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**'The Sentence Cannot Hold':
Language and Trial in Yusuf Atılgan's
*Anayurt Oteli***

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Abstract

‘Sentence’, etymologically, brings about judgment. It necessitates an agreement predetermined by a particular language –or speech- so that each party engaging in that agreement can recognize the judgment. As language is the medium of such recognition, sentence has to frame what can make sense within the agreement. What is outside communication, the unutterable other, then, has to be left out. The constant gap between the others exists, therefore, outside the sentence where understanding, or coming to an agreement with the other, becomes impossible. According to Blanchot, limits of communication indicate the territory of such impossibility: an infinite conversation, where the sentence, or judgment ceases to seek an answer.

In this paper I will be tracing the concept of ‘sentence’ in Yusuf Atılgan’s *Anayurt Oteli* (1973), one of the most prominent examples of late modernist novels written in Turkish. I will primarily look at the use of language in the narrative marking the impossibility of agreement between the protagonist Zebercet and his surroundings. I will also question why the novel dissolves the idea of language as means for communication and what possibility the narrative opens up for the question of understanding the other. Asking such question would, eventually, lead one to the injustice related to the asymmetric nature of communication that exclude the space of other which are dealt, particularly, by modernist fiction.

Keywords: Yusuf Atılgan, *Anayurt Oteli*, language, social contract, sentence, modernist literature.

“Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world”¹

The widening gyre depicted in William Butler Yeats’s poem “The Second Coming” keeps expanding toward the end by making clear its abiding existence. Its extension persists from the moment it seems to break and replace the unity presupposed in the ‘twenty centuries of stony sleep’ by destroying any medium of consensus in post-war Europe. The absolute separation of the falcon and the falconer as a result of the gyre lies in the disappearance of a communicational medium where they could compromise. Similarly, norms that seem to hold people together, like the idea of the second coming, therefore, have to dissolve inevitably for the widening gyre, the irreversible rupture, discloses itself visibly.

“The Second Coming” lets the reader doubt the epistemological consensus featured by certainty, security and order in the beginning of the 20th century. The idea of a second coming becomes the articulation of a common reliance and hope that assures the knowledge of both the future and the past. While the story of Jesus sets up the past, the feeling of security for his anticipated return as the only answer for future salvation provides a relief where it at the same time conceals the obscurity at the outside of such contract. Within this relationality, the gyre, the inevitable abyss, or the initial discontinuity no longer reveals itself. Therefore, by emphasizing the revelation of the gyre as the consequence of war, the poem not only implies the possible disagreements that might occur among people or states after the World War I, but also, and more importantly, through its use of language it marks the inadequacy of communication, the impossibility of establishing any agreement with the other party.

As a modernist text, “The Second Coming”’s occupation with the insufficiency of communication, whose language fails to open any space for differences regarding the other, causes its literary language to be produced in alternative ways for telling about the other. The modernist language in the poem, therefore, creates a difference with the everyday communication through taking place exterior to its logic; its disparate being deals with the ethical questions concerning the extent of possibility to encounter the other.

Similar to “The Second Coming,” a late modernist text that reveals the insufficiency of conversation to face the presence of other through language is *Anayurt Oteli*, a.k.a. *The Homeland Hotel*, written in 1973 by one of the leading Turkish writers, Yusuf Atılgan. It tells a story of a young man, Zebercet, who runs a hotel in a small town in Turkey, the *Anayurt Oteli*, which earlier was supposed to be an old Ottoman residence legated by his grandfather. People routinely come and go at this hotel. While everything was

¹“The Second Coming”, accessed in 05.08.2014, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/172062>.

usual, one day Zebercet's life comes to a turning point when he encounters a rather mysterious woman who comes to stay after getting off the delayed train departing from Ankara, the capital of Turkey. He finds himself in the grip of an obsession towards the woman. His obsession gradually mounts and seems to take over his daily life. He shuts down the hotel, walks around the streets aimlessly, kills the cleaning woman, goes to trials related to a murder case, and in the end, commits suicide. There seems no logical explanation, no chain of causality that binds these events to one another in the novel. The reader is never given a direct explanation of Zebercet's moves from obsession to violence. The language of the narrator that avoids communicating with the reader within the sphere of everyday conversation comes in relation with the concerns of Yeat's modernist language stating the persisting communicative distance becoming visible through the gyre between the falcon and the falconer.

As in "The Second Coming," the use of language in *Anayurt Oteli* undoes the capacity for communication. In both texts, the apparent social order is invalidated and problematized through a reductionism concerning the other. The other's presence is reduced to the space of communication for the sake of a social contract that seemingly creates a unity among its members. Different from the poem, in the novel there is no longer the destruction of war that negates the possibility of such unity or agreement, but rather the persistence of violence within everyday conversation inflicted on the subjectivities of its participants. Therefore, the gyre, the communicational gap that becomes only visible after the war in the poem manifests its existence in the novel from the very beginning. In *Anayurt Oteli*, there is never a common or a certain idea that holds people together as a second coming. The everyday language that is supposed to provide an agreement among individuals in the novel becomes another territory of law that recognizes its participants appropriate to its discourse and nullifies what remains in its outside. Therefore, every attempt at making conversation or establishing a communicative ground fails or turns into a fruitless effort between the characters.

The language in the narrative directs us, the reader, to stand closer to the communicational distance between the socially excluded protagonist of the narrative, Zebercet, and his surroundings. The revelation of the distance between the interlocutors in the novel during their communication leads the narrative to seek a different language where the reader can experience a new kind of knowledge about the other. It is a knowledge that exists outside the conversation, which cannot be attained through ordinary language, or, in other words, through proper sentences seeking for definitions. How the narrative accomplishes to reveal such knowledge would be my essential question in this paper.

'Now What is a Sentence'

"A sentence is proper if they have more than they could. They could.

Without leaving it. A sentence makes not it told but it hold. A hold is where they put things. Now what is a sentence. A sentence hopes that you are well and happy.”¹ For Gertrude Stein, sentences are pleasing elements in language conveying reconciliatory meanings. They are satisfactory; they give contentment as they securely hold things that are agreed upon together as a unity. Etymologically the word ‘sentence’ stands for the statement of authority, decision, or verdict.² Judgment, in these definitions, becomes the precondition of sentence giving definitive meanings to one’s actions. Sentence’s capability to reduce one’s actions to its own law through judgment constitutes its power. In this way, it also forms a legitimate medium for speech between parties, a sterile contract that makes things appear as perceivable and clear on that specific medium. As the participants communicating through sentences become seemingly knowable to each other, what remains otherwise, obscure and ambiguous to their conversation is left out. Stein’s text seeking the exterior of what is established through the legitimate sentence is parallel to *Anayurt Oteli*, in which the restricting characteristic of sentence is deliberately shown to indicate the problematic reduction of other’s existence to the limited frame of conversation, to what can be uttered reasonably, grammatically and acceptable inside its realm. Both texts carry the particular concerns regarding the use of everyday language problematized primarily in modernist literature where the unity of sentence, or of formal logic is being irreversibly fragmented. I will exemplify the specific use of language in Atilgan’s novel that invalidates the everyday language where the sentence, as also implied in Stein’s text, becomes an instrument for violating the other’s presence rather than being a medium for a unifying agreement.

How does, then, the effect of such language go beyond the sentence in *Anayurt Oteli*? How can the exteriority of everyday language become visible so that the revelation of the other appears as a new kind of knowledge in the narrative? The following excerpt is one of the rare moments when the reader encounters Zebercet’s thinking. His avoidance to form any sentence up until the necessity to talk to a man he accidentally hits implies the existence of the communicational rift between Zebercet and the others present from the very beginning:

“(...) I had thrown him thus falling out of the attic window into the street in the following morning garbage man must have taken him supposing that he was hit by a car what’s his name no name let’s call him Karamik isn’t he this morning’s police coming now”
(When he turned back suddenly, he hit a man on the arm. ‘I beg your pardon’ he said.)³⁴

¹Gertrude Stein, “Sentences and Paragraphs”, *How to Write* (New York: Dover Publications, 1975) p. 29.

²“Sentence”, accessed in 05.08.2014, <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=sentence>.

³Yusuf Atilgan, *Anayurt Oteli* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007), p. 86.

⁴Unless otherwise indicated, translations are those of Ezgi Ceylan.

The reader comes into contact with his stream of consciousness up until the moment it is ruptured by Zebercet's accidental hit. The obligation he felt to apologize to the man causes Zebercet to put his genuine thinking aside. Under the conditions imposed by the rules of everyday language, he becomes unable to express his thinking to others. Therefore, the moment Zebercet reacts to the man by saying 'I beg your pardon', which is a formal idiom used for common courtesy, the distance between him and the man becomes infinite: infinite in the sense that the communicational abyss revealed by the formal use pushes Zebercet to conceal his presence from his surroundings. His otherness, his obscurity that could not likely be verbalized by the everyday language is silenced under the reign of propriety. While precluding Zebercet's presence as the other, the idiom 'I beg your pardon' also establishes a medium on which everything is reduced to what looks acceptable.

What the reader encounters in Zebercet's situation is a revelation of a communicational rift that derives from the legitimate expression of 'I beg your pardon'; a sentence that does not open a space outside its limit to make the other reveal itself. It is an idiom that closes any possible contact with the other as it is concerned by the agreement's solidity. Recalling Stein, the sentence "[p]leases by its sense."¹ Its comprehensibility and reliability like the feeling of security brought forth by the idea of a second coming is what makes the agreement persist. The agreement imposed by the rules of everyday discourse becomes, however, emptied by the infusion of different uses of language in the narrative, and the idea of unity between the parties of conversation is replaced by the idea of absolute separation and plurality. Emmanuel Levinas also mentions the potentiality of language to uncover the difference between parties and to bring forth the space where they, revealing their different identities, can contest:

Absolute difference, inconceivable in terms of formal logic, is established only by language. Language accomplishes a relation between terms that breaks up the unity of a genus. The terms, the interlocutors, absolve themselves from the relation, or remain absolute within relationship. Language is perhaps to be defined as the very power to break the continuity of being or of history.²

The absolute difference is inconceivable in terms of formal logic, as it cannot be revealed within the conventional boundaries of sentence that 'pleases by its sense.' *Anayurt Oteli* breaks the authority of sentence in which one can only survive by having accepted its limited recognition, by having agreed to be seen as a completely understandable subject within the communicational medium. Sentence's existence in the narrative, therefore, is challenged by the different use of language through which characters become absolute others who never turn into fully knowable subjects in their relationality with their society, with the law, and with the narrative.

¹*How to Write*, p. 27.

²Emmanuel Levinas, "Infinity and the Face", *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2011), p. 195.

The narrator, for instance, deliberately refrains to explain the reasons behind Zebercet's actions by breaking the claims of any judgment on his behavior. By doing so, the narrator preserves Zebercet's identity without trying to break down any causal relations of his conducts to the narratee. It refuses to become an intermediary who appears to know everything about Zebercet. The narrator's position is significant in the sense that it leaves the unknowable parts of Zebercet's identity outside its claim. It never tends to define more than it could by making the obscurity of characters in the story apparent. However, its depictions remain always within the boundaries of its limited knowledge about Zebercet. The following passage, for example, is taken from the part in which Zebercet kills the cleaning woman; the narrator recounts only what can be observable without adding any judgment to the story it tells:

Losing her hands he looked while she glides from the bed: her eyes and mouth were open. He knelt down leaning his head to the bed. With aching arms, he twiddled his fingers. His mouth was dry. The ringing in his ears was fainting.¹

Zebercet's practice is rendered in a descriptive mode, which is overly physical: The movements of woman's body under his body, the sensation of his fingers, face, mouth, and arms are precisely depicted. The narrator does not take a single step beyond the purely descriptive writing of a murder scene. It remains in the simple and ordinary language by making the act of killing indifferent: no sign of emotion or moral judgment. It is the same distancing voice recounting the story throughout the book. The events in the narrative do not pertain to a hierarchical order. In order to be able to get close to the experience of Zebercet, the narrator deliberately refrains itself from evaluative interventions and thereby leaves the gap between the narrator and its other, Zebercet, intact. The narrator seems to be aware of the restricting language it uses which will not be adequate to define who Zebercet is. Having prior knowledge of the impossibility to narrate any event or any subjectivity in the novel conventionally, the narrator makes a preference by making commentary and value judgment irrelevant to the narrative.

The narrator is self-conscious in the sense that it makes an ethical choice not to take part in using sentences that carry judgments about the characters and the course of events. Or, to put it differently, it merely uses some descriptive expressions about the facts from which it can be sure of. The choice is ethical because it deliberately refrains from violating the space of the unknown or the unutterable in the narrative. The problematic of telling about the other derives primarily from the role of the narrator for it imagines an audience, a narratee to come into contact with in order to tell the story. The narrator's language, therefore, carries the risk of reducing the other's obscure presence to a knowable subjectivity for the sake of making the story agreeable. The position of the narrator in *Anayurt Oteli*, thus, problematizes the unity of stories that are narrated to some addressees in a comprehensive way: it problematizes the conventional language to narrate, the language that is

¹*Anayurt Oteli*, p. 58.

expected to be rhetorical as it tries to make the story complete and persuasive to its audience.

Indicating the problematic characteristic of the rhetorical language that violates the space of other while recounting, the narrator tends to redefine its role by avoiding telling the story of the other on behalf of it in the narrative. However, the communicative medium it strictly avoids to participate in with its narratee proceeds in the everyday communication between the characters in the narrative. The language of the trial, and the language of the daily speech, thus, remains problematic. How could, then, the narrative overcome the violating characteristic of the everyday language? And especially, how could it escape the language of the law that usually puts the conversation to an end through judgment?

Law and Responsiveness: Undoing the Space of Rhetoric in *Anayurt Oteli*

Rhetoric is a specific sort of “language designed to have a persuasive or impressive effect”¹. As rhetoric’s purpose lies in pursuing or impressing the other party within a conversation, it brings about the usage of particular techniques directing the addressee to agree on the plausibility of the proposed argument. The affirmation of what is proposed, therefore, becomes more significant than the one who affirms. The rhetorical language remains loyal to its rules by not going any further to know about its addressee. When stating “[n]ot every discourse is a relation with exteriority”², Levinas emphasizes rhetoric’s indirect approach as it puts its participants on a distance that would not allow them to express their genuine presence:

Rhetoric, absent from no discourse, and which philosophical discourse seeks to overcome, resists discourse (or leads to it: pedagogy, demagoguery, psychagoguery). It approaches the other not to face him, but obliquely— not, to be sure, as a thing, since rhetoric remains conversation, and across all its artifices goes unto the Other, solicits his yes. But the specific nature of rhetoric (of propaganda, flattery, diplomacy, etc.) consists in corrupting this freedom. It is for this that it is preeminently violence, that is, injustice.³

In Levinas’s sense, rhetoric operates within a kind of speech that is different from a veritable conversation where the absolute other’s presence can be faced. For the sake of soliciting the other’s yes, rhetoric does not give the other any possibility to disclose its individual space as a new kind of knowledge to the interlocutors taking part in the conversation: in other words, rhetoric corrupts the other’s freedom by making the encounter with the

¹“Rhetoric”, accessed in 10.08.2014, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/rhetoric>.

²“Rhetoric and Injustice”, *Totality and Infinity*, p. 70.

³*Ibid*, p.70.

presence of others impossible; it obstructs gathering new experiences through facing other realms while opening up its own. Rhetoric is violent and unjust as it reduces the interlocutors of the conversation appropriate to its own limited conversational arena, not 'letting them be'. Therefore, it corrupts the freedom, or in other words, the possibility to engage in a veritable speech between the participants by not recognizing them as the absolute others from the beginning. Under such conditions, as Levinas mentions, justice can only prevail by 'overcoming of rhetoric' where the other can be accessed in its own presence.

Not only the limited and descriptive language of the narrator, but also Zebercet's inner reactions to his surroundings undo the effects of rhetoric in the novel. His fragmented expressions freed from lucidness do not allow the rhetorical statements uttered in the everyday life survive: they cannot hold in the sense that through Zebercet's responsive interventions, the communicative ground cannot provide a commonality between interlocutors, which would necessitate an agreement on the rules of communication at the beginning.

By problematizing and nullifying the requirements of the everyday rhetoric, Zebercet also empties the notion of justice in his setting. His environment becomes entirely a field for everyday violence, as the laws that do not transcend the formal recognition of the citizen as the other remain within the rhetorical language. The absoluteness of the other cannot 'legitimize' the difference of its presence within the everyday communication. The law, therefore, becomes the end of conversation in which the other, in this case Zebercet, cannot express himself. It closes the possibility of an ethical conversation where the other can be faced. Through the communicational rift that comes forward by Zebercet's response, the disinterestedness of the law to encounter its subjects for the sake of remaining loyal to its continuity becomes salient. As long as the sentence 'pleases by its sense', the subjects remain knowable and the daily communication proceeds comprehensively, the violence inflicted on the presence of the other can be kept out of sight by the rhetorical characteristic of the everyday language.

A good example for Zebercet's inner reactions resisting to the dominating rhetoric of law could be given when Zebercet goes to a trial and listens to the questions in the court that seek explicit answers about a murder case. The following excerpt is taken from the part where he pretends to answer the questions in his mind as if the questions are directed to him:

- Doctor said she was truly a virgin. Her father told that he had not even let a male fly perch on the girl. Why did you kill her?
*'His father you said his father had already died then they sent her back because she was already touched, she was naked on the bed in the small hours her eyes, mouth opened I pulled the quilt over her...'*¹
*the small hours her eyes, mouth opened I pulled the quilt over her...'*²

¹Anayurt Oteli, p. 74-75.

²Anayurt Oteli, p. 74-75.

The ‘why’ here indicates the determination of the judge to acquire an immediate answer from the accused person. Any possible answer that would be given appropriately to the question of ‘Why did you kill her?’ would solve the case, leading to a decision of what kind of punishment the person would receive according to his ‘motive for murder’. Any reason would make sense within such conversation, as any answer would remain within its legitimate boundaries. The conversation’s rhetorical characteristic does not concern to go beyond to face the presence of the other; it rather is interested in the answer posed to him/her. It is, then, necessary to ask the question of what lies in answer’s legitimacy?

Answer is something that is given in turn. Its presence within the conversation reinforces the reciprocity of the communicational agreement. It is itself the affirmation of what has been offered, questioned or uttered by the other party that keeps the conversation in a comprehensible frame. Answer satisfies the question and holds the speech in a secure and anticipated discourse. In this apparent certainty and affirmation of rules, judgment comes along with it inevitably: answer is a legitimate sentence that has acceptable meaning in everyday discourse, contributing to the violence of rhetoric’s reductionism by submitting to its judgments.

However, Zebercet’s reaction, his silent statement toward the question of ‘Why did you kill her’ does not become a proper answer; it does not fulfill the expectations of the question, seeking a plausible reason for the killing. His words become rather a response that propounds his existence as an absolute other: instead of affirming the rules of the legal discourse by giving an expected answer, Zebercet gives his response from the outside of conversation by formulating his thoughts into a different use of language. His idiosyncratic speech being exterior to the formal communication marks the limits of comprehensiveness concerning the legal discourse. Through his language, therefore, Zebercet cannot be recognized as and reduced to a knowable subject by the law; he delineates an inevitable rift between his presence and the legal formalities that tries to define him as an accused subject.

The revelation of Zebercet’s existence as the other through such rift is sustained in the narrative by the specific language he uses. Language in the narrative has the power to open up another possibility being exterior to the proper speech of the everyday. Its existence carries a potential to lay bare the otherwise of rhetoric by being itself the response. Maurice Blanchot gives the example of writing by emphasizing the language’s capacity to form an alternative way of conversation:

“(…) recounting (writing) draws language into a possibility of saying that would say being without saying it, and yet without denying it either. Or again, to say this more clearly, too clearly: it would establish the center of gravity of speech elsewhere (...)”¹.

¹Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, translated by Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 387.

Anayurt Oteli undoes the power of rhetoric through different uses of language that establish the center of gravity of speech outside the conventional relationality. The text itself becomes a response to the violence of everyday conversation in the narrative as the everyday seeks certainty and stability in its language to be sustained. Hence, if a question is there, it should be replied. The answer makes the whole appear as a unity within the ordinary language. However, the language of the narrator and Zebercet marks the rift, the unutterable existence of the other, visible. Levinas defines such a rift as void, stating that "Language does not belong among the relations that could appear through the structures of formal logic; it is contact across a distance, relation with the non-touchable, across a void."¹

By appearing, the void also marks the distance between the interlocutors. More importantly, it marks the separation that has been existed from the very beginning. What language does in *Anayurt Oteli* by adumbrating the void between the participants of conversation is ethical as it hints the absolute difference of them that cannot be hold by the sentence: the sentence that make them seen unjustly attainable.

Ethical at the Outset: On Distance

He pulled out his cigarette box and asked. He doesn't smoke. He asked. His name was Ekrem. He lighted his cigarette upon his asking. "Ahmet" he replied. He asked. He came from a country last year, he used to work at an ironsmith's shop at the industrial bazaar of the town. His wage was low; yet he was learning the craft. He asked. He is staying with his old, lonely aunt. (...) He was on his right side; his arm touches him they settled. The boy said: "This cinema is the best one". He has some hair faintly visible on his upper lip, around the beard line on his cheeks. He asked. He recently turned seventeen. He asked, too.

-Thirty... three, he said.

- What do you do?

- I am running a hotel inherited from my grandfather.²

The conversation made by Zebercet, who introduces himself as Ahmet, and the seventeen-year-old boy Ekrem is rendered in such a way that it displays the difference between what they experience and what they say. Only some hints of their experience, though limited, could be traced by the descriptions of their acts: the touch of their arms and knees, the feeling of the warmth of each other's hands, Zebercet's erection and the boy's instant snuggling during the film they watched at a cinema is rendered in detail by the narrator. However, their intense attraction is never reflected on their words;

¹"The Freedom of Representation and Gift", *Totality and Infinity*, p. 172.

²*Anayurt Oteli*, p. 50-51.

they continue to speak on an ‘agreeable’ ground that would remain appropriate for their surroundings. Their distance is crossed through a latent language that could not be expressed by the rules of their formal communication. Therefore, the questions they pose to each other are reduced to the verb ‘asked’ as the questions are presumable and insignificant compared to their experience that takes place exterior to their ordinary speech.

With the revelation of the outside in the narrative through language that goes beyond the comprehensibility of the rhetorical conversation seeking answers and affirmations, the other begins to have a place to present its existence. Within this frame, it is no longer defined by the limited view of other party or the law; it is not represented by a conventional speech to be fitted in a comprehensible frame. The other appears.

To the violence, that is, of what tends to open and tends to close, tends to cohere in the contours of a clear figure that limits, and yet tends to err without end, to lose itself in an ever restless migration, that of the *other* night which never comes but comes back again. In this communication it is obscurity that must reveal itself and night that must dawn. This is revelation where nothing appears, but where concealment becomes appearance.¹

The realm of the other appears as such that it changes the beginning. The presence of the void between the interlocutors of the conversation that becomes apparent with the revelation of the other through language underlines the absolute separation at the outset. Zebercet, therefore, is unknown to us, the reader, from the very beginning. His being, his experiences, the reasons beyond his actions cannot be verbalized by anyone in the narrative. His autonomy, solitude, and separation are always present. They are never expounded, as it is known from the beginning that they could never be. The distance with the other, therefore, persists.

The appearance of the other across a distance makes the language of the novel also ethical in the sense that it preserves the other’s space intact, free from representation that would lead to an inevitable reductionism toward its existence. The reader’s experience with language in the narrative emerges from the contradiction of different uses of language leading the conventional, everyday speech to lose its authority and legitimacy. Constituting this rupture from the very beginning in the novel through the interventions of the narrator and Zebercet, the narrative allows the reader to start experiencing language other than an instrument for a seemingly unifying agreement. The language itself becomes the other whose space is reduced to the concerns of rhetoric in the everyday. It opens up its space each time it fails to establish a unifying consensus about its rules. Its failure leads it being experienced through its revelation in the outside of conventional speech like Zebercet.

¹Maurice Blanchot, “Communication”, *The Space of Literature*, translated by Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 198.

Martin Heidegger states that the experience of language is something that is ineffable; each effort to define its existence would always escape us. However, one can face its presence in the exterior of the prevalent speech:

But what does language speak itself as language? Curiously enough, when we cannot find the right word for something that concerns us, carries us away, oppresses or encourages us. Then we leave unspoken what we have in mind and, without rightly giving it thought, undergo moments in which language itself has distantly and fleetingly touched us with its essential being.¹

The revelation of its distance, its inconceivability becomes a new kind of experience that would be the only way to feel its presence. Language, unlike the sentence that seeks stability and certainty, does not please by its sense. What literature does in *Anayurt Oteli* is to seek a new sort of language that would undo the ethics of conventional speech being unfair to the obscurity of its participants. By revealing their distance, their difference at the outset, the novel wipes out the domination of unity that was once supposed by the old beginnings –of history, of literature etc. Language, becoming the initial void by opening itself up in the narrative, irreversibly manifests its and the other's presence as a new kind of knowledge by suggesting an alternative ethic to the old one that relies on rhetoric.

In conclusion, the definitive characteristic of sentence framed by the rules of everyday language is transgressed by the alternative uses of language in *Anayurt Oteli*, offering an ethical narrative by prevailing the absolute difference of its characters. Especially the protagonist Zebercet's alienation from his surroundings through his miscommunication with other characters brings about his otherness, leading to his genuine presence in the novel from the very beginning. His being creates a contradiction with the language of the law that tries to make decisions about punishments, deliberately neglecting his and other's existence by reducing them to its own rules. The everyday language is no difference from the legal one: It violates the space of the other for the sake of communication and agreement. Zebercet manages to escape the violence of the law and the everyday through his present exteriority in the conventional language up until his suicide. He cannot survive in the end, however the language is. The sentence and its definitive judgments cannot hold in *Anayurt Oteli* because of the possibility that is opened up by the experience of language. The language changes the narrative from the beginning by becoming itself the distance that undoes the assumed unity and certainty of communication. By undoing the sentence, *Anayurt Oteli* presents the reader another way of approaching the other, which makes its encounter ethical.

¹Martin Heidegger, "The Nature of Language", *On the Way to Language*, translated by Peter Hertz (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971), p. 59.

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