expectations from political struggle as women as well as the price they specifically paid in the political struggle for the homeland. The dedication and sacrifice of the Kurdish women in Kurdish political struggle is particularly highlighted in *EYB* and *Lehî*. As manifested in one of Temo's writing to Alan, Kurdish political women are represented as subjects who pay the price for their ideals: "wasn't the aim of Diana the liberation of us all? She, too, resisted like us and did not volunteer any information [about her comrades when she was captured]; she had become a victim of her ideals" (*Lehî*, p.162).[246]

Just like Temo, Lehî, from a migrant Kurdish family living in Germany, joins the Kurdish political movement for the "liberation" of the homeland. When she starts to go to a Kurdish association affiliated with the PKK, she becomes conscious of her "femininity and ethnic identity" and questions her "femininity" and "ethnic status" as a Kurdish woman: "who am I, what am I, where do I come from, why was I a woman, why was I a

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[246] Ma armanca Dîanayê jî ne rizgarkirina me bû. We jî wek me li ber xwe dabû, sir nedabû, bûbû qurbana fikrên xwe.

Kurd and subordinated? Was it a fate that I had to submit to and accept, or was it possible to change my fate?" (*EYB*, p.117).[247] The novel specifically highlights how Kurdish women engage with the political ideal of a free homeland and then participate in the (armed) resistance struggle to the extent they acknowledge "the reality of the homeland" (*EYB*, p.120)[248]. This interest in and desire to recover the lost homeland is portrayed as a fundamental dynamic of this mobilization:

> The love of homeland was henceforth above all other loves for me. The love of homeland had now been placed in my heart. Although I was working hard in Europe by travelling to all European countries with [my] comrades, participating in numerous campaigns and organising many demonstrations and social events, these events in Europe were not enough for me. I wanted to return to the homeland; return and go to mountains, take up arms and end all badness and defilement [in the homeland]. I believed in the idea that fighting, fighting for freedom is the greatest honour. I thought that honour was not related to the chastity of woman but associated with honour of the homeland (EYB, p.120).[249]

By engaging with the Kurdish political movement, Lehî becomes critical not only of the hegemony of Turkish state and her own patriarchal community, but also of the European

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[247] Ez kî bûm, çi bûm, ji ku hatibûm, çima jin bûm, çima kurd û bindest bû. Ma ev qeder bû, ku diviyabû min serê xwe jê re bitewanda û qebûl bikira, an jî gelo min dikarîbû qedera xwe biguheranda.

[248] Rastiya welêt.

[249] Êdî evîna welêt, ji bo min ser hemû evînan ketibû. Hezkirina welêt, di dilê min de bi cih bû. Digel ku ez li Ewrûpayê pir dixebitîm jî, bi hevalan re li hemû welatên Ewrûpayê geriyam, beşdarî bi çendan kampanyaya bûm, min di organîzekirina gelek meş, şev û civînan de cih girt jî, dîsa xebatên Ewrûpayê ez têr nedikirim. Min dixwest vegerim welêt; vegerim, bi çiyan bikevim, xwe li sîlehê rapêçim û dawiya xerabî û kirêtiyan bînim. Min bawer dikir ku şer, şerê ji bo azadiyê, rûmeta herî mezin e. Min di got namûs ne di nav çîmên jinê de ye, lê rûmeta welêt e.

"individualistic" lifestyle, which she defines as "egoistic": "I was annoyed by European life, by the egoism and individualism of people, I left all that and I steered myself to the homeland" (*EYB*, pp.121–2).[250] As a young woman, she finds space in the political movement to claim her female identity and to attain individual freedom in a patriarchal community: "I had pursued my own freedom, I had seen my freedom in that of the homeland, I was running in the search of that freedom" (*EYB*, p.126).[251]

Wounded in a clash between PKK guerrillas and Turkish security forces in the homeland, Lehî is captured and delivered by the Kurdish village guards to a Turkish counter-guerrilla unit, who rape her when she refuses to disclose the hiding place of her fellow guerrillas. Lehî meets Temo and later on, Alan, only after she begins to work as a prostitute in the city (Diyarbakir) under the surveillance of a Turkish counter-guerrilla unit. After settling in Stockholm with Alan's help, she learns that she is believed to have been killed in an armed clash and has been declared a "martyr" when she visits a Kurdish association: "I am dead and remembered like a martyr […] I am no longer a nasty prostitute […] I am not a black mark for my family and tribe but an epitome of honour" (*Lehî,* p.208)[252].

Using Lehî's story as a background, Cewerî deals with the cultural meaning of the loss of female "honour" in the Kurdish (political) community by questioning what it means for a woman political subject to be raped by Turkish security forces during the resistance as well as the meaning of being a "prostitute" for a Kurdish woman. It can be stated that, in general,

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[250] Ez ji jiyana Ewrûpayê, ji egoîzma mirovan û ji îndîvîdualîzma wan aciz bûbûm, min ew li dû xwe hiştin û berê xwe da welêt.

[251] Ez bi dû azadiya xwe ketibûm, min azadiya xwe di azadiya welêt de dîtibû, bi dû wê azadiyê beziyabûm.

[252] Ez mirime, ez hatime kuştin û niha mîna şehîdekê têm bibîranîn […] ez êdî ne qehpikeke gemarî me […] ji malbat û eşîrê re ne rûreşî, lê serbilindiyek im.

Cewerî represents the issue of state sexual violence against Kurdish female political subjects as a social taboo that the Kurdish (political) community does not want to talk about. The novel's response to this state is to assert that the denial of this fact by the Kurdish (political) community also means the denial of the losses experienced by political female subjects during the political struggle. Evidencing this is Lehî's critical remarks: "What happened to me, which is a wound of our society and remains hidden, is not seen by anyone; those who see this [hidden wound] close their eyes to it, they do not want to accept this fact as a reality [of the Kurdish society]" (*Lehî*, p.65).[253]

The first implication of the denial of this kind of loss by the Kurdish (political) community is that the loss, which takes place during the struggle for a collective ideal, becomes the object of an undisclosed and concealed grief for the victim. Lehî has three different names in the novel: 'Zara' is her nom de guerre, 'Diana' is her alias name as a prostitute, 'Lehî' is another name given to her by the author (Alan) when he starts to write a "novel" about her. Lehî mentions that "I will never disclose my real name" (*Lehî*, p.36).[254] Her refusal to reveal her "real" name signifies not only her feelings of shame and embarrassment on her family's behalf, that having been the subject of state sexual violence "[she] has calumniated [her] family's name and that curse will remained there forever" (*Lehî*, p.109),[255] but also her response to the Kurdish (political) community, who condemns her for submitting to the

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[253] Serpêhatiyên min ku kuleke ciwata me ye, lê veşartî ye, nayê dîtin, ên ku dibînin jî çavên xwê jê re digirin, jê direvin û naxwazin wek rastiyekê bibînin.

[254] Ez ê navê xwe ê rastî jî tu carî eşkere nekim.

[255] Min bi navê xwe lekeyek li eniya malbatê […] xistibû û wê ev leke her û her bimaya.

"enemy" and failing to maintain her "honour" rather than trying to relieve her grief for her lost "honour".

Drawing attention to the repercussions of this state of affairs, *Lehî* implies that the lost object of love for which the victim mourns is a social taboo and that the cultural meaning ascribed to this object of love by the Kurdish (political) community transforms the work of the grief of the victim into an introverted kind. The character's grief is positioned between the psychology of a traumatic loss and the socio-cultural locale of this loss which makes it impossible for the victim to deal with it. The social and cultural meaning of "honour" becomes a central motif to represent the hardship and dilemmas of the character's melancholic grief.

Examining the issue of "honour-based violence" and how honour beliefs and norms create a risk of harm both to "the self and to others", Karl A Roberts (2017) argues that "losing honour exacts a significant psychological cost for individuals as it accompanied by loss of self-esteem and feelings of shame" (p.247). Roberts (2017) further notes that individual honour is a multifaceted concept involving both "psychological" and "social" processes:

> Honour is linked to an individual's reputation made up of a combination of respect and esteem obtained from membership of an honour group [...] An individual's honour is based largely upon the judgements of other individuals in the group and can be lost by failing to behave in accordance with the group norms. Loses of honour are accompanied by feelings of a damaged reputation, shame, reduced self-esteem and can result in loss of group membership (2017, p.247).

Cewerî's account of representation of "honour" loss caused by a traumatic event involves two connected motifs: trauma and melancholy. Particularly the treatment of the melancholy

motif associated with female honour is saturated with connection and allusions to the socio-cultural setting; the novel critically elucidates how this Kurdish socio-cultural setting shapes the victim's work of mourning. For Cewerî, at psychological level, the first implication of rape and forced prostitution for female victims is an interminable trauma. And the motif of trauma presented is one that reveals the devastating legacy of the state sexual violence upon the personality of the female character.

The consequences of trauma are represented mainly through Lehî's own her words; talking about her captivity by the Turkish counter-guerrilla unit and the events after, Lehî describes the "wound" inflicted upon her "psyche" with the incident of rape and forced prostitution as an incurable one: "I had been bodily and psychologically wounded […] Even if the wounds of my body could be healed, the wounds of my psyche would not have" (*EYB*, p.147).[256] After arriving in Sweden, she finds herself in a destructive mood: "I am in trauma" (*Lehî*, p.139).[257]

In its most general definition, "trauma" is described as "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth 1996, p.11). As Caruth further notes, "trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out" (1996, p.4). In relation to the conception of trauma as a wound, Caruth importantly notes that:

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[256] Ji laş û ruhê xwe birîndar bûbûm [...] Ya laş rehet bibûya jî, wê ya ruh qet rehet nebûya.
[257] Di trawmayekê de me.

In the medical and psychiatric literature, and most centrally in Freud's text, the term *trauma* is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind. But what seems to be suggested by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is that the wound of the mind […] is not like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that […] is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor (1996, pp.3–4).

Highlighting the significance of the haunting dimension of the traumatic event in the victim's life in this way, Caruth argues that "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely not known in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on" (1996, p.4). LaCapra (1994) adds to this by noting also that "victims of severely traumatizing events may never fully escape possession by, or recover from, a shattering past, and a response to trauma may well involve 'acting-out' (or emotionally repeating a still-present past) in those directly affected by it" (p.xii).

Lehî's descriptions of the implications of trauma provide a similar trauma account: that a "wound of the mind" cannot be healed like a "wound of the body". This is manifested through *Lehî*'s remarks about her traumatic suffering: "the wounds of body and mind are not the same. Although the wound of body could leave a mark, for wounds of mind, it is much harder;

it does not get off one's back and leads one into a cycle of endless grief" (*Lehî*, p.24).[258] The

trauma is depicted as an "unassimilated" memory of the state sexual violence, repeatedly

"returning" and "haunting" the character, making it impossible to leave behind the memories

of sexual violence, taking possession not only of her past, but also her present. The novel

suggests that a traumatised individual lives in "a still-present past"; the memories of the

traumatic event makes it impossible for the victim to make a new start in life as exemplified

by Lehî's remarks:

> I had been freed from all of tragedies and dirtiness of my life and arrived in the
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> country of freedoms [Sweden]. However, I could not find refuge in the country of
>
> freedoms either. In the evening, sometimes I was waking up from nightmares in
>
> sweat. Sometimes I was sinking into deep fantasies; I was moving away from the
>
> present time and returning to the past (*Lehî*, p.126).[259]

The novel highlights that the traumatised victim "cannot get rid of the past time(s) and

decontaminate [herself] from it" (*Lehî*, p.139)[260]; the memory of the traumatic event captures

the present of the victim: "my past life sometimes turns my current life into a hell" (*Lehî*,

p.139).[261] The trauma memory follows the traumatised victim "like a shadow" (*Lehî*, p.158).[262]

As illustrated by these examples, in the aesthetic sense, Cewerî offers a distinctively

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[258] Birîna laş û ruh ne mîna hev in, heke birîna laş şopekê li dû xwe bihêle jî, birîna ruh xedar e, dev ji mirov bernade û mirov di nav xemgîniyên bêdawî de vedigevizîne.

[259] Ez ji hemû trajedî û kirêtiyên jiyanê xelas bûbûm û min xwe gihandibû welatê azadiyan. Lê ez li welatê azadiyan jî nedisitîm. Ez carina bi şevan ji xewnên tirs vediciniqîm û bi xwêdanên zîpikî şiyar dibûm; carina di xeyalan de kûr diçûm, ji dema niha bi dûr diketim û li demên bihurî vedigeriyam.

[260] Ez […] dikim nakim nikarim xwe ji fikrê bihurî bişom û xwe jê pak bikim.

[261] Jiyana min ya buhurî, carina jiyana niha […] li min dike dojeh.

[262] Wek siyekê.

denotative rather than connotative account of trauma as evidenced by direct and repeated references to the experience of a "wounded psyche" (Caruth 1996). Shaped with such an approach, the representation of the trauma takes place mainly through the female character's own descriptive articulations and indeed takes a didactic form from time to time. This enables Cewerî to highlight that the psychological implication of the memory of trauma is an unbearable burden for the victim. With such psychological repercussions of the traumatic event on the life of character, the novel highlights that victims subjected to state sexual violence "may never fully escape possession by" the legacy of this violence. The other psychological implication of honour-related loss is an interminable melancholy for the victim; in this setting, this particular kind of melancholy is one involving a set of losses of one's self-regard, self-esteem, innocence, "purity" and "self-love".

5.5. The Melancholy of a Love Object whose Loss is Disguised as a Social Taboo

The melancholy of a lost female "honour" is revealed through two literary strategies by Cewerî: first, through the representation of the psychology of this kind of loss and its implications for women's psychic life; second, through a distinct concern for the Kurdish socio-cultural reality encompassing this melancholic subjectivity. In general, Cewerî's novel seems to hint that the Kurdish social and cultural milieu, which has codified honour-related losses as irreparable, leaves no room for a possibility of recovery from a traumatic loss; it condemns the victim to an endless melancholy about the lost object of love. *Lehî* describes that traumatized victims find themselves in a state of perpetual melancholy in this socio-cultural setting. As the lost love object also includes memories of the trauma, the victim's grief for the love object is turned into a two-sided torment; their subjectivity is captured by the memory of traumatic event as well as the relentless melancholic search for the lost love

object. Concerning this two-fold nature of the suffering inflicted, Lucy Brisley (2015) argues that:

> Trauma (as a response to loss) and Freudian melancholia typically share several characteristics, with traumatised and melancholic subjects exhibiting parallel psychosomatic symptoms. Just as a profoundly troubling event – or indeed a series of event – can engender the traumatic condition, so a traumatic incident - be it the loss of loved one or, as Freud suggests, even a more abstract kind of loss - can trigger melancholia […] Just as the traumatic event returns repeatedly to haunt the traumatised subject, so the melancholic individual remains ensnared in a looping, repetitive, and ultimately unconscious relationship with the lost object. (2015, p.98)

Conforming to this framework, Cewerî asserts that the first implication of an honour-related traumatic loss on the victim's personality involves a loss of the sense of the "purity" of one's own body; furthermore, the loss of one's sense of dishonour accompanies this shattering loss of self-confidence. For Lehî, her body has irreparably lost its "purity"; she feels that she has completely lost the possibility of being an "honourable" individual: "even if I wash myself with the all the waters of the world, I would not be cleansed and become an honourable person and the beloved of someone's heart" (*Lehî*, p.32).[263] The sexual violence is represented as a contamination of the body and the self for the victim: "not only my body but also my psyche had been polluted" (*Lehî*, p.131).[264] Lehî considers herself "as one of the most polluted, dirty

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[263] Ez xwe bi ava dinyayê hemûyî bişom jî ez ê pak nebim û nebim mirova bi rûmet û delaliya ber dilê kesî.
[264] Ne tenê laşe min, ruhê min jî genarî bûbû.

and disgusting people in the world" (*Lehî*, p.32).[265] The character's sense of the loss of her "purity", "honour", self-regard, self-esteem and self-love is further highlighted through a motif of reading psychological books focusing on the issue of trauma and ways of recovering from such loss. "In these books", Lehî remarks, "the ego was a central theme. It was mentioned that one should first think about him/herself, one should love oneself, one should sublimate his/herself. I was making too much effort in order to sublimate myself, to give value to myself that was trampled down" (*Lehî*, p.131).[266] The character's failed love relationships (first, with Eric, and then with Andres) with the hope of moving on in life are represented as psychological implications of the character's sense of loss of her own "purity" and self-regard.

The novel also goes to efforts to highlight how victims of state sexual violence spend the rest of their life searching for and mourning the lost object of love perpetually; Lehî's life in "the country of freedoms" is depicted as a futile and tiresome search for her lost honour and purity: "I was only in search of regaining my dignity. I was in search of clearing my honour" (*Lehî*, p.173);[267] her relentless melancholic search for the lost loved object makes it impossible for her to move forward in the life: "I will not marry […] I need to recover the purity I had in the past" (*Lehî*, p.141).[268]

However, for Cewerî, although honour-related losses caused by sexual violence result in permanent damage on the victims' self, the ability and potential of victims to overcome this traumatic loss and move forward in life also depend on the socio-cultural milieu in which they

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[265] Mirova dinyayê ya herî gemarî, lewitî, qirêj û nepak.

[266] Ego dida pêş. Digot divê mirov pêşî li xwe bifikire, ji xwe hez bike, ezîtiya xwe bilind bike. Min pir hewl dida û pir li ber xwe dida ku ez ezîtiya xwe ya ku hatibû eciqandin hildim, bilind bikim û rûmetekê bidimê.

[267] Ez bi tenê li dû bidestxistina rûmeta xwe bûm. Ez li dû paqijkirina namûsa xwe bûm.

[268] Ez ê nezewicim [...] Divê ez bigihîjim paqijiya xwe ya berê.

live. The novel hints that overcoming the grief of loss associated with "honour" also depends on "honour norms" and "codes" of the "honour group" (Robert 2017); Lehî's comparative account of Swedish and Kurdish communities about prostitution and the status of women aims to highlight this socio-cultural reality: "In [Swedish] society, women who had once fell into clutches of a life and fate of vice like mine had been able to get out of it after a certain time; they had gained high status; they had had husbands and children, and were able to lead a happy life" (*Lehî*, p.154).[269] In contrast, the novel asserts, becoming involved in prostitution in any way and being subject to state sexual violence means an irreparable loss of "honour" for Kurdish women. The consequence of this socio-cultural factor concerning women's honour is an endless shame and melancholy. This is amply evidenced with the motif of Lehî's shame as well as her feeling of not being able to protect her honour against the perpetrators of her suffering: "I could not look at face of Kurds [in Sweden] because of shame. What is more, I was a culprit in their eyes, some would even lapidate me if they were my relatives" (*Lehî*, p.116).[270] As also manifested through Temo's critical remarks, an honour-related loss might also be the subject of "honour" violence against Kurdish women by their own community: "if I don't kill Diana today, the others will kill her in the coming days" (*EYB*, p.79).[271] In this socio-cultural setting, the lost female "honour" turns into "an ungrievable loss" (Butler 1999) for the victim; it becomes an object of melancholy encompassed by feelings of shame: "[In Sweden], I was hiding especially from the Kurds" (p.132).[272]

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[269] Li vê civatê, jinên ku deminan wek min ketibûn pirrika jiyanê, paşê jê derketibûn, bilind bûbûn, bûbûn xwediyê mêr û zarokan û jiyaneke dilşa dibihurandin.

[270] Min ji fediyan nikarîbû li çavên kurdan binêriya. Wekî din, ez di çavên wan de sûçdarek bûm, belkî hin bi ser min ve bûna, wan ez biricimandama.

[271] Ez îro wê nekujim, wê sibe hinekî din wê bikujin.

[272] Be taybetî jî ez ji kurdan direviyam.

Butler (1997) argues that "when certain kinds of losses are compelled by a set of culturally prevalent prohibitions, we might expect a culturally prevalent form of melancholia" (p.139). With a textual strategy that especially emphasizes the indignation caused by the lost love object of the character in terms of socio-cultural norms of the society, Cewerî's novel seems to assert that the notion of female "honour" in Kurdish (political) community eliminates any possibility of overcoming an honour-related loss for the victim of sexual violence; it implies that the "honour norms" of the Kurdish community "institutes forms of melancholia" for the victims by doing away with the "possibility of a completed grief" (Butler 1999, p.170-1).

The figurative remarks of the author (Alan), who is writing a novel about Lehî's story, are also suggestive of the impossibility of "emancipation" for Lehî from a "dishonourable life": "I will emancipate you [...] You will be purified bodily and spiritually. You will be like an angel" (Lehî, p.46).[273] With such insertions, Cewerî points to the impossibility for Lehî to regain her lost "purity" and "honour" in *real life*; only "literature" may offer some space for the victims of state sexual violence to regain their "honour" in the eyes of community:

> The state I had fallen into had affected the author [Alan] too much; it had driven
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> him into a conscientious questioning. My tragedy had become a heavy burden for
>
> him. He could devote himself to the writing [of my story] in order to alleviate both
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> my tragedy and his own guilty conscience (*Lehî*, p.65).[274]

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[273] Ez ê te [...] xelas bikim [...] Tu ê hem bi laş, hem jî bi ruhê xwe paqij bibî. Tu ê bibî mîna melekekê.

[274] Rewşa ku ez ketibûmê Nivîskar pir hejandibû, ew xistibû nav agirekî wijdanî. Trajediya min li wî bûbû bargiraniyek. Ji bo ku ew trajediya min hinekî kêm û bargiraniya xwe jî hinekî sivik bike, belkî wî xwe bisparta nivîsandenê.

Through Lehî's story, Cewerî also reveals the vulnerability of women's agency in the Kurdish political movements; Lehî's wishes of "being martyred" in the conflict rather than being captured by the Turkish security forces evidences a cultural critique of the Kurdish political movement's ideological stance on women's political subjecthood. Towards the end of story, when Lehî witnesses her picture as a "martyred" and "honoured" guerrilla in a Kurdish community centre in Stockholm, she mentions that "if this is true, I will be able to conceal behind myself all the disgraceful events that have happened to me and live an honourable and respectable life again" (*Lehî*, p.185).[275] Her critical remarks highlight that, Kurdish women are respected as political subjects to the extent that they are able to join the caravan of "martyrs" in the resistance struggle despite being active political subjects in the Kurdish political arena throughout the last four decades: "my martyrdom was an honour for everyone; I [myself] could live in the shadow of my own martyrdom with pride and honour" (*Lehî*, p.198).[276]

Through the use of trauma and melancholy motifs containing overt socio-cultural and political connotations, Cewerî provides a further version of melancholic subjectivity mediated by an authentic social and cultural setting. The motif of character's inability to "sublimate" her "self" and overcome the grief for her lost "purity" and "honour" due to the social and cultural inhibitors becomes another signifier of Cewerî's account of melancholy which seems to presuppose that melancholy is not only a psychological phenomenon, but also a social and cultural fact.

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[275] Heke ev rast be, ez ê bikaribim hemû kirêtiyên ku hatine serê min bi pişta destê xwe wê de dehf bidim û dîsa serbilind û bi rûmet bijîm.

[276] Şehîdbûna min ji bo her kesi rûmetek e, ez jî dikarim di siya şehîdbûna xwe de serbilind û bi rûmet bijîm.

5.6. Melancholy as a Constructive Form of Commitment

This section provides an examination of the melancholy motif utilised by Cewerî as a constructive form of commitment to one's national language and culture that is in danger of extinction due to political repression and proscription; the discussion also covers an examination of the exile motif used both as a space of literary productivity for the Kurdish authors of Turkey and as an account of the experience of displacement and homelessness. The motif of exile, which is one of the central concerns of *Lehî*, develops as one of key motifs of Alan's life story, who is forced to leave his country as a young political activist and finds the opportunity to produce literature in his forbidden mother-tongue in exile. In *Lehî*, two conflicting dimensions of exile are foregrounded: on the one hand, it is represented as an "unbearable space" for an exiled subject; on the other hand, it is a space of cultural and intellectual opportunities for a creative agent. Cewerî suggests that one's loss of native location due to political oppression can also be experienced as productive; he highlights intellectual opportunities and atmosphere of freedom the exile space may offer an author whose mother-tongue and national culture is proscribed in one's country. With these two allusions to aspects of the cultural politics of subordinated nations, the exile refers to both a relentless psychic state accompanied by a sense of melancholy as well as one of cultural and intellectual dynamism for the exiled subject in the form of intellectual production.

In his 'Reflections on Exile' Edward W. Said describes exile as "a condition of terminal loss", which cannot be recovered: "exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (2001, p.173). For Said (2001), while exile has been transformed "easily into a potent, even enriching,

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motif of modern culture" (p.173) in the modern times, it signifies a passage of "anxiety and estrangement" for the exile subject:

> While it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever (2001, p.173).

In Cewerî's novel, the "sorrow of estrangement" in exile and the productivity of exile for a creative agent displaced from his homeland are represented as two intertwined aspects of the exile experience. Alan is a young man who has "left behind all the pleasantness of his life" (*Lehî*, p.66)[277] and "turned his face to a new country [Sweden]" (*Lehî*, p.66).[278] Through a series of flashbacks, we learn that Alan had fled to Sweden when he felt that "a dark cloud [of the military coup] came to loom over all of us, which will turn the place upside down" (*Lehî*, p.89).[279] He and Temo were best friends, "like two sides of the same heart" (*Lehî*, p.36)[280] as they participated in Kurdish revolutionary activities in the late 1970s.

Living in exile for fourteen years, Alan makes the point that both those who could not escape from the persecution of the 12 September military regime as well as those who escaped from the junta's oppression and lived in exile shared a similar fate at different places: "My heart has broken in exile; his [Temo's] heart was broken behind the walls of the prison" (*Lehî*,

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[277] Hemû xweşiyên xwe li dû xwe hiştibû.
[278] Berê xwe dabû welatekî nû.
[279] Ewrekî reş bi ser me de bigire û terr û hişk bide ber xwe.
[280] Em wek du perçeyên dilên hev bûn.

p.37).[281] The exile is depicted as a passage of "anxiety", "estrangement" and "loneliness" in an exile's life. As Alan describes: "this exile, this loneliness I have been suffering in exile is consuming me […] I live without friends and comrades, without love; I am withering away like a rose, the water and life span of which is exhausting day by day" (*Lehî*, p.211).[282]

For Cewerî, exile means an experience of the loss of belonging to the native location for a (national) intellectual; it causes a feeling of a "transcendental homelessness" (Lukács 2006, p.61) in exile's life. An exiled intellectual lives in limbo, belonging neither to his lost native land nor to his new space:

> I have become like a bird who is alienated from [its] nest, whatever I do, I cannot find refuge and settle anywhere; whatever I do I cannot feel at ease anywhere, I don't feel belonging anywhere, I am neither from here [Kurdistan] nor there [Sweden]; neither this country [Kurdistan] is mine nor that [Sweden] (p.67).[283]

However, for Cewerî, the exile space is also a production site for an intellectual whose nation, culture and language are oppressed. As a distinct aspect of its effect, *Lehî* is particular in asserting that exile is devastation for an intellectual if a new love object cannot be invested in there. Couched in such concerns, Alan's story emerges as the story of a generation of Kurdish authors who also turned exile into a productive experience. He is represented as one of the actual Kurdish authors of the "exile generation" or what might be called the "Swedish generation" who succeeded in creating modern fiction in the Kurdish language, and most of

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[281] Dilê min li sirgûnê dilê wî jî di nav çar dîwarên girtîgehê de deriziye.

[282] Ev xerîbî, tenêtiya ku ez li vê xerîbiyê dikşînim min dixwe […] Ez ji heval û hogiran, ji evîn û hezkirinê bêpar dijîm, wek guleke ku roj bi roj ava wê û roja wê kêm dibe, diçilmisim.

[283] Ez bûme mîna çûkekî ku hêlîn li ber herimî be, dikim nakim li cihekî nasitirim, dikim nakim sebra min li deverekê nayê, xwe aydê tu cihî nabînim, ne ji vir im; ne ji wir; ne ev welat ê min e, ne ew welat.

whom had a past in originating in the Kurdish political movements of the 1970s before their literary careers, as noted by Scalbert-Yücel (2018). The literary texts, especially novels, produced by this Swedish-based generation formed the basis of modern Kurdish literature in the Kurdish-Kurmanji.

Indeed, Temo's remarks about Alan's authorship reveal the critical importance of this political generation's efforts for turning exile into productive work; he highlights that Alan was writing "our story" in our "mother-tongue" in exile when the Kurdish political prisoners "were screaming under unbearable tortures" in Diyarbakir prison in the 1980s: "the moment came when we were forgotten, but your reputation was spread and people throughout the homeland started to recognize you" (*Lehî*, p.90).[284] For Alan, exile also signifies a distinctly suitable space for a Kurdish author "to revive his [native] language" and "establish a literature" in his language "forbidden" by Turkey.

In relation to this emphasis on language, Kathrin M. Bower (2000) notes that "conflation of motherland and mother tongue illustrates the difficulty of trying to isolate factors of nationality, birth and language as clearly demarcated and separate entities" (p.112). Bower further argues that "the love of (lost) homeland is closely related to the love of a (mother) language" (2000, p.112). In exemplifying these questions, Cewerî's novel poses a direct link between the act of writing in "mother-tongue" and engaging with the lost homeland. For Alan, in exile, melancholic fidelity to mother-tongue expresses fidelity to the lost homeland.

The novel also asserts that melancholic fidelity to the oppressed nation's cultural ideals is a means of protection from the devastating implications of the exile for a national intellectual.

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[284] Dem hat em hatin jibîrkirin lê navê te belav bû, xelkên welêt seranser tu nas kirî.

Although Alan falls into "depression" many times and "reached the verge of the degeneration" (*Lehî*, p.66),[285] his motivation and aim to create a modern literature in the Kurdish language enables him to cope with the psychological destruction of exile. The literature in the native language becomes a "home" for Alan, in which he can take refuge in exile, allowing him to protect himself from estrangement and melancholy of exile: "I could survive by means of writing" (Lehî, p.152).[286]

In his seminal *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, linking the act of writing with exile, Theodor W. Adorno considers "writing" per se as a habitual place for an exiled and displaced creative agent: "for a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live" (2005, p.87). Lehî describes "[Alan's] huge desire for talking about literature and his works" (*Lehî*, p.108)[287] as one of the basic motifs of his life and personality: "his life [...] was that of his authorship. He had dedicated himself to writing like an ascetic, and was continuously writing like a devout" (*Lehî*, p.154).[288] For Alan, life in exile is bearable only to the extent he can engage with "words": "Life is words for me, when my words run out, life will lose its meaning for me" (*Lehî*, p.152).[289] When "words" abandon him, he feels "as though someone has thrown [him] to the bottom of a well and shut the lid of the well over [him]" (*Lehî*, p.152).[290] He falls into "a deep melancholic mood" (*Lehî*, p.152)[291] when "[his] ink runs

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[285] Hatim ser sînorê têkçûnê.
[286] Ez bi xêra nivîskariyê li ser lingan bûm.
[287] Daxwazeke wî ya mezin ya li ser peyivandina edebiyatê û berhemê wî.
[288] Jiyana wî [...] nivîskariya wî bû. Wî wek derwêşekî xwe avêtibû qada nivîskariyê û mîna dîndarekî bawermend dinivîsand.
[289] Jiyan ji bo min gotin in, gava gotinên min nemînin wê jiyan ji bo min maneya xwe wenda bike.
[290] Qey hinan ez xistime binê bîrekê û deriyê bîrê li ser min girtine.
[291] Hewayeke pir melankolî.

out" (*Lehî*, p.152).[292] Alan describes his "authorship" as the only gain of the exile: "All I have is my authorship" (*Lehî*, p.104).[293] As an exile, if had he not written in Kurdish, he would immediately become spent in exile: "I know the day I am deprived of writing, I will become like a fish taken out of the water, so I will die" (Lehî, p.104).[294]

In all these remarks about the significance of authorship for Kurdish community (in Turkey) by Temo, Lehî as well as Alan himself, two points are particularly highlighted: first, Alan's intellectual ability to turn loss (the native place) into a gain (the literature in the native language); second, his melancholic fidelity to the Kurdish language which makes the emergence of a literature in the forbidden Kurdish language possible.

5.7. The Meaning of Melancholic Persistence upon Kurdish language

Lehî, as a novel, distinctly highlights that the symbolic importance of Alan's authorship does not derive merely from its potential to represent the sufferings of nation, but from the language in which this authorship is performed. Conceived as such, the question of literature in the mother-tongue emerges as a central concern for Cewerî. He presents Kurdish authors' melancholic insistence upon Kurdish language as an act of cultural resistance, one to preserve language and literature. In this setting, melancholy is utilised as a motif of intellectual fidelity that enables the creative agent to reinstate a national culture and language that has been proscribed and repressed in Turkey; this specific use represents an intellectual engagement with the lost object for the sake of cultural and political renewal.

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[292] Hibra min ziwa bibe.

[293] Di destêmin de tenê nivîskariya min maye.

[294] Ez dizanim roja ku ez ji vê nivîsandinê bibim, wê mîna masiyê ku tu ji avê derxinî li min bê, ez ê nemînim.

This also suggests that the meaning of melancholy as an "adamant refusal of closure" (Eng & Kazanjian 2003, p.3) with respect to loss is variable in Cewerî's literature; indeed, on the one hand, as found in Temo's and Lehî's stories, melancholy is described as a psychic paralysis, a self-absorbed mood as well as a (self)destructive state that can lead to violence, while on the other hand, it is hinted that some forms of melancholy with respect to loss are non-pathological; instead they can also be productive too. Through Alan's story, *Lehî* implies that melancholy as a stubborn attachment to a lost love object may also offer "a capaciousness of meaning in relation to losses encompassing the individual and the collective [...] the psychic and the social, the aesthetic and the political" (Eng & Kazanjian 2003, p.3).

The significance of Alan's melancholic commitment to the native language for the Kurdish community in Turkey is evidenced particularly through the character's remarks about literature and Alan's authorship. Lehî notes that "[Alan] had spent the majority of his life in exile for the sake of recovering his [native] language; he had become a saint of his mission" (*Lehî*, p.53).[295] Lehî's dialogue with Alan about the notion of nation, literature and language represents the cultural function of Alan's literary "mission" for the oppressed nation: "you are trying to get a nation to regain its own language; in this way, you are giving the nation its own identity" (*Lehî*, p.138).[296] The novel also makes the point that mother-tongue writing is, in a sense, an activity to recover the losses of the oppressed nation. This is evidenced by the rationalisation of Alan's literature as a warranted case of melancholic attachment to the lost

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[295] Wî piraniya jiyana xwe li xerîbiyê, ji bo bidestxistina zimanê xwe bihurandibû, ew bûbû derwêşekî karê xwe.

[296] Tu hewl didî ku zimanê miletekî lê vegerînî, tu bi vê yekê nasnava wî miletî didiyê.

mother-tongue as articulated by Temo's critical remarks: "[Alan] was agonizingly writing our story in our native language which was forbidden" (*Lehî*, p.90).[297]

Upon returning to his hometown, Diyarbakır, for the first time after political conditions ease and official sanctions are partly lifted on Kurdish language and literature in Turkey, Alan wants to talk about the issue of language and the importance of writing in Kurdish in his first literary seminar: "after many years, I had returned to the city where Kurdish words had once been banned. I would have talked about the history of the proscription of that language through those [forbidden] words and then also sign my books" (*EYB*, p.85).[298] Alan's Kurdish-written "books" represent the cultural potential of a "melancholic consciousness" (Frosh 2013), advocating that in the colonial and postcolonial settings, melancholic insistence can also be an effective way to recover the cultural losses of the nation under oppression. These critical remarks about the cultural importance of Alan's melancholic insistence upon the mother-tongue also confirm the approach put forward by Bocheńska: "Modern Kurdish literature is [also] an example of language and culture revitalization" (2022, p.902).

In relation to this point, Scalbert-Yücel highlights that for Kurdish "exile generation", the literature meant, first of all, a cultural means "to prevent the loss of language" and "to demonstrate the existence of Kurdish language and literature" (2018, pp.236–37 [translation my own]). Through the story of literary achievements of Alan, Cewerî highlights that Kurdish language was saved and "revitalized" from extinction thanks to the insistence of the exiled generation of Kurdish authors to write in the mother-tongue. Reflexively, as a novel

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[297] [Alan] li wir di xemgîniyê de bi zarê me ê qedexe çîroka me dinivîsand.
[298] Piştî çendîn salên dirêj, ez li bajarê ku demekê gotina kurdî lê qedexe û qaçax bû vegeriyabûm, min ê bi wan gotinan behsa dîroka qaçaxiya vî zimanî bikira û dû re jî min ê kitêbên xwe îmze bikira.

exemplifying this intellectual effort itself, his novel provides a convenient conceptual ground to demarcate one of its distinct features: that this novelistic project is also a product of a melancholic insistence upon the "prohibited mother-tongue". And furthermore, some forms of melancholic attachment to loss are in fact "abundant" rather than "pathological" (Eng & Kazanjian 2003) in the colonial settings. With this specific emphasis on the restorative potential of literature, Cewerî's novel implies "the [postcolonial] idea that in 'preserving' the lost object as an unconscious trace, melancholia may provide a paradigm for the recovery of colonised histories and hence for a progressive politics of liberation" (Frosh 2013, p.87).

However, Cewerî's novel is also distinct in underlining the repercussions of writing in a language with a very limited readership for the Kurdish authors; it suggests that even though a Kurdish-language literature is created thanks to devout efforts, this literature does not, as yet, have a readership. The novel illustrates the implications of this absence as a mood of melancholy for Kurdish authors; the melancholy in this setting emerges as the author's disappointment with investing in an unread(able) language as well as mourning for the absence of a reader.

5.8. Melancholy of Writing in an Unread(able) Language

Cewerî's novel is one of the first novelistic texts in Kurdish literature to engage with the melancholy of writing for a non-existent readership; it reveals that the writing in an unread(able) language per se involves some forms of melancholy for the modern Kurdish authors. In *Lehî*, the absence of a Kurdish reading public is both a matter of cultural inquiry into the Kurdish community as well as functioning as a subject of mourning for the author (Alan). Lehî's reflections of Alan's great desire to be read and appreciated by his own fellow

citizens also evidence the melancholy of Kurdish authorship in Turkey, posing its cultural dilemma in having authors but not readers yet. While Cewerî deals with this absence mainly with the motif of the Kurds' indifference to Kurdish-language literature, without running the theme's risk of turning the victim of a colonial loss (the Kurdish-language reading public) into its primary perpetrator (the state's oppressive policy), his novel provides a nuanced account of the Kurdish writing in Turkey. Its descriptions of Kurdish reading public clearly reflect Cewerî's concern for the future of Kurdish language and literature in Turkey where they have been excluded from public and educational spheres for the last century, a treatment which continues to this day.

Examining the economy of Kurdish literature in the light of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of literary field, Scalbert-Yücel (2018) argues that, for Kurdish authors from Turkey, who write their work for quite a limited readership, the non-existence of a Kurdish reading public has not been a problem, and adds: "the work of Kurdish writing, as of its definition, is not commercial. There is no economic earned capital (except few exceptions in Sweden). At least now, only a symbolic capital can be gained [in this field]" (p.237 [translation my own]). Similarly, Abdullah Keskin, the editor and owner of Avesta publishing house, one of the oldest Kurdish publishing houses in Turkey, remarks that in Turkey, around three hundred Kurdish books are published annually. However, Keskin adds that the number of total individual books printed in Kurdish does not exceed "the number of prints of one popular book [in Turkish]" (İbrahimoğlu 2016). Keskin remarks that "Kurdish returned from death's door" (İbrahimoğlu 2016 [translation my own]) in Turkey thanks to the Kurdish literary output after 1990s, when the official ban on Kurdish language was partly lifted, while the absence of a Kurdish reading

public remains as one of the most important issues for the Kurdish writing and publishing sector.

The following critical comment by Alan about his "novels" poignantly highlights the absence of a Kurdish readership in Turkey and brings to the fore the question of the sustainability of Kurdish-language literature (in Turkey):

> My novels are now translated into foreign languages [...] It is true that this gives me great pleasure. However, I have been at the service of our mother tongue for all these years and I would like this service to be more beneficial to the Kurds; all this work is for them. Now if you ask our [Kurdish] politicians to name two Kurdish authors [writing in Kurdish], they will not know and rest assured that they have not read even a couple of lines from the works of these authors (*Lehî*, p.138).[299]

The sense of being subjected to this mood of melancholy by the absence of a reading public is highlighted throughout *Lehî*. Alan is a famous novelist in the Kurdish community, but his "novels" are not read by the Kurds. As an author, he is representative of Kurdish national literature, but the source of his representative position is not the popularity and readership of his works; rather, it derives from the symbolic meaning of his literary effort in a "prohibited" language. Alan's feeling of melancholy about not being read by the community he claims to represent reflects also Cewerî's own concerns about Kurdish-language literature that has no readers; the textual reflection of this concern is the transformation of Alan's

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[299] Êdî va ye romanên min werdigerin zimanên biyanî [...] Rast e ku ev min pir kêfxweş dike, lê evqas sal in ez xizmetê ji zimanê me ê malê re dikim, min dixwest ev xebata min bêtir bigihîje wan, ev xebat ji bo wan e. Aniha tu ji siyasetvanekî me navê du nivîskarên me bipirsî ew ê nizanibin û ez ji te re sond dixwim ku wan du rêzên wan jî nexwendine.

concern into all other characters' concern. When Temo goes to a modern bookshop located in a newly opened shopping centre (in Diyarbakir), he critically remarks that:

> I am looking at the books in the display window. Most of the books in showcase are books of leftists, from Karl Marx's Das Kapital to Edward Said's Orientalism and the works of Noam Chomsky. However, I cannot find any books of my friend [Alan] written in Kurdish, who is in the city at this very time and signing his books [for the readers] (*EYB*, p.48).[300]

Alan's wife considers his cultural mission of creating a literature in Kurdish language as a "useless" effort, because Kurds, in fact, do not care about Kurdish writing and books in Kurdish at all: "who reads your books? It has been many years you are writing but no one says you have done very well and bless your hands, you have done an important thing for [Kurdish] language and literature" (*Lehî*, p.109).[301] Lehî's remarks about Alan's "loneliness" also highlights those of Kurdish authors producing literary works in "a prohibited language" bereft of a reading public: "The author, who has many books and dedicated the majority of his years to establish and revive his [native] language and literature […] was alone and feels so lonely" (*Lehî*, p.104).[302] Alan lives with the hope and melancholic desire that one day, Kurds would realize "the work that I have been doing is not useless and hollow" (p.109).[303]

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[300] Çavên xwe li ser kitêbên di camekanê de digerînim. Piraniya kitêbên di camekanê de ên çapan xuya ne. Ji Kapîtala Marks bigire, heta Orientalizma Edward Seîd, kitebên Naom Chomskî… Lê ez kitêbeke hevalê xwe ya bi kurdî, ku xwedêgiravî ew jî niha li bajêre û kitêbên xwe îmze bike, nabînim.

[301] Ka kî kitêbên te dixwîne? Va ye tu evqas sal dinivîsînî ka kê gotiye mala te ava, destên te sax bin, te ji bo vî zimanî û vê edebiyatê tiştek kiriye.

[302] Ev nivîskarê xwediyê evqas kitêb ku salên xwe ên dirêj di riya avakirin û vejandina ziman û edebiyata xwe de bihurandibû [...] bi tenê bû û xwe wisa bi tenê his bikir.

[303] Ev karê ez pê dadikevim ne karekî vala ye.

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Through these critical remarks echoed by different characters about Alan's "work", "books", "authorship" and "loneliness", Cewerî provides an authentic account of Kurdish writing and literature in Turkey, highlighting both the impacts of "the history of the prohibition of [Kurdish] language" on Kurdish cultural life as well as the melancholic dilemma of Kurdish authors caused by the Kurdish (political) community's indifference to Kurdish language and cultural artefacts. In this way, the novel highlights the absence of a Kurdish reading public that would be able to validate the melancholic achievement of the author against "the history of the prohibition of [Kurdish] language"; it signifies the absence of a Kurdish readership as a loss, and in a sense, mourns for this loss.

With these particular emphases on the absence of the Kurdish readership in Turkey, Cewerî suggests that writing in mother-tongue is not only a cultural attempt to recover the losses of the nation for Turkey's Kurdish authors, but that it is also a risky investment in an object of love (the Kurdish reading public) that does not exist presently and may not do in the future either. With its overt allusions to Turkish state's policy against Kurdish language as well as the contemporary Kurdish community's disinterest in Kurdish language and literature, Cewerî's novel also seems to suggest that writing in Kurdish per se accompanies a mood of melancholy for its authors.

5.9. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has provided an examination of the use of melancholy motif in Cewerî's *EYB* and *Lehî* in three different settings: firstly, as a violent reaction to loss of a political and cultural ideal; second, as an interminable mourning for loss of female "honour" used to represent the legacy of state sexual violence against Kurdish women political subjects as well as "the

impossibility of grieving" (Butler 1999, p.171); and third, as a form of intellectual resistance used to represent efforts to recover Kurdish language.

Dedicating particular attention to the political, social and cultural references inscribed by Cewerî in these melancholy motifs, the discussion engaged with a range of political and cultural questions of the political and cultural life of Turkey's Kurds in order to illuminate the parallels between represented melancholic subjectivity and the political, social and cultural context incorporating this subjectivity. The examinations of the motif of "melancholic murder" (Temo), the endless grief for the lost female "honour" (Lehî) as well as melancholic attachment as an intellectual insistence upon the mother-tongue and its literature (Alan) have highlighted that the use of the melancholy motif by Cewerî is always distinctly mediated by a Kurdish political, social and cultural context quite similar to other modern Kurdish novelists examined in the previous chapters. This is so even in the representation of most clinical forms of melancholy (e.g. "melancholic murder") which emerges as a subject matter of his crime fiction (*EYB*). The discussion highlighted that the referential potential of loss, grief, suffering, emotional impasse and fixation upon a lost love object involved in melancholy motif renders it a useful motif for Cewerî to represent the sufferings, grief and predicaments of two political generations (the 1970s and the 1990s generations); it also demonstrated how it has been utilised to provide a representation of the intellectual resistance of the Kurdish authors to recover these cultural losses.

The discussion also highlighted that, in Cewerî's literature, the melancholy motif always functions as a key literary device to describe a wide range of subjectivities. It demonstrated that the motif becomes particularly a convenient device for representations of the disillusioned Kurdish political subjectivity at odds with political and social realities,

highlighting that all of Cewerî's characters are those who have paid a price for the oppressed nation and homeland and are somehow now left alone because of these objects of love. The melancholic rage of Temo that causes him to kill his mother is also testament to this disappointment with the love object (the ideal of a free homeland). Lehî, too, pays a price "for the emancipation of this country" (*EYB*, p.110);[304] she attempts "to liberate its people from all kinds of impurity" (*EYB*, p.110)[305] and "from the chains of slavery", but finds herself in a position in which "her honour" is trampled upon not only by Turkish security forces but also by the men of her own community. Alan's mood of melancholy about the prospects of his works also evidences his disappointment with the Kurdish (political) community, which does not own up to its own language and literature.

Highlighting this multiplicity of the utilisation of melancholy motif in Cewerî's novels, the discussion presented further specimens of the uses of melancholy as a critical motif; it has shown that it is a constitutive motif in the modern Kurdish novel; what makes it constitutive to this project is not merely its psychological meaning, but its incorporation of the theme of loss, intersecting as it does with the history as well as the present political, social and cultural life of Kurdish people in Turkey.

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[304] Ji bo rizgarkirina vî welatî.
[305] Xelkê vî [...] ji hemû kirêtiyan rizgar bikira.

Conclusion

Through a critical reading of Mehmed Uzun's *Siya Evînê*, İbrahim Seydo Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî* and Firat Cewerî's *EYB* and *Lehî*, this study examined the use of melancholy motif in modern Kurdish novels by Turkey's Kurds; in doing this, it paid due attention to the political, social and cultural implications of melancholy and the aesthetic potentials of the motif to embrace, depict and elicit the Kurdish socio-political reality. It aimed to bring psychoanalytic insights to bear upon the domain of Kurdish literary criticism and studies for an improved understanding of various forms of melancholic subjectivity and loss-based nostalgia and trauma. To do this, it provided a survey of the utilisations of melancholy motif across a wide range of settings and in different types of novel, consisting of historical (*Siya Evînê*), contemporary (*Reş û Spî*), crime (*Ez ê yekî bikujim*) and metafiction (*Lehî*) kinds. This was complemented with a comprehensive consideration of main forms of melancholy (e.g. clinical, emotional and intellectual) in these texts. This contributed to critical accounts of subjectivities beset by motifs of resistance, loss, grief and melancholy. By uncovering an authentic setting for the melancholic grief of an oppressed community as well as its aesthetic expression in novelistic form, the study has also comprised an original case study contributing to our understanding of melancholic subjectivities mediated by colonial settings and the literary appropriations of these subjectivities in non-Western novel traditions.

The study closely engaged with the following questions about the use of melancholy motifs in the selected novels: What makes the melancholy motif a particularly useful literary device for modern Kurdish novelists for the representation of Kurdish life in Turkey? For the representation of which particular subjectivities do the Kurdish novelists appeal to the use of

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melancholy motif and what are the political, social and cultural dynamics which determine and mediate the representation of these subjectivities? And in so far as the particular uses are concerned, what textual strategies do Kurdish novelists use in the representation of melancholy? Does the psychological meaning and figurative representation of melancholy come to the fore in the utilisation of the melancholy motif by Kurdish novelists, or is it the case that political connotations and descriptive representation are foregrounded? And further, what are the points of confluence and divergence of these narrative strategies by Kurdish novelists with both postcolonial as well as modern novels in their illustrations of loss and melancholy?

The first chapter of the study provided a critical overview of the history of the Kurdish novel as well as an account of the development of the realist and modern literary modes in Kurdish-language novel. This was done with a particular focus on the relationship between the use of realist and modern literary narrative forms by Kurdish novelists from mid-1980 and the elevation of the motifs of loss and melancholy to dominance in this novelistic project. Encompassing an examination of novels published between the 1930s and the mid-1980s, the discussion demonstrated that the interest of Kurdish novelist shifted from the nation's heroisms to the nation's authentic losses, social destructions and political defeats to the extent that they engaged in literary realism and modern narrative forms. Through a comparative analysis of the early Kurdish novels characterised predominantly with an epic taste and "non-realist" modes with those characterised by realist "formal conventions" (Watt 1957), the discussion highlighted how the adaptation of the realist formal conventions played a critical role in emergence of the modern Kurdish novel; this also demonstrated the extent

to which a loss-based aesthetic of grief was made possible with the adaptation of realistic literary forms.

The second chapter of the study presented the reflections of this realist and modern trend in Uzun's historical novel *Siya Evînê*, the first realist historical novel in the Kurdish-language literature. With specific focus on the motifs of melancholy as well as nostalgia, the discussion first provided an evaluation of the literary style and cultural purport of Uzun's historical novels in order to reframe his historical fiction. It proposed how Uzun uses the potentials of the historical novel both to provide a realist account of the modern Kurdish history as well as to memorialize the lives of actual Kurdish political and intellectual figures who remained faithful to the political ideal of a free homeland and nationhood. Engaging with events and figures in a troubled modern history, the discussion highlighted how Uzun, with this textual strategy, produced what might be called an *obituary literature* in the form of historical fiction focusing on the lives of actual political, intellectual and cultural figures (e.g. Mîr Bedirxan in *Hawara Dîcleyê*; Memduh Selim Beg in *Siya Evînê*; Celadet Alî Bedirxan in *Bîra Qederê*; Evdalê Zeynikê in *Rojek ji Rojên Evdalê Zeynikê*). His historical novels do not merely provide an authentic account of historical events, but also elevate biographies of certain members of the nation as models of "well-lived" lives by commemorating and glorifying these lives and legacies. On this basis, the discussion proposed that in the case of Kurdish literature, modern historical novel emerged not only as "a 'form' of history" (Butterfield 2011) or "as part of the rise of historicism" (Shaw 1983), but also as an "obituary narrative" (Fowler 2007). Examining both the content and narrative strategies deployed by Uzun in this project, the discussion also highlighted how his works not only bespeaks of actual Kurdish historical personages, but suggest an evident form of mourning for the lives and deaths of the nation's intellectual,

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political and cultural figures who dedicated their lives to the ideal of a free homeland and nationhood.

Bearing in mind this double-layered function of Uzun's historical fiction, the discussion dealt with the motifs of melancholy as well as nostalgia set around the life story of an actual Kurdish national intellectual, Memduh Selim Beg, in *Siya Evînê*. With respect to the use of melancholy motifs, the discussion demonstrated that Uzun represents the melancholic insistence upon a lost love object, both at an emotional (e.g. a lost love) as well as a political level (e.g. a lost homeland) as a non-pathological fixation. Drawing upon Khanna's (2003) approach to the postcolonial intellectual, "colonial melancholy" and third-world nationalism, the discussion engaged with the history of both modern Kurdish nationalism and the establishment of Republic of Turkey (1923), built on the "categorical denial" of Kurds (Yeğen, 1999) in order to elucidate the symbolic meaning of the character's melancholic attachment to the ideal of a free homeland. It traced Uzun's representation of the character's refusal to detach from the political ideal of a free Kurdistan as a "movement of fidelity" (Derrida 1989) in the wider political context of Turkey's Kurds. The discussion identified how the deployment of the motif, always accompanied by marked contemporary political connotations, enable the representation of the character's melancholy act of preserving the ideal of a free homeland in the "ego" as that of the lasting national desire of Turkey's Kurds. The discussion highlighted that as a historical novel, *Siya Evînê,* considers the lost homeland as a primary loss for the Kurdish (political) community in Turkey; its specific use of melancholy motif in this actual setting involves a literary strategy to highlight a historical loss for the Kurds as a nation.

Based on an examination of the motif of love-melancholy, the discussion demonstrated that for modern Kurdish novelists, the motif becomes subject to exploration to the extent it

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represents "the tragedy of a scattered country"; it proposed that the first modern Kurdish novel dealing with the love-melancholy represents it not merely as a subject of "sexuality and the unconscious", but also to highlight the importance of "secular political power" (Jameson 1986) in the affective life of the political agent during the resistance for a free homeland. The discussion also identified how love-melancholy in *Siya Evînê* emerges merely as an emotional affect of male sensibility, echoing the grief for the loss of an object of desire (Feriha) the male character sacrifices for the sake of the ideal of a free homeland and how this is at the expense of the underrepresentation of female melancholic subjectivity.

With respect to the use of nostalgia as "a sentiment of loss and displacement" (Boym 2001), the discussion paid particular attention to its political and cultural meanings; it provided a critical account of how nostalgia as "a type of remembrance" (Clewell 2013) is utilised by Uzun to provide a critical "dialogue" (Clewell 2013) between the Ottoman past and Republican present for the Kurdish community. It proposed, on this basis, that the motif is not merely about the *past*, but is used critically to emphasise the "evilness" of the *present* for Turkey's Kurds, highlighting that "fantasies of the past" fashioned by *Siya Evînê* are distinctly "determined by needs of the present" (Boym 2001). Based on these findings, the discussion also emphasized that a nostalgic "dialogue" with the Empire past in *Siya Evînê* is not an "innocent" attempt (Walder 2010) of the literary representation of the Kurdish past; and how this is enacted by Uzun in distinctly selective terms, generally from a conventional dominant Kurdish national point of view and at the expense of overshadowing the totality of the same history for the non-Muslim religious and national groups in the Empire.

The third chapter of the study turned to a consideration of the use of melancholy motif in Aydoğan's *Reş û Spî* to represent the grief and dilemmas of relatives of those who lost their

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loved ones in the national political struggle. Drawing upon Derrida's notion of "mourning" and "duty" as well as Freud's account of melancholic "ego-splitting", the discussion elicited the utilisation of melancholy fashioned by Aydoğan around a motif of martyrdom. It engaged with the motif in two different settings: melancholy as an inconsolable grief of the relatives of martyrs as well as the mourning "duty" of bereaved survivors, who feel compelled to engage in the political legacy of their lost loved ones.

Grounded on an examination of melancholy as an inconsolable grief of losing a loved one in political resistance, the discussion demonstrated that, unlike the early Kurdish novels, Aydoğan's work provides an account of grief as an authentic human experience and offers a cultural space for a "privatized grief" (Clewell 2009) in a way that transcends the motifs of "martyrdom" and "resistance" as fashioned by the early Kurdish novels. An important conclusion was the distinct thematic shift "from the communal to the psychic dimensions of grief" (Clewell 2009) it marked with its elaborate adaptation of realist modes for the representation of the grief of losing loved one; its literary strategy of reflecting the grief for the loss of a loved one through a realistic psychology of a bereaved survivor is what marks this change in the illustration of loss and grief in Kurdish novel.

For the examination of the use of melancholy motif as a mourning "duty" set around the issue of engagement with the political legacy of the lost other, Derrida's mourning perspective provided a useful conceptual framework to offer an authentic locale for the question of the legacy of the lost other in the Kurdish setting. The discussion suggested an inversion of Derrida's account of mourning as a double-layered "duty" for the bereaved survivor, consisting of both "to carry" the lost other "who is dead and lives only in us" (Derrida 1989) and to perform this work of mourning through some form of engagement with the "works"

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"deeds", or "signature" of the lost other (Brault & Nass 2001). It demonstrated how, in the case of Kurdish novel, this is turned into the political and cultural setting of martyrdom. It concluded that, in the Kurdish political and cultural setting, the melancholic incorporation of the martyred "other and his world" (Derrida 2005) in the "self" takes a form of "moral debt" that is difficult to pay off (Özsoy 2010); it is an anxious melancholic limbo as well as an uncarriable psychic burden for the bereaved survivor, keeping him/her at odds with the lost other as well as the (political) community. Based on this discussion, the study emphasised that *Reş û Spî*'s fashioning of the issue of engagement with the legacy of a "martyr" as a subject of "ego splitting" for the bereaved survivor articulates a literary representation of this socio-political setting.

With specific emphasis on the motif of character's melancholic torment, the discussion also engaged with Freud's (1917) account of "ego splitting". The novel's representation of the question of engagement with the legacy of the lost other around the motif of ego-splitting rendered Freud's (1917) account a useful concept to highlight the pathology of grief in this setting. A primary conclusion of this aspect of the discussion of the use of the motif was that its psychological meaning is of interest for the Kurdish novelists insofar as it is capable of revealing the socio-political reality. With specific focus on the "ungrievability" (Butler 1999) of the legacy of the lost other in the novel, the discussion also highlighted that the politics of grief based on the bereaved survivor's radical engagement with the legacy of the deceased converts the lost other into an unwelcomed spectre and removes the possibility of a healthy "dialogue" with the lost other in the Kurdish setting; it provided a reading of Aydoğan's novel as a literary account of this very socio-cultural dilemma and the bereavement crisis experienced by the survivors.

The fourth chapter of the study provided an examination of the use of melancholy motif in three different settings in Cewerî's *EYB* and *Lehî*: an illustration of melancholy as a clinical condition that causes one to kill a loved one, as an endless grief for a traumatic loss (of female "honour") and as a site of an aesthetic and cultural resistance involving the preservation and revival of a national language that faces extinction. Schipkowensky's (1968) concept of "melancholic murder", Caruth's (1996) and LaCapra's (1999) concepts of trauma, loss and melancholy, Butler's critical writings on the "ungrievability" (1999) as well as Eng's and Kazanjian's (2003) arguments about the "political potential" (Eng & Kazanjian 2003) of melancholic attachments in colonial and postcolonial settings provided appropriate conceptual basis to contextualise Cewerî's use of melancholy to articulate various subjectivities, all of which are mediated by a political, social and cultural context.

Through a consideration of the motif of "melancholic murder", the discussion also highlighted that the first Kurdish crime novel emerges as a "melancholic murder narrative" (Stougaard-Nielsen 2019) operating within a violent melancholic subjectivity; it demonstrated how crime fiction is used by modern Kurdish novelists not as a literary form to investigate an individual's psychic "decay", but "colonial situations" (Matzke & Mühleisen 2006) and socio-political degenerations that place the individual in the grip of melancholy. The discussion emphasized that the motif of "melancholic murder" becomes a subject of interest and investigation for modern Kurdish novelists in so far as its instrumentality for political and social criticism; as such, the motif goes beyond its narrow psychoanalytic meaning to function as a flexible signifier that serves to manifest the tension between the political subject at a sense of loss and the socio-political reality that makes the individual's desires and ideals impossible. The study also highlighted the unique literary crime fiction forms attained through the illustration

of the crime act as a socio-political effect and the criminal persona as the victim caught in a frenzy resulting from state violence, a mood of indignation, political disappointment and melancholy.

The second section of this final chapter dealt with a motif of melancholic dilemma over a traumatic loss, utilised by Cewerî critically to highlight state sexual violence against Kurdish political women subjects and the Kurdish social and cultural reality that makes it impossible for the victims of sexual violence to come to terms with honour-related loss and grief. The discussion of the female character's (Lehî) melancholy highlighted that, for modern Kurdish novelists, "an ungrievable loss" (Butler 1999) always involves a political, social or cultural context; the "impossibility of grieving" (Butler 1999) for loss is represented not as an individual failure, but as an implication of the socio-political and cultural reality. Saturating the melancholy motif with a strict political and social setting, the specimens examined often indicate "a public foreclosure of the possibility of grief" (Butler 1999, p.172) in their descriptions of the psychology of loss and melancholy; in this setting, the socio-political and cultural structure emerge as the determining factors that "institutionalizes melancholia" (Butler 1999) for the individual experiencing a loss.

A third element of this discussion comprised a consideration of the motif of a productive form of melancholy, utilised by Cewerî to highlight the political and cultural potentials of certain attachments for the intellectuals of the oppressed peoples – especially those facing cultural, linguistic and literary extinction due to ethnic and national oppression. On the basis of the analysis of this melancholy motif, the discussion provided an argument that modern Kurdish literature in Kurdish is a product of the Kurdish authors' melancholic insistence on using and writing in Kurdish language and that this, "revival" of Kurdish language "created" a modern

literature in a "prohibited" language. It demonstrated that while Cewerî also highlights the melancholic dilemma of writing in an un(read)able language for the Kurdish authors in Turkey, there is much in his work which suggests that the meaning of melancholic attachment to a lost loved object is variable and context governed for Kurdish novelists: his illustration of the creative agent's (e.g. Alan in *Lehî*) melancholic attachment to the national language as a progressive intellectual act is to the point. Evidencing the compliance of the Kurdish case to a description of melancholy as an "abundant, rather than lacking" (Eng & Kazanjian 2003) condition, this consideration also demonstrated that the attitude of Kurdish novelists to the use of melancholy as a motif is invariably strategic: melancholy as a stubborn attachment to a loss is represented as non-pathological in so far as it has the potential to recover the nation's political and cultural losses. Conversely, when rendered pathological, this is so only to the extent that it diminishes the individual's potential to engage in the nation's political and cultural struggle for recovering its losses under conditions of political oppression.

In this way, this study has paid due attention to the socio-political connotations of loss and melancholy in the selected novels; yet, it devoted less attention to the aesthetics of loss and melancholy in the texts for two reasons. First, in their descriptions of melancholic subjectivity, Kurdish novels continually alert us to the historical, political and cultural circumstances of melancholy experienced by the characters. Second, as evidenced sufficiently by the discussion of their content, these novels treat melancholy not as a subject of "formal" innovation for representations of subjectivities characterised by a mood of melancholy, but as a descriptive category that serves to depict the psychology of the central character, which is entirely mediated by the Kurdish socio-political reality; that is, the characters' "affective

maps" (Flatley 2008) shaped by a loss-oriented melancholy mood is mainly the subject of "content" exploration rather than "aesthetic forms" (Clewell 2009).

Based on the consideration of the literary use of various melancholy motifs, the findings of this study evidence that "loss [is] deeply political" (Eng & Kazanjian 2003) for modern Kurdish novelists. One of the most remarkable literary implications of this perception of loss is that the grieving "ego" that the Kurdish novelists find worthy of articulation is often a *politicized-ego*. In the selected novels, melancholy emerges either as an affective economy of those active political subjects mobilized to "liberate" the lost homeland and participate in the political struggle (e.g. Memduh Selim Beg in *Siya Evînê*; Temo and Lehî in *EYB* and *Lehî*) or as a model of grief deployed by those who have lost their loved ones in the political struggle for a free homeland and feel obliged to engage in the political legacy of their lost loved ones (e.g. Robîn in *Reş û Spî*). A single exception of this model in the novels is *Siya Evînê*'s Feriha's melancholic grief for a lost love, which is clearly underrepresented. But as an overall conclusion, this discussion has suggested that this excessive literary interest in "affective maps" of melancholics in the political struggle highlights that loss and melancholic grief bereft of socio-political allusions has not yet attracted the attention of the modern Kurdish novelists from Turkey.

Drawing from these findings, this study also showed that melancholy as a particular affect defined by the notion of a stubborn attachment to a lost love object is not itself the subject of investigation; what renders the motif relevant and functional for the Kurdish novelists is chiefly the connotations of loss involved in the motif, which facilitates the representation of both the nation's as well as the individual's losses. Testament to this is the positioning of the individual's affective or intellectual response to these losses in a convenient model of grief.

The discussion identified how an insight of loss-oriented grief turns into a useful literary device to describe a broad spectrum of melancholic subjectivities in the selected novels. Comprising specific responses to these questions, the motif is utilised as a multi-functional literary device; firstly, to signify the loss of the Kurdish homeland in the early twentieth-century or the indispensability of the ideal of a free homeland for the Kurdish community (*Siya Evînê*); secondly, to articulate inconsolable grief of those who lost their loved ones in the political struggle or the melancholic dilemmas of bereaved survivors before the legacy of martyrs (*Reş û Spî*); thirdly, to recount the psychology of being unable to cope with loss caused by the state (sexual) violence and terror (*EYB* and *Lehî*); and fourthly, to highlight the importance of melancholic attachments for the oppressed nation in the cultural resistance for recovering its losses (*Lehî*). In its illustration of a love affair, it becomes a convenient motif to narrate the sadness of love separations caused by the "reality" of the homeland or the wounded "ego" of the (male) political subject marked with loss of an object of love during the "hard times" of the nation (*Siya Evînê*). Based on these findings, the discussion highlighted that Kurdish "melancholy literature" is distinctly a political literature. And the politics of this literature itself does not merely highlight the fact that Kurdish novelists have been able to benefit chiefly from the socio-political potentials of the motif as a literary device, but also that the socio-political reality has firmly shaped Kurdish losses and grief in Turkey over the last century. The aesthetic upshot of this in the Kurdish literary setting is that melancholy literature affords the individuation of loss experienced due to social and political setting on the one hand, while enabling a politicised form of aesthetics informed by motifs of resistance, loss and grief on the other.

What this shows is that when it comes to the Kurdish novel, "the priority of the political interpretation of literary texts" (Jameson 2002, p.1) becomes even more critical, if not imperative; Kurdish authors' literary concern with especially highlighting the relationship between "subjective emotional life" of the character and the socio-political dynamics "that lie at the origins of one's losses" (Flatley 2008), arguably, foregrounds the political interpretive method over other approaches. The grieving "ego" in this setting, often turns into an object of socio-political inquiry, and if this is not the case, then the socio-political reality is often amplified by the authors around the motif of a grieving "ego," palpably resonating it.

This study also evidenced sufficiently that while modern Kurdish novelists of Turkey excessively apply and utilise the motifs of loss, grief and melancholy for representations of Kurdish life in Turkey, their work have not yet reached a level of remarkable mastery with respect to the illustration of melancholic subjectivity. Unlike Western modern novels, in which motifs of loss and melancholy have also been considered as a matter of "formal inflection" (Bahun 2014) by the author, modern Kurdish novels by Turkey's Kurds suggest very limited ability to represent "melancholic dynamics" (Bahun 2014) in distinct figurative form and modes. The aesthetic configuration of the grieving "ego" in these texts is often convoluted due to the authors' evident desire to provide a descriptive account of the grieving "ego" and the grief objects as well as the particular focus on the socio-political inflections of melancholy. The overall consideration of melancholy use in the selected novels clearly showed that, despite modern Kurdish novelists' descriptions of *loss* as *loss,* they are evidently less concerned with producing an effective aesthetic of grief and melancholy. This is the case despite the sublimation of loss under the given political and cultural discourses of resistance

or heroism; and this is also notwithstanding the positioning of the work of grief in the domain of the individual's psychology as evidenced by elements of content and the utilisation of certain modern literary modes such as stream of consciousness, interior monologue and the unconscious for descriptions of melancholy.

As amply evidenced by *Siya Evînê*, we also find a very didactic narration of the meaning of the male character's melancholic performance for the loss of homeland and the political ideal of a free homeland. The melancholic love in the novel is not a subject of "formal" innovation engaging with both the male and female sensibility in love-melancholy; instead, the agony of love-melancholy appears in the simple literary form of a relentless reproach (of the male character) about the "reality" of the homeland and Kurds. In *Reş û Spî*, despite its innovative use of "ego splitting" as an allegory for an anxious melancholy, the suffering and emotional dilemmas of the character (Robîn) are mostly fashioned through his endless "tears" and dramatized didactic dialogues, in which he addresses the reader directly, rather than through "gaps, ellipses and silences" (Clewell 2009). Similarly, despite Cewerî's obvious effort to avoid a monotonous narration and his appeal to a set of experimental narrative techniques in *EYB* and *Lehî*, the "melancholic dynamics" shaping the psychic life of the characters are the subject of monotonous as well as markedly didactic narration: we learn that the matricidal act, the "melancholic murder", committed by Temo is not an implication of the individual "decay", but political and social phenomenon from his tedious and didactic dialogues about the murder; Lehî's melancholic response to a traumatic loss is not inscribed "in the elusiveness of empty tropes" (Sánchez-Pardo 2003), but in her didactic remarks about "trauma" and a traumatic loss that places one "into a cycle of endless grief". As a further example, the complexity of the melancholy of writing literary works in an unread(able) language for an

author is embodied merely through Alan's critical but also very didactic account of the unreadability of the Kurdish-language works in Turkey; furthermore, the motif of Kurdish authors' melancholic commitment to the proscribed Kurdish language is the subject of a simple glorification of the act, only echoed by the duly informative remarks of the characters.

With its specific focus on the particular uses of the motifs of loss, grief, melancholy, nostalgia as well as trauma in the modern Kurdish novel, the present study is the first of its kind attempting to bring psychoanalytical insights to bear upon the burgeoning field of Kurdish literary studies and criticism for an improved and methodical understanding of subjectivities set in a model of grief in Kurdish novels. In doing this, the study, on the one hand, highlighted that the motifs of resistance, loss and melancholy are central to this novelistic project while also eliciting the link between this configuration of this literary content and the Kurdish socio-political reality in Turkey; on the other hand, it pointed at potentials of psychoanalytical literary criticism for the nascent but developing field of the Kurdish literary studies, proposing a nuanced reading of prevalent motifs such as grief inscribed in the modern Kurdish novel.

Furthermore, despite highlighting a common literary thread in the illustration of loss and melancholy in the modern Kurdish novel, due to its limited scope (four novels by Turkey's Kurdish authors written in the Kurmanji), the present study does not claim to provide a comprehensive account of melancholy as a motif in the wider Kurdish novelistic project; its spread over four different political and cultural geographies and divergent development in the specific socio-political and cultural settings of these locales defines this scope. While the initial insights of modern Kurdish novels produced in other parts of the Kurdish homeland suggest that resistance, loss, mourning and melancholy also constitute central concerns for each of these novelistic projects (notably the works of Elî from Iraqi Kurdistan, of Nehayî from

Iranian Kurdistan and of Helîm Yûsiv from Syrian Kurdistan), further study is needed on the specific uses of these motifs in their respective settings as well as their intersections. Studies covering also the works of novelists from other parts of the Kurdish homeland could provide further insights on how modern Kurdish novelists deploy these motifs as well as the forms that Kurdish melancholic subjectivities take in these specific socio-political and cultural settings; they could also provide a more detailed and accurate picture about the aesthetics of grief and melancholy involved in the wider Kurdish novelistic project, identifying the extent to which other Kurdish novelistic projects have reached a literary mastery in the deployment of these motifs. Only too aware of this need for a better understanding of melancholic subjectivities involved in the modern Kurdish novel, this field of literary study can therefore be complemented with efforts to trace the signification of loss and melancholy in these specific novelistic projects.

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