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CONSTRUCTING FREE WOMEN'S VOICES IN THE NOVELS WRITTEN BY FEMALE AUTHORS IN MODERN TURKISH LITERATURE

*Zehra GÜVEN KILIÇARSLAN**

ABSTRACT

A “woman’s voice” is an important component for ‘power,’ which constructs inferior female bodies, in comparison to the superior male body. Power disindividualizes women by constructing them as sexual objects. The female body has been objectified by being separated from the ‘voice’ and disindividualized by power. In this paper, it is first considered how women are “silenced” by “power,” and then examined the Turkish female writers’ stances regarding this phenomenon through their novels. In doing this, this article will closely analyze the literal and literary voices of these novels. The guiding research questions are: Are women’s voices silenced under the patriarchy? How does power affect women’s voices in literature? Can women form their own voice/language in novels? Do women authors speak for themselves and, if so, what happens when women speak for themselves in the texts? How do they use silence to be heard? What narrative strategies do they use? This paper will analyze both the literal and literary voices present in the novels. Here “literal voice” is defined not only as the physical voice that enables us to speak to each other through the use of language, but the ability to speak up, to participate, to express and to experience oneself. It examines the voice as a concept of agency in the realm of power or powerlessness in novels. Thus, voice might include the right not to speak as well as the right to speak. In terms of literary voice, this article is more concerned with formal structures and specific forms of textual practice. More specifically, it will scrutinize the author’s language and literary strategies in order to understand whether she is able to form a female voice.

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STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

Are the female voices silenced under patriarchy? If she talks, does that mean that she does so as a disembodied voice who only repeats the words she hears uttered in a language not her own? In other words do they echo male discourse or speak for themselves as women? These questions were and still are the important part of feminist criticisms which critiques deal with. Many researchers have reached the conclusion that patriarchal ideologies imprison women in a limited space “beyond” the language or “before” the language by defining them with concepts such as privacy, silence, naturalness, mystery, etc. They speculate them as the opposite of “public.” This speculation is one of the most important bases imposed upon the women’s voices, identities, or their bodies. One of feminism’s most basic determinations is that women are obliged to live in a language built by men. The silence of women is defined and assured by the language that speaks “over” them, “about” them or “mediation” of them. In other words, the language spoken by the women is substantially formed by men and that this language confines women in the position of the “subject” chosen by the dominant patriarchal ideologies.

To be represented as themselves women must be the agency/subject determined by them and they are supposed to develop a language that fully or adequately represents them in order to make them visible. When the common cultural status of women as their lives being misrepresented (usually by men) or never represented is taken into consideration, the development of this language becomes quite important. Thus, it is important to understand how women can be represented in a more comprehensive manner in the language and politics, and to comprehend how they are produced and restricted by the power structures which are believed to be an important way for the emancipation of women.

Literature as an art of representation allows us to see how language serves women’s voices in creating alternate realities to the avenues of power open to them in the world. The status of women and men as being both biologically and sociologically different from each other requires them to have different perspectives on the literary creativity. In general, men’s writing was positioned as “the norm,” presented as if it were literature, somehow representative of all writings. By not considering gender the assumption conveyed is that male is somehow generic or neutral, an assumption shown to be false by a focus on women’s writing. Therefore, it is important to point out the superiority of male writers in terms of number and authority, late arrival of women writers to the literary scene, women as being on the edge and exception in literature. Also, it is crucial to indicate that the image of women in literature was mainly created by men. In other words, woman in literature is the one written by men. However, feminist researchers think that the unique social experiences of women and men are different from each other and that they do not situate in equal conditions. When feminist literary criticism which focuses on these different perspectives reflected in literary texts analyzes the content, format and the language of a text, it tries to uncover the dominant male culture reflected in the text on the one hand, and explores how women’s feelings and experiences and their own artistic creativity are reflected in the texts on the other.

It has been shown by feminist literary criticism that historical and social conditions are crucial for the text, that the relationship between the text and its historical and ideological status is inevitable for reading, examining, evaluating and interpreting it, and that the text's form and the content is indistinguishable. In the 1980s Turkish society experienced a transformation, which brought changes for all individuals as well as women. Turkish literature was surrounded by women writers in this period more than ever before and this term became, as the phrase goes "the age of women's literature" for Turkish literature especially in novels. Therefore, female types and identities were altered. Recent scholarship has produced a number of important studies examining women's literature of this period. In addition, starting from the beginning of the 21st century, Turkish society has experienced and is still experiencing another transformation. As a result of this, women's identities (with all other individuals) are undergoing another change. The reflection of this change can be seen most clearly in contemporary novels. Since the number of women as writers in the Turkish literary scene has increased, women have been depicted extensively by women, and women characters have entered literature realistically and in many different types, it is necessary to examine the novels of this period from a female perspective.

A "woman's voice" is an important component for 'power,' which constructs inferior female bodies, in comparison to the superior male body. Power disindividualizes women by constructing them as sexual objects. The female body has been objectified by being separated from the 'voice' and disindividualized by power. This paper first considers how women are "silenced" by "power," and then examines the Turkish female writers' stances regarding this phenomenon through their novels. In doing this, this article will closely analyze the literal and literary voices of these novels. It is argued in this paper that Turkish women authors have achieved important progress in terms of exercising some level of power, gaining consciousness, and reconstructing themselves, but they need to be empowered more to demonstrate their subjectivities and willpowers. The guiding research questions are: Are women's voices silenced under the patriarchy? How does power affect women's voices in literature? Can women form their own voice/language in novels? Do women authors speak for themselves and, if so, what happens when women speak for themselves in the texts? How do they use silence to be heard? What narrative strategies do they use?

Both the literal and literary voices present in the novels are analyzed. Here "literal voice" is defined not only as the physical voice that enables us to speak to each other through the use of language, but the ability to speak up, to participate, to express and to experience oneself. The voice is examined as a concept of agency in the realm of power or powerlessness in novels. Thus, voice might include the right not to speak as well as the right to speak. In terms of literary voice, it is more about formal structures and specific forms of textual practice. More specifically, this paper scrutinizes the author's language and literary strategies in order to understand whether she is able to form a female voice.

In this article authors from different backgrounds as well as authors who hold different perspectives on different topics are included, as this enables to examine a diverse population of women writers.

Although they come from different backgrounds and they defend different ideologies, all of the women authors discussed here support and work to better women's life conditions, and they do this via their novels, which serve as their most important tools. For this reason, novels written in the 21st century by women writers with a range of ideologies who focus on female issues have chosen; namely, women's voices. Among the possible women writers, the following authors and their works have been chosen: *Bir Deliler Evinin Yalan Yanlış Anlatılan Kısa Tarihi (The Very Erroneously Narrated Short History of a Madhouse)* by Ayfer Tunç, *Düğümlere Üfleyen Kadınlar (Women Who Blow on Knots)* by Ece Temelkuran, *Baba ve Piç (The Bastard of İstanbul)* by Elif Şafak, *Dün ve Ferda (Yesterday and Future)* by Eréndiz Atasü, *Fatma Aliye: Uzak Ülke (Fatma Aliye: The Remote Country)* by Fatma Karabıyık Baqrbarasoglu, *Mor (Purple)* by İnci Aral, *İki Genç Kızın Romanı (Two Girls)* by Perihan Mağden, *Cinayet Fakültesi (The School of Murder)* by Pınar Kür.

Keywords: Power, woman's voice, literary voice, Modern Turkish literature, novels.

MODERN TÜRK EDEBİYATI'NDA KADIN YAZARLARIN ROMANLARINDA ÖZGÜR KADIN SESLERİNİN İNŞASI

ÖZ

"Kadının sesi", 'üstün erkek bedenine' kıyasla ikinci derece kadın bedenleri inşa eden "iktidar" için önemli bir unsurdur. İktidar, kadınları cinsel nesneler olarak kurgular ve bireysellikten uzaklaştırır. Yani, kadının bedenini, "sesten" ayırarak onun bireysel olma özelliğini elinden alır ve onu nesneleştirir. Bu makalede önce kadınların iktidar ile nasıl "sessizleştirildiği" ele alınmakta ve ardından Türk kadın yazarların bu olguya ilişkin tutumları romanları üzerinden incelenmektedir. Bu amaçla romanların edebi sesleri ile romanlardaki karakterlerin (özellikle kadın karakterlerin) hakiki sesleri ayrıntılı bir şekilde incelenecektir. Cevap aranacak araştırma soruları ise şu şekildedir: Kadın sesleri ataerkil sistem tarafından susturuluyor mu? İktidar, kadınların seslerini edebiyatta nasıl etkiler? Romanlarda kadınlar kendi seslerini / dillerini oluşturabiliyorlar mı? Kadın yazarlar kendileri için konuşabiliyorlar mı; eğer konuşabiliyorlarsa, kadınlar metinler içinde kendileri için konuşurlarsa ne olur? Kadın yazarlar seslerini duyurmak için sesi/sessizliği nasıl kullanırlar? Bu amaçla, metinlerinde ne tür anlatı stratejileri kullanırlar? Bu sorulara cevap ararken daha önce de belirttiğim gibi romanlarda, hem edebi sesleri hem de özellikle kadınların hakiki sesleri üzerinde durulmaktadır. Buradaki hakiki ses, yalnızca birbirimizle dil kullanarak konuşmamızı sağlayan fiziksel ses değil, aynı zamanda çekinmeden konuşabilme, katılma, kendini ifade etme ve deneyimleme yeteneği olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Yani ses, romanlarda iktidar veya iktidarsızlık alanında etkinlik/yetkinlik belirten bir kavram olarak incelenmektedir. Bu anlamda ses konuşma hakkının yanı sıra konuşmama hakkını da içerebilir ve birçok anlam ifade eder. Diğer taraftan edebi ses incelenirken daha çok metinlerdeki formal yapılar ve biçimsel özellikler ele alınacaktır. Daha açık bir şekilde, özgün bir kadın

sesi oluşturulup oluşturulmadığını anlamak için yazarın edebi dili ve edebi anlamda kullandığı stratejiler incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İktidar, kadının sesi, edebi dil, Modern Türk edebiyatı, roman.

Construction of Literal and Literary Voices of Women

A “woman’s voice” is an important element for ‘power,’ which builds female bodies of inferior status, in comparison to the superior male body. Women are disindividualized by power as being constructed sexual objects. Power objectifies female bodies by separating them from the ‘voice,” thus disindividualizes them. This paper first focuses on the way in which women are “silenced” by “power,” and then it examines the female writers’ stances regarding this phenomenon through their novels. In doing this, it will closely analyze the literal and literary voices of these novels. The guiding research questions are: Are women’s voices silenced under the patriarchy? How does power affect women’s voices in literature? Can women form their own voice/language in novels? Do women authors speak for themselves and, if so, what happens when women speak for themselves in the texts? How do they use silence to be heard? What narrative strategies do they use?

D’juana Ann Montgomery defines “voice” as a “dependent variable; means of expression, creation, and communication that allows a writer and/or reader to interact with his/her knowledge of language and culture” (Montgomery, 2009:5). In this paper, I will analyze both the literal and literary voices present in the novels. Here “literal voice” is defined not only as the physical voice that enables us to speak to each other through the use of language, but the ability to speak up, to participate, to express and to experience oneself. I examine the voice as a concept of agency in the realm of power or powerlessness in novels. Thus, voice might include the right not to speak as well as the right to speak.

In terms of literary voice, this article is more concerned with formal structures and specific forms of textual practice. More specifically, it will scrutinize the author’s language and literary strategies in order to understand whether she is able to form a female voice.

The novels in which women’s literal and literary voices are analyzed are *Bir Deliler Evinin Yalan Yanlış Anlatılan Kısa Tarihi* (*The Very Erroneously Narrated Short History of a Madhouse*) by Ayfer Tunç, *Düğümlere Üfleyen Kadınlar* (*Women Who Blow on Knots*) by Ece Temelkuran, *Baba ve Piç* (*The Bastard of İstanbul*) by Elif Şafak, *Dün ve Ferda* (*Yesterday and Future*) by Erendiz Atasü, *Fatma Aliye: Uzak Ülke* (*Fatma Aliye: The Remote Country*) by Fatma Karabıyık Baqrbarasoğlu, *Mor* (*Purple*) by İnci Aral, *İki Genç Kızın Romanı* (*Two Girls*) by Perihan Mağden, *Cinayet Fakültesi* (*The School of Murder*) by Pınar Kür.

According to Foucault, confession-based Western civilization strives to utter the most difficult things to say in a clear manner; justice, medicine, family relationships, everyday life go into the field of confession; crimes, sickness, diseases, sins, requests, and problems can be admitted (Foucault, 1990: 58-73). Islamic culture, on the other hand, is an “unspoken culture.” It is based on the limited private sphere, where “not to be expressed” subjects of the private domain and “secrets” exist (Foucault, 1990: 58-73). Patriarchal ideologies also entrench women into the supra-language/metalanguage or rather pre-verbal space by defining the existence of women with concepts such as privacy, naturalness, mystery, and silence; it constructs the existence of woman as contrasting the public (Irzık and Parla, 2004:7). In this way, it tries to prevent women’s relationships with language before being established, because language stands out as the primary means through which men, who possess power, distinguish themselves from women who are the “others.” This is to say that all language is the language of the dominant order, and women, if they speak at all, must speak through it. As Susan Snaider Lanser states, “The language women are taught is those in power are those with words; those with the power of the word have the power to define; for woman to name herself and write herself also means the freedom to

define herself" (Lanser, 1979:297). Therefore, women effectively have no voice within the system dominated by men's language.

Similarly, Swann argues that gender-based differences define women's linguistic characteristics as secondary and incomplete within the masculine order, which defines male as the norm, and women are marginalized because men define the rules and traditions in the field of writing and speaking (Swann, 1992: 58-59). Historically, very few women were able to participate in speeches that were made in public, in other words the place seen as valuable by power. According to Cameron, while communication and speech in the public space imply freedom, "silence" is the symbol of oppression (Cameron, 1992:5). Women are obstructed by being excluded from "precious/valuable" speeches in the public sphere, as well as by being silenced by men who hold power in the private space once again.

It has been revealed through theoretical research that masculine hands have served to shape language, that language has a masculine structure, and that language includes formal differences depending on gender.¹ Many researchers such as Robin Lakoff, Dale Spender, Deborah Cameron, Marry Ritchie Key, Marry Ellmann, Peter Trudgill, William O'Barr and Browmann Atkins have done research comparing and contrasting male and female languages. As a result, they have identified that 'women's language' can be generalized as the language of "powerlessness." Thus, women who speak the language of powerlessness have taken them under protection by speaking less and much more carefully. Deborah Cameron states that men created words to express male experiences such that women become estranged to the language (Cameron, 1992: 93). Women often feel helpless in the face of this power because women have two options: speak a language that is foreign to them and their experiences, and try to explain women's experiences with the words that reflect male experiences; namely, alienation, or being unable to express themselves adequately, and feeling the lack of language as they attempt to explain something in a womanly manner, and eventually retreat into silence (Cameron, 1992: 93). For this reason, the absence of a suitable language for women has led to the prominence of women's "silence." In this way, the history of silence is central to women's history.

The articulation between 'women' and 'silence' and, also, 'silence' and 'powerlessness' are almost considered common sense within literary and academic contexts. For example, the book of *Silences*, in which Tillie Olsen examines the "silenced communities," illustrates how women's silence has been viewed as oppression, the mark of women's exclusion from the public spheres of life and from representation as speakers in texts (Olsen, 2003). Similarly, anthropologists Edwin Ardener and Shirley Ardener developed a theory about the "muted groups." Unsurprisingly, women constitute one of these muted groups (Ardener and Ardener, 1975). They argue that the powerful group in society creates and controls the meaning (Ardener and Ardener, 1975). The muted groups, on the other hand, are silenced by this dominant structure and are forced to use the concepts and ideologies of the dominant side when they want to express themselves (Ardener and Ardener, 1975). Women are not the only group who is muted and unarticulated; gypsies, children, and criminals are also silenced (Moore, 1988: 3). One point that Shirley and Edwin Ardener ponder carefully is that muted groups should not be identified through a literal silence; these people may talk (Ardener and Ardener, 1975: 21). However, by referring to these groups as "muted," the researchers do not necessarily mean these people are silent, but rather these people are unable to say all they would wish to say, and are unable to say it where and when they would like (Ardener and Ardener, 1975: 21). Women are a silenced group because the power decides for them where, when, how and what they will talk about.

Women struggle with masculine presuppositions whenever they talk. Women's words faced by a continuous stream of interruption and devaluation by men. In the system of value created by men, women's talk about what they do in their daily lives, especially gossip, is described as "empty." In

¹For more info, see R.Lakoff, *Language and Women's Place*, New York: Harper&Row Publishers, Inc. and Dale Spender, *Man Made Language*, New York & London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

addition to this devaluation, when women are in the same environment as men, silence is imposed on women as a sign of respect. As a result of all these pressures, the impression that women speak a lot is common among men, no matter how little women actually speak.

It is clear that these terms (e.g., “muted” and “silenced”) do not only express the problem of language but also the problem of power. The linguistic restriction is the basis of a social restriction that can be considered in a more general sense. The masculine power aims to create lack of self-confidence in women, and eventually to facilitate the control of women by taking their speech, which is an important tool of self-expression.

Men who hold power assert some affirmative reasons when they push women out of the language. One of the most important of these is that when men and women are together, the silence of woman is a sign of respect in the community. When women are being taught to remain silent, silence is being defined as a virtue belonging to women by the masculine language. Thus, an affirmative meaning is attached to the silence of women.

Another reason can be seen in Muslim countries like Turkey. Elifhan Köse states that within the Muslim societies, Muslim women being quiet and dignified is important (Köse, 2014: 162). Women are not to laugh, and remaining silent is viewed as an act of controlling the overflowing behavior of the body and the soul (Köse, 2014: 162). For women, to be silent and dignified is indispensable for veiling, which requires nurturing of the body.

In addition, the masculine power imposes silence upon women, which serves their own interests, through the concepts of religion, traditions-customs, respect and honor. Thus, silence prevents women from having a voice of their own. In other words, power presents silence to women by naturalizing and glorifying it, so that they can imprison women in a restrictive silence where they can easily be surveilled and dependent on men. That is why over time even a small talk turns into a success for women.

While female speech is formally devalued, the exaltation of women's silence is a vehicle for suppression and exclusion of the oppressed women in two ways. Power wants women's silence and invisibility. When women are able to speak, it is only done within the confines of the male language. No matter how much they talk, it is common that women's words are devalued and labeled as consisting of empty speech and gossip. For this reason, women are always criticized for being too conversant. Instead of women's speech being compared to man's speech, women's speech is compared to no speech at all.

At the point of this compulsive existence of women's silence, the use of silence and the necessity of eventually creating a female language by breaking this silence is a crucial matter. Tillie Olsen lists the reasons regarding why silenced communities do not speak, and these include lack of time, money, support, one's own confidence in one's right to public language, an available discourse that will allow one to tell the truth, and familial and social support (Olsen, 2003: 49). It is important to remember Foucault's very well-known argument that power does not only operate through domination or oppression as is commonly believed; it also operates through the experience of resistance (Foucault, 1990: 139). It can be thought that silence does not just mean to have surrendered to power. In other words, it creates new possibilities, produces new things, ideas, and relations. Therefore, women can use silence to refuse to speak in dominant language, or to deny acceptance and passivity in order to resist so that, ironically, by being silent, they are able to speak for themselves, for the “other.”

Being silent, even if it does not bring change, creates a space for women to protect themselves and can be used as an alternative means of creating meaning and truth. There is a power in listening or not listening, as well as in speaking or not speaking. Patricia Laurence says, “Foucault complicates this notion of discourse in avowing that any such discourse involves at least two sides, and that, indeed, there are many discourses of power involving the listener as well as the speaker (Laurence, 1994: 159). Silence

is also identified as a space of possibility by some researchers. For example, Rowe and Malhotra describes silence as follows:

In entering the stillness of silence, we might communicate deeply at the edges of sound. Silence allows us the space to breathe. It allows us the freedom of not having to exist constantly in reaction to what is said. Standing in silence allows for that breath, for that reflection that can create a space of great healing. We theorize silence as a space of fluidity, non-linearity, and as a sacred, internal space that provides a refuge— especially for non-dominant peoples. Silence is a process that allows one to go within before one has to speak or act. This is crucial if our work as activists, writers, and creative artists is to come from a grounded place that connects the spiritual with the political (Rowe and Malhotra 2013: 2).

Therefore, as Laurence states, silence is as fundamental to talking as listening is necessary to speaking; the function of the listener can only be comprehended by way of speakers (Laurence, 1994: 160). The significance of voice or silence, of knowledge and ignorance, only endures in a web of distinctions (Laurence, 1994: 160).

Literature as an art of representation allows us to see how language serves women's voices in creating alternate realities to the avenues of power open to them in the world. The status of women and men as being both biologically and sociologically different from each other requires them to have different perspectives on the literary creativity. In general, men's writing was positioned as "the norm," presented as if it were literature, somehow representative of all writings. By not considering gender the assumption conveyed is that male is somehow generic or neutral, an assumption shown to be false by a focus on women's writing. Therefore, it is important to point out the superiority of male writers in terms of number and authority, late arrival of women writers to the literary scene, women as being on the edge and exception in literature. Also, it is crucial to indicate that the image of women in literature was mainly created by men. In other words, woman in literature is the one written by men. However, feminist researchers think that the unique social experiences of women and men are different from each other and that they do not situate in equal conditions. When feminist literary criticism which focuses on these different perspectives reflected in literary texts analyzes the content, format and the language of a text, it tries to uncover the dominant male culture reflected in the text on the one hand, and explores how women's feelings and experiences and their own artistic creativity are reflected in the texts on the other.

The masculine power, which seeks to confine women into the meanings it defines through forming power in the language, appears in literary texts, as well. Literary history is dark with silences because the control of both literal and literary voice is in the hands of the same power: men. However, this power has not been able to prevent women from writing and struggling to make their voices heard. As Evren Karataş stated, in Turkish literature, women's voiced have began to be heard after 1908, and women authors have started to be mentioned after 1950s (Karataş 2009). After 1970, it has been seen that there has been no difference between Turkish male and female authors in terms of number and quality (Karataş 2009).

In this context, it should be noted that women's works have original qualities in the World of literature where men often dominate. Elaine Showalter has grouped these feminine qualities of women's literature historically and qualitatively under the name "female, feminine, and feminist" (Showalter, 1977). Furthermore, she argues that women's writing is a "double-voiced discourse" that always embodies the social, literary, and cultural heritages of both the muted and the dominant (Showalter, 1977: 263). Additionally, female authors reveal both the surveilled status of themselves in the patriarchal society and the essence of private culture outside of this patriarchal society. This sovereign and silenced double voice in the works of female authors writers creates "text" and "sub-text" (Showalter, 1977: 263). As such, according to Virginia Woolf, this attribute appears even in the works

of female authors who use male names. In this way, the internal conflict brought about by gender and traditional feminine roles can be clearly seen (Woolf, 1929).

Voices of Resistance, Silences of Presence

Power wants to create what Foucault calls, “docile bodies” (Foucault, 2012: 135) that do not produce knowledge and speech, as opposed to conscious and productive individuals. It is not hard to find female characters with these docile characteristics in Turkish literature. In fact, Turkish literature speaks through women's silences. At the core of these Turkish novels, we repeatedly encounter women who are silent or silenced, muted or inarticulate. Generally, in Turkish novels, women are positioned as passive, selfdestructive, and event-driven, as opposed to the position of the active subject, who makes choices, decisions, and acts regarding and directs events. This positioning has also become a crucial tool used to strengthen the power of men.

This leads to the similar aspects pertinent to women, analogous instruments and processes that exist to exclude and despise women in language and literature. Starting from this similarity, both speaking and silent characters in the novels are considered as vehicles in this chapter, which aims to analyze the voice of women. This part addresses Turkish works to question why and how women's silence, as well as the voice of women who can speak, emerged. In addition, whether women have the power to choose to be silent, for what purposes women can choose silence, and the status, authority, and agency of the women who can speak are examined. The fundamental question examined here has to do with whether the silence of women represents merely silencing, oppression, and consequently, a surrender, or the process of creating a different meaning as valuable as the word.

In some of the novels analyzed here, female characters are devalued within the male-dominant environment, and are silenced by being excluded from the narrative. In others, they are still suppressed by men, but they eventually become silent by their own will while trying to take a stand against men who hold power.

By looking closely at the analyzed novels' characters who refuse to speak or who are silenced via outside pressure, as well as by looking at communication form and intensity women have established within their environment, one can assess whether the silencing that the patriarchy forces on women can be given reshaped by women. It has been found that the voices or silences of women have some common characteristics in the novels studied here. Most importantly, the brief survey of female characters in the following analysis reveals that women's silences have become a discourse of resistance, making women actively present. Their role as thinking, observing, dreaming characters show women as exercising power when they refuse to speak the dominant language.

In all of these novels, the main characters are literally silent on certain topics, though the reasons for their silences are different. Zeliha in *Baba ve Piç* is one such character. In general, she has an idea about everything and does not hesitate to share her ideas. She is so brave and outspoken, even swearing at the men who harass her in the middle of the street. In this instance she ignores the “rule of the street,” which states that you never react when you are harassed in the street (p.11).

She is the only woman who can use such an indecent language indiscreetly without hesitation in Kazancı family. Not only in Kazancı, but among all Turkish women she is considered rare because of this characteristic... Weighty, violent oaths... Passersby are staring at her face in amazement. The kind of swearing unbecoming to a woman's mouth. (p. 9)

Similarly, when she goes to the clinic, Zeliha talks about abortion, which women in general abstain from talking about loudly; Zeliha, however, speaks regarding this topic without any hesitation, and she utters the word “abortion” while looking into the eyes of the people in the clinic (p.16).

The author has left this character literally silent about a single topic, and that is the identity of her daughter's father. Zeliha's daughter Asya also does not break her silence regarding the identity of

her father. The author does not reveal whether Asya wants to know who her father is, or whether he is alive or not. However, at the end of the novel, the silences of these characters are broken in this regard.

In the same novel, the Armenian grandmother has never explained the secret of her past to anyone. The author has tried to reflect the importance of the unspoken subject by consciously leaving this character silent at all times. Using the grandmother's silences strategically, she points out how important the unspoken will be. The author's conceptualization of this character's silence also shows the author's silence on this important political topic. By proclaiming no opinion in this political matter at all, through the silence of the character, it has been revealed that the author does not have any authority on this subject.

Likewise, in novel *Dün ve Ferda*, the protagonist, Ferda, is a powerful, plainspoken character. She never hesitates to share her ideas about anything, especially political issues, with anyone, including her husband. The instance in which Ferda is silent is clearly an example of resistance.

Ferda believes that she should have the economic power to make her voice heard. After graduating from the university, she sees herself as a strong and independent woman. She begins working as an assistant to Hürriyet Hanım (Mrs. Hürriyet) at the university and develops a relationship with Prof. Kazım Bey (Mr. Kazım) who is both the chair of the department and Mrs. Hürriyet's supervisor. However, Ferda does not reveal this relationship to Mrs. Hürriyet and thinks of this silence as a means of resistance and revolt against her (p. 36). Ferda's will to speak out and effort to make her voice heard by someone brings her to the Mediterranean, where she has a short affair with a young man. She stays silent and does not share anything about this with her husband. Again, she considers this silence to be a type of resistance and revolt against her husband.

In the novel, Ferda's husband Özdemir, contrary to Ferda, accepts silence and believes that silence will solve all of the family's problems. While the author creates the husband as a political character who constantly digs up social problems and talks about them, she silences him on the topic of familial conflicts (p.142). This is to say that the author offers a different language by presenting a male character, who is silent about "private" subjects, because this is generally characteristic of female characters.

Additionally, Erendiz Atasü writes separate virtual sections where characters are able to talk about the topics they cannot talk in real life in order to make their voices heard. In this virtual world, both male and female characters are able to tell all of their truths to one another.

The silence in *Cinayet Fakültesi* is another example of resistance. However, this novel is fictionalized in a different way from the others. Pınar Kür writes a novel within a novel and at the same time makes the writer of the novel a murderer. Akin, who is the murderer and the writer, is both literally silent and invisible throughout the novel. She was raped years ago and did not break her silence until the moment she took her revenge. However, because Akin is also the writer, she has the most important and authoritative voice and is the creator of all of the events and murders. In other words, Pınar Kür turns the silence of this character into a striking example of resistance and also puts all the power on Akin as the creator of all things. In short, through a silent character, Kür creates a power that has a voice, and also gives a voice to others.

In *Mor*, there are silent but actively present figures. One of them is the mother of İlhan Sacit, Armağan, and Gülcan. Although she is a side character, she is the most influential person throughout the novel because of her significant impact on the main characters. Her most important characteristic, which affected her children is her silence. The silence of the mother makes her very powerful and influential in the eyes of the men around her, including her sons and husband. Here, the mother's silence is both an example of resistance against her husband, and an example of protective silence, as she seeks to protect her children. The mother commits suicide, and nobody knows the reason behind it. Throughout

the novel her actions do not reveal her intents, nor does what she says. As an illustration, her son Armağan is most afraid of his mother's silence because it seems as though something horrible will come from it (p.61).

Another silent character in the novel is a male. Inci Aral reveals through a silent male figure that power often oppresses people and creates silences. She makes it more striking by not only creating a silent male character, but by positioning him against a female character who can speak. Figen, unlike Armağan, is a more open and extroverted person. She notices that in an environment where men and women are present, the men are those who constantly talk, and she puts an end to the silences of women by consciously stopping the men's talk (p.97). When Figen speaks, Armağan finds her more attractive and wants to learn more about her personality more (p. 57). Figen, on the other hand, cannot associate Armağan's personal qualities with masculinity, although she generally accepts that he is good in nature (p. 77). In fact, Figen, who has a voice and is able to speak, cannot welcome her husband's silence in a positive way.

Figen: Armağan, your love, as well as your sorrows were very quiet.

Armağan: Silence is humane, silence is the uninvited territory of a person. Figen: It is stifling. (p.148)

The author reveals a common belief that silence is not an appropriate characteristic for men and that silence is more closely related to women, as Figen expresses her thoughts about Armağan. Additionally, the author emphasizes in a more impactful way that being silenced is not an acceptable feature for anyone.

Again, in this novel, a female character, who is raped and as a result stuck in silence, emerges. Revan is a female character who, like Zeliha in *Baba ve Piç*, speaks a lot and does not hesitate to discuss whatever she thinks of any topic. In fact, even though her husband, İlhan, initially loves her for being outspoken, he later thinks that she is a very tedious and a woman who speaks unnecessarily (p.91). However, the only thing she does keep silent about is the fact that her first boyfriend raped her. Because Revan could not voice herself at all, she finds no way out (p.93).

One of the most important subjects in *Düğümlere Üfleyen Kadınlar* is the adventurous travel of four women who each have a voice and can speak up against power. In the novel, Ece Temelkuran provides very impressive examples of the type of women who are able to speak up and have voice, as well as the type of women who use silence in a strategic way by remaining silent. For example, Madam Lila, one of the main characters of the novel, sets a precedent for powerful women by, at different times, speaking in a very influential way, and by being silent. Through this character, the author underscores that both women's voice and their silence can serve as means of resistance against power.

When Madam Lila is silent, she is thinking, observing or deliberately refusing to respond to the speech of others. In other words, her silence becomes an "active" presence. In the same way, Maryam, another character in the novel, creates a space to think and observe, not by speaking at events but by being silent in general and consciously refusing to respond to the speech of others. Therefore, the verbal silences of these female characters become active strategies of choice and resistance.

In order to indicate that, in general, men are the speakers and women are the silent listeners, the author gives a contrasting example by using Madam Lila. Madam Lila is a female character who wants to tell the story and voice her opinion, not the one who listens to the story. She says:

Maybe I wanted to do what I never did, not what I always did. I wanted to tell my story. Men do not like it at all. They want to tell the story; they never listen. And I told him my story... (p.249).

Ece Temelkuran gives important clues about the difference between male and female language and the dominance of the former. For example, Madam Lila says, "I learned all the languages I know from men, everything that I tell you from women" (p. 134). She continues, "We can only have words by writing our own stories" (p. 223).

In fact, the language they speak is not their native language, but these three women, Amira, Maryam, and the journalist, as well as Madam Lila, are able to negotiate very well and establish very close relationships.

While we are speaking English, which is our exile, we are turning into a patchwork; to be ours. Amira adds words from Tunisian Arabic, Maryam from Egyptian Arabic, me from Turkish. The words of Muslim culture, inshallahs, masallahs, wallahs, billahs, are sparkling like beads in this English. We are opening passages from these words in English, in the cold London air, warm passages from the Middle East. So, a language that belongs to us is coming into existence. A brand-new English flavored with Arabic almond paste and Turkish rose jam. But such a language we cannot teach anyone. (p. 128)

The author suggests therefore that these women can speak not only the language they invented themselves, but that their bodies, too, can speak.

Amira took her hand to her belly: "I am on my period." Maryam stopped with a strange face: She said it is very strange and stopped speaking. "Right now. Me too." "I thought that men could not change the chemistry of each other's body, no matter how close they were. But when women really start talking, even their ovaries are talking to each other (p.338).

Temelkuran, also, gives striking examples of silences being used against power as another way to resist. In her novel, *Düğümlere Üfleyen Kadınlar*, the character Dido says:

Stranger, I am the mother of all my daughters, who will come after me. I am like the invincible women of the land I came from, fertile and assiduous. I defeated the kings and the fighters with my silence, o brave soldier. (p. 237)

In other words, in this novel, the author writes the story of four different women who have different voices and words to say, who have the ability to express themselves openly, as well as who show all kinds of reactions to power and oppression either by speaking or being silent, and who, with all these qualities, diverge from all other women who are submissive and voiceless. All of them set forth on a journey in order to live the lives they want to, as opposed to the lives imposed on them, and their paths cross on this journey. By means of Madam Lila, they realize their own identity and power in this path together.

In *İki Genç Kızın Romanı*, silence is once again, used in a strategic way. Behiye is a girl who speaks neither among her friends nor in the family. She lives her pain, anger, and her problems on her own. The author uses Behiye's inner voice to convey her experiences, feelings and thoughts to the reader. She is especially very angry toward her brother Tufan, but even if she does not say anything about this, her brother understands her unspoken anger toward him. In other words, Behiye is actively present throughout the novel, even in sections where she does not say a single word.

Contrary to Behiye, another female character in the novel, Çiğdem, speaks almost all of the time, but her speech does not have any effect on anybody with whom she converses. Behiye likens her to "a suitcase full of trivials" (p. 43). According to Behiye, Çiğdem, as well as all of the other characters who speak, has nothing important to say. In other words, even if they are able to speak, they are "absent."

In *Fatma Aliye: Uzak Ülke*, the author Fatma Barbarosoğlu presents a female character who is different from those in other novels. Barbarosoğlu highlights the ideas of voice and silence by creating a strong female character, Fatma Aliye. The only thing that Fatma Aliye could not speak about is her

daughter who escaped from the house and married a man who is not Muslim. Fatma Aliye feels guilty and powerless because she is not able to do anything about the turn of events. For this reason, she has no words to speak about this incident. It is possible to say that, contrary to other novels, the silence in this novel is actually an indicator of a powerless female figure.

Therefore, in the examined novels, female authors present female—as well as male – characters whose voices are not heard or listened to. Although these characters speak, their voices are not given value. More importantly, in addition to creating these characters, these authors have created female characters, who keep silent but express a great deal of information or feelings and become actively present; they also create characters who choose silence as a means of resistance and who in this way, stand against power.

Furthermore, when examining the literary voices of these authors, who try to create their own language, it is possible to encounter those who use similar and common literary techniques to stand against power, as well as those who try uncommon/unorthodox methods in order to form a language of their own.

Female writers begin to consistently give strong voices to female characters, allowing them to bear the philosophical, psychological, and intellectual weight of their fictional experiences. Because those novels written by female authors are written to either reveal the women's situation or to exemplify different female profiles, the majority of the novels assessed here have female protagonists. In other words, all of the major voices of the texts are female, namely, Zeliha, Asya and Armanuş in *Baba ve Piç*; Ferda in *Dün ve Ferda*; Fatma Aliye and the author herself in *Fatma Aliye: Uzak Ülke*, which is a biographic novel; Madam Lila, Maryam, Amira, and again the author herself in *Düğümlere Üfleyen Kadınlar*; and Behiye and Handan in *İki Genç Kızın Romanı*. Even in *Cinayet Fakültesi*, a novel in which the protagonist is believed to be a man at first, the most important figure, the heroine and the murderer, Akın is revealed to be female. In *Mor*, the most fundamental issue is the concept of male-female relationships, marriages, and family relations. Therefore, the author of this novel makes use of both male and female characters as protagonists. Finally, *Bir Deliler Evinin Yalan Yanlış Anlatılan Kısa Tarihi* is a kind of anthology which consists of dozens of interconnected stories. For this reason, it is possible to find different type of characters, including men, women, elders, children, the poor, and the wealthy. However, when the novel ends, the majority of the heroes that remain in the reader's mind are women. Each of the authors gives a similar type of voice to the women's struggles by strategically creating an innovative discursive mode through the use of both silence and speech.

When we look at the narrator of the novels, there is a common feature in all of them, with the exception of *Cinayet Fakültesi*. We still do not see a consistent and comfortable "I" in these novels written by women. Instead, the authors generally prefer to write in third-person narrative (in *Düğümlere Üfleyen Kadınlar* and part of *Fatma Aliye: Uzak Ülke*, first person narrative is used). In *Cinayet Fakültesi*, Pınar Kür leaves the female narrator silent because she wants to use the male authority to have an authoritative voice. There is no authorial "I," and the authors often use the general and impersonal "one" to create a sense of communal authority.

When we look at these novels, we encounter a number of common features. First, all of them are sociological novels that depict the issues reflected in society. Furthermore, the psychological elements in the novels are significant because authors recognize the importance of reflecting the inner world of women in addition to their sociological situations. Among the novels I discuss here, the one which draws the most attention, in terms of genre, is *Cinayet Fakültesi*, a detective novel. This type of novel in Turkish literature is generally dominated by male authors and is known as a genre which women do not dare to write. However, Pınar Kür shows a great example of courage in this matter and succeeds as the female author of detective novels. Another author who succeeds in writing in a different genre is Ayfer Tunç. She wrote the novel *Bir Deliler Evinin Yalan Yanlış Anlatılan Kısa Tarihi* in carnivalesque

style², a rare genre in Turkish literature. This novel consists of dozens of intertwined stories and Ayfer Tunç succeeded in bringing unrelated people and strange events together.

Moreover, when we look at the methods these authors use to create a unique female literary language, the internal monologue or stream of consciousness immediately draws our attention. This narrative strategy reminds the reader of Virginia Woolf's interest in female observers. Through the technique of "psycho-narration"³ in which a narrator fuses with the consciousness of the characters he narrates, the inner worlds of those who are socially inarticulate or unrepresented in the dialogue of the novel are presented. As Braxton and Zuber state, Woolf, extremely conscious about the "unsaid" in life and society, created narrative methods to express the personalities of silent observers (Braxton and Zuber, 1994: 1614).

By way of this unique style, knowing that women in certain times and places are unable to speak openly, female Turkish novelists, similar to other authors, such as Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, and Virginia Woolf, narrate the inwardness of female listeners and observers in conventional frameworks in life and texts, inviting us to interpret their silences not as passivity, submission and oppression, but as an enlightened active presence. The silences represent women's different ways of feeling and knowing, as well as representing the available means of expression in particular historical and cultural circumstances. It is possible that these silences also hide fears, angers, and taboo thoughts. Narrating the inwardness of female characters by way of internal monologues or streams of consciousness is an important and effective way to show that characters who do not talk and prefer to be silent, in this case female characters, are able to think, observe, dream and thus become actively present in the flow of the story. Almost all of the authors we analyze here successfully use this technique to present the inner lives of the female characters and the reasons behind their silences.

To give a few examples, in *Dün ve Ferda*, the protagonist Ferda does not speak of her relationship with professor Kazım to her academic advisor Hürriyet. In the beginning, she does not speak about her relationship to anyone, especially to her advisor, because that is what Prof. Kazım has told her to do. However, we learn from Ferda's internal monologues that she herself wants to remain silent in this regard and that she has chosen silence as a means of resistance. Additionally, in *Düğümlere Üfleyen Kadınlar*, this method is frequently used, as the author shows through stream of consciousness what these four women in the story really think, as well as the intentions behind their actions. The author is able to express that even though they are silent, the women are thoughtful observers. In fact, she underscores that these women's silences are not the indicative of their weakness but rather they serve as an important mark of how strong they are. It can even be said that these women are the most powerful and confident when they are silent, and can observe and be alone in their thoughts.

In *İki Genç Kızın Romanı*, the internal monologues serves as an important way for the reader to understand what Behiye, the protagonist of the story, thinks. Behiye is not a person who speaks very much; on the contrary, she almost always keeps quiet and moves confidently in the direction of achieving her goals.

Similar examples are frequently encountered in other novels as well. However, in addition to these features, the choice of topic is the most important means by which female authors create their own language in their novels. All the authors we discuss here attempt to reveal the situation of women in Turkey by making the issues related to women, such as family or society, marriage, and woman's inner

² Carnavalesque is a term coined by literary theorist and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin to describe a literary style. This literary mode subverts and liberates the assumptions of the dominant style or atmosphere through humor and chaos. For more information, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1929, and Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his world*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1941.

³ Psycho-narration is the term used by Dorrit Cohn in *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* to describe an indirect technique for the narration of consciousness in third person

journey, an important component of their novels. In *Baba ve Piç*, the child who was born as the result of the traumatic rape that Zeliha experienced; in *Cinayet Fakültesi*, Akın's determination to get revenge after a similar incident; in *Dün ve Ferda*, Ferda's experiences as a woman at a time when the environment was politically complicated; in *Mor*, the experiences of a family (both men and women); in *Fatma Aliye: Uzak Ülke*, the biographic story of Fatma Aliye, who is an important Turkish author, and the decision-making process of Fatma Karabıyık Barbarosoğlu in writing this story; in *Düğümlere Üfleyen Kadınlar*, the adventurous journey of four women to a Middle Eastern country and as well as to their own inner worlds; in *İki Genç Kızın Romanı*, the experiences through which Behiye and Handan live; and finally in *Bir Deliler Evinin Yalan Yanlış Anlatılan Kısa Tarihi*, the things that happened to both men and women are the main themes of these books, and all of the authors dare to break the silence through their use of forbidden or challenging topics.

Apart from all these common characteristics, there are also important features that distinguish these novels from one another. Female authors begin consistently to give strong voices to female characters, allowing them to bear the philosophical, psychological, and intellectual weight of their fictional experiences. However, in *Baba ve Piç*, a historical story that deals with the Armenian issue; in *Cinayet Fakültesi*, crime; in *Dün ve Ferda*, politics; in *Mor*, modernity; in *Fatma Aliye: Uzak Ülke*, history and biography; in *Bir Deliler Evinin Yalan Yanlış Anlatılan Kısa Tarihi*, carnivalesque and anthology; in *Düğümlere Üfleyen Kadınlar*, adventure and crime; and finally in *İki Genç Kızın Romanı*, youth and drama (tragedy) serve as additional remarkable characteristics or themes of these novels.

The silence that women strategically use is also a part of this power that ultimately produces reality. For women, creating meaning and language in female novels is an important part of the process of developing their own voices. Finding this alternative voice means creating dialogue in which the speaker waits for a response from the listener. By way of this alternative language pattern a woman can give the appropriate response to the speaker. Although power tries to destroy the voice of the woman by suppressing it, this voice reminds the reader of its presence, perhaps not in words, but in the most unexpected moments and ways.

It is clear that there is indeed a voice that "speaks" and another, usually silent consciousness, that "hears." In fact, it is this voice and the structure of communicating personae that the text builds, thus giving the written text much of its power and authority. In this section, female observers have been described in terms of what they "see" or "observe" rather than what they "hear" or "listen to." Therefore, by way of literature, they are able to reveal themselves as "knowing" through silent observations rather than through speech. Preservation of these female silences by female authors is noted, and in a reversal of the traditional notion of women's complicity with oppressive circumstances or cultural exclusion, such silences are viewed as difference of view, an alternative code of "truth" or, sometimes, an expression of anger, protection, patience, or attention. That is to say, women's silence may be read as a strategy of resistance and choice—a ritual of truth.

While silent resistance is a means to avoid surrendering to the male dominant language, this aim can be further enhanced by the discovery of a female language. The woman who wants to break her silence to remove herself from passive resistance must transform language into her own language.

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