

# Interdisciplinary British and American Studies (IBAS) Journal

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E-mail: [editor@ibasjournal.com](mailto:editor@ibasjournal.com)  
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### **Technical Assistance**

E-mail: [info@ibasjournal.com](mailto:info@ibasjournal.com)

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## About the Journal

### Scope

The Interdisciplinary British and American Studies Journal (IBAS Journal) is a rigorously ***double-blind peer-reviewed, biannual international*** academic journal that fosters innovative scholarship in countries with British and American literary traditions. IBAS Journal welcomes submissions from scholars, researchers, and advanced graduate students working across disciplines, including ***literature, language, culture, and society*** of Britain and America. We are particularly interested in any kind of scholarly work from the Medieval Age to the present day. Our goal is to foster a deeper understanding of Britain and America through research conducted in a global context, including those from non-Anglophone countries.

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# Interdisciplinary British and American Studies (IBAS) Journal

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31.12.2025

Dear Distinguished Readers and Contributors,

As we present the final issue of 2025, we find it essential to reaffirm the core identity that has shaped *Interdisciplinary British and American Studies (IBAS) Journal* since its inception. Our journal has always sought to be more than just a scholarly venue; it is a platform for researchers from across the globe — ranging from promising young graduates to seasoned professors — to analyze British and American cultures through their own unique, non-native lenses.

*IBAS* operates on the belief that the most profound insights into a culture often come from those observing it from the outside. By prioritizing perspectives from countries where English is not the primary language, we foster a scholarly environment where "the center" is re-evaluated through the diverse cultural, social, and political filters of our international contributors.

This issue is a testament to that ongoing commitment, featuring voices from Hungary, Albania, and Türkiye:

Aya Chelloul (Hungary) offers a compelling decolonial analysis of the Syrian refugee crisis through Layla Alammari's *Silence is a Sense*, bridging lived realities of the Global South with contemporary literary theory.

Emin Furkan Batihan, Amine Hilal Pamukçu, and Sami Cem Uygun (Türkiye) provide a multi-authored, interdisciplinary study on Nathaniel Hawthorne, merging literary analysis with a Feminist Social Work Perspective.

Dhurata Lamcja, Gilberta Hadaj, and Elona Limaj (Albania) examine the 1980s Albanian prose, reminding us how the echoes of Socialist Realism interact with broader literary traditions.

Bünyamin Yavuz (Türkiye) explores the digital frontier by evaluating ChatGPT-4's translation capabilities in handling the complexities of Jane Austen's prose.

Furthermore, we are proud to share that *IBAS Journal* is steadily advancing toward its global objectives. In our first three issues, we have published a total of 15 articles from 8 different countries, featuring contributions from the USA (2), Ukraine (2), Hungary, Romania, Albania, Iran, Qatar, and Türkiye (6). It is noteworthy that the 6 articles from Türkiye represent researchers from 5 distinct academic institutions, reflecting our commitment to institutional diversity.

To maintain the highest standards of academic integrity and objective peer review, we strictly adhere to a policy where no more than 25% of our Editorial Board members may publish in a single issue, and a maximum of 2 articles from the same institution are accepted per issue. Having recently been indexed in the Index Copernicus Master List, we look forward to expanding our presence in further prestigious indexes in 2026.

*IBAS Journal* remains committed to its foundational diversity, encompassing perspectives from West Asia to Southeast Asia. Our Editorial Board's inclusion of scholars from Iraq and Malaysia reflects our long-standing mission to provide a platform for voices that challenge traditional academic boundaries, even as we strive to deepen these cross-continental dialogues in the coming year.

While *IBAS Journal* has already established a significant presence across Central Europe and the Balkans, we are committed to further expanding this trajectory. Our journal is not merely a regional outlet but a burgeoning international hub that bridges diverse academic traditions. In the coming year, we are excited to announce that we will be welcoming respected scholars from various countries to our Editorial Board, with a specific focus on broadening our reach beyond our current strongholds."

A Wish for 2026

As the *IBAS* family, we do not only look forward to academic growth but also to a world defined by harmony. In a time of global uncertainty, we hope that 2026 brings peace, tranquility, and a spirit of cooperation to all corners of the world, far from the shadows of conflict. May the coming year be a period where dialogue triumphs over discord, and where the universal language of art, literature, and science continues to unite us all.

Happy New Year to our global academic community.

Dr. Kenan Yerli  
Editor-in-Chief  
*Interdisciplinary British and American Studies Journal*

On Behalf of the Editorial Board

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# Damaging Traverses: Decolonizing Trauma and Migration through the Lens of the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Layla Alammar's Novel *Silence is a Sense*

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-1311-4618>



[Aya Chelloul](#) <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PhD. Candidate, University of Szeged, Institute of English and American Studies, Hungary

## *abstract*

The present paper explores the representation of the Syrian refugee crisis in Layla Alammar's novel *Silence Is a Sense*. It interrogates the traumatic experience that undergirds the physical crossing of Europe through the exploration of the main character's silence. Placing the refugee at the center of focus, the paper troubles the established trauma model and its concomitant notions of memory, testimony, and the unspeakable. It argues that the embodied experience of the refugee, the socio-historical context, and the institutions with which she interacts shape the way the event is lived, interpreted and signified to others. The dynamics of silence, speech, writing and interpretation showcase the ambivalence of the refugee experience, the intensity of her trauma, the institutional constraints the main character faces, and the ethical necessity of story-telling in bringing about the recognition of the other.

**Keywords:** trauma, refugee, Syria, coloniarity, unspeakability, silence

Correspondence: Aya Chelloul, e-mail: [ayachelloul2@gmail.com](mailto:ayachelloul2@gmail.com)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most memorable scenes of 2015, and perhaps that of the entire decade, is the image of the Alan (Aylan) Kurdi's little body washing on the shores of Türkiye. By September of that year, tens of thousands of Syrians fled their homes to seek refuge in neighboring countries like Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and Türkiye after violence broke down in numerous cities across their country as a result of the intensifying armed confrontation between rebel forces and the government. The sudden flux of people seeking refuge has created an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Dawn Chatty notes that the international aid infrastructure was unable to perform effectively in the face of the heterogeneous group of educated and skilled Syrian population, often employing biased views when determining service provisions and needs assessments (2017, 27). The limited access of aid, rising unemployment rates and the inaccessibility of education prompted many Syrians to venture into Europe for better living conditions, a surge that received massive media coverage. Emily Burns and Michel M. Haigh indicate that the media coverage of the crisis in major newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* was thematic, focusing on the victimhood of the refugees fleeing violent conflict rather than presenting them as economically motivated migrants (2025, 402). In the European coverage, the sentiments associated with the portrayal of the event fluctuated from positive to negative by the end of 2015. In their report for the Council of Europe, Myria Georgiou and Rafal Zaborowski demonstrate how the coverage of the crisis has undergone a multiphasic shift wherein the initial tolerance ceded the way to a humanitarian tone, then gradually transformed into security concerns in the wake of the Paris attacks in November (2017, 8). The tone inevitably mediates the way the event is understood and imagined by the host communities, creating "the symbolic conditions of possibility under which we are invited to imagine the predicament of these sufferers as well as think, act and feel towards them (Chouliarakis and Zaborowski 2017, 617). The testimonials of the victims barely reached the surface of the coverage, as the event was coopted by right wing politicians pushing for their conservative agenda, reinforcing the idea that refugees are an economic burden, and a threat to the nation (620). The categorization of the migrant and the refugee in international law and domestic immigration laws oversimplify the intentions behind border crossing, leaving room for preconceived notions to determine "the legitimacy and deservingness" of who is allowed entry (Abdelaaty and Hamlin 2022, 233). These discursive constructions overlook the lived experience of the Syrian refugee, rendering the structural silencing and the psychic trauma of the crossing pertinent issues that need to be addressed. Attending to testimonies, different forms of storytelling and representation of the trauma of the Syrian refugee are pivotal to voice the embodied experience of the Syrian refugee. The Kuwaiti writer Layla Alammar's novel *Silence Is a Sense* (2021) is one of the early fictional representations of the tragic displacement of millions of Syrians and the psychic effects it has engendered.

Following the life of an unnamed, first-person narrator, the novel depicts the trials and tribulations of the main character, a Syrian woman traversing the European continent, crossing the English Channel, and settling in a quiet apartment block in an unnamed city in England. Observing people's lives from her balcony, she assumes the peculiar position of a mute onlooker, privy to the innerworkings of other people's lives without addressing much of hers. She leverages this position as a gazing subject to write articles for a reputable online magazine called The New Press. However, by virtue of her background as an asylum seeker and the circumstantial rise of xenophobia, the magazine solicits her to write about her refugee experience. What comes out is a series of reflections that deconstruct nationalism, religion, memory and trauma.

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In particular, the novel explores the unspeakability of trauma in the way large scale events incapacitate the victim's recalling and linguistic abilities, damaging her physical capacity to produce meaning manifesting in her becoming mute. The process of writing and self-expression that the novel explores deconstructs this traumatic response and the way it has been theorized by traditional trauma studies. As I shall demonstrate, the traumatic experience of trekking across Europe has been deferred through the process of writing, which led to the opening up of space to critically engage with the underlying causes of this complex trauma. The protagonist engages in a process of rearranging and interrogating the social and political factors that have led to the well-known yet disregarded Syrian refugee crisis all while questioning the underpinnings of xenophobia and nationalism in Britain. Writing short stories as opposed to the native-informant-like op-eds she was commissioned to make by the magazine editor provides her with the means necessary to express that cultural moment. Through its depictions of the *long pause* of trauma and its chronic quality, the novel effectively troubles the binary between the exceptional and the mundane, the extreme and the quotidian, casting an important light on the complexity of the experience of the racialized other as a refugee and the role of speech and silence in the process of testimony and healing.

In order to investigate the complex relationship between migration and trauma, this article will be divided into four sections. The first section will look into the traditional trauma model, pioneered by Cathy Caruth's groundbreaking work *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996), in order to excavate the theoretical underpinnings of the model. I will argue that this model falls short of providing an adequate explanation to the experience of collective chronic trauma, and, following, Steph Craps's suggestion, I resort to Franz Fanon's concept *racial epidermal schema* to view traumatic responses beyond the decontextualized pathological lens of the individual sufferer in order to embed her within greater structural mechanisms, namely the everlasting effects of colonialism, or, coloniality (Quijano 2000). His concept facilitates the grasping of the effects of coloniality on the psyche of sufferers of chronic trauma and their quotidian lived experience. In the third section, I demonstrate how the experiential, embodied aspect of trauma is dependent upon the interpretive webs in which the survivor is situated, affecting how memory, recollection and healing take place. In the final section, I consolidate these theoretical aspects to address how memory, experience, time, and silence and speech arise in the novel, arguing that the protagonist's mutism is directly informed by intensive sensory input and the structural configurations of journalism, psychiatry and border control. The same affective and structural conditions also determine the way she chooses to tell her story and step away from her silence.

## 2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE TRADITIONAL TRAUMA MODEL

The traditional model for trauma studies was established by Cathy Caruth, Shoshanna Fellman and Geoffrey Hartman in the 1990's which consecrated significant attention to the literary expression of trauma. The model relied heavily on the Freudian interpretation of hysteria which was readapted to make sense of the delayed response of trauma survivors. According to Michelle Balaev (2018, 361), Breuer and Freud's Studies on Hysteria (1895) has established that the experience of trauma undergoes a process of repression, latency, triggering and remembrance. That is to say, the traumatic event is unassimilated by the victim in the present moment of its occurrence. It is rather stored in the unconscious as raw data. Once this "punctual" (Forter 2011, 98) event has passed, the victim goes through a latency period or *Nachtraglichkeit* wherein the effects of the event are not consciously felt. Only a secondary event can open the gates of the past memory to rush to the surface of the victim's consciousness.

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As remembering takes place, psychological pain arises, and particular meanings become associated with the traumatic event. Trauma is thus understood by mainstream theorists and established literary critics as one that causes dissociation and amnesia during the latency phase and psychic distress once it is remembered.

Freud's later work *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) has provided another layer to the established understanding of trauma. The observation of the shell-shocked war veterans has led Freud to revise the earlier model, arguing instead that traumatic events lead to traumatic neurosis (Balaev 2018, 362). In the aftermath of the traumatic event, the unity of the ego is undermined as a result of the psychic tension it generates, causing a "breach" (ibid). Unlike his earlier understanding, Freud singles out unexpected fear as the cause that disables the protective shield: anxiety. The sudden shock thus overwhelms the ego to the point of becoming inoperable, allowing the event to "enter the inner psyche without the adequate internal defense" (ibid). Repetition compulsion characterizes the response at the heart of traumatic neurosis, whereby the memory of the events is repeated in the present. The survivor holds the futile hope of mastering the psychic tension through that repetition, generating a warped experience of time, where the past is always held in the present. Alongside this temporal pathology, Freud also posits that the memory of the event is a memory of a memory that took place in the survivor's dreams, amounting to a distorted recollection of the event. Recalling the event through narrative means in light of the pathologies that trauma inaugurates become central points of inquiry within trauma studies.

These pathologies form one of the backbones of the Caruthian model of trauma criticism. In her acclaimed book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), Cathy Caruth demonstrates how trauma is unrepresentable and unspeakable. Due to its large-scale, fear-inducing effect, the traumatic event is posited as that which cannot be captured by language, exceeds the victim's comprehension, and collapses structures of narrative representation. Fundamental to her argument is the paradox of immediacy and belatedness. Since the victim's psyche catches the event in an unmediated, defenseless fashion, she remains oblivious to its meaning which leads to its reoccurrence in her present (Baelev 2018, 364; Meretoja 2018, 25). The problem that arises consequently is that any attempt at communicating the atrocity forces an institutionally sanctioned structure of meaning to appropriate its meaning (Meretoja 29). So, any attempt at signifying and forming an understanding of the event leads to its distortion and appropriation, subjecting the victims to another form of violence. The paradox at hand then makes the event only locatable through approximation, one that is tied to an inherent absence. Silence, as a result, sits uneasily as an anticipated reaction to trauma.

The traditional model of theorizing and understanding trauma has considerable limitations. According to Hanna Meretoja, there is an overemphasis on extraordinary, one-time events that irrevocably transforms the victim's experience as well as an unexamined presupposition of the immediacy of experience (2018, 26-27). Moreover, as Michelle Baelev notes, the model biologizes the traumatic response, rendering it a transhistorical, universal experience of all victims (2018, 363). Chronic exposure to structural racism and microaggressions, for example, elude the evaluative and critical capacity of this model. The postcolonial experience with culturally and historically specific modes of expressing grief and pain and with dealing with injustice remain unaccounted for and risk being essentialized. The definition of trauma, its symptoms and cure should be seen as institutional

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and cultural products of a specific sociohistorical formation (Craps 2013, 20). It arguably takes the experience of “white, young, able-bodied, educated, middle-class, Christian men” as the norm (*ibid*).

The subject of this universal conception of trauma is preoccupied with creating coherence to his life story, adamant on overcoming his split ego, and is detached from the materiality of everyday life.

The cumulative, quotidian forms of oppression produce traumatic responses which are seldom discussed. The overwhelming influence of the latter theories of Freud leaves the traumatic experience of identity formation unexplored. Greg Forter (2011) highlights the need to examine social relations’ impact on psychic well-being. As he puts it, “the primal scene represents the pathogenic confrontation that each of us must make with this social inscription” (106). The victim is embedded in a sociohistorical matrix which was closed off by Freud’s revisions of his earlier exploration of hysteria. Forter, however, finds merit in maintaining the bi-phasic earlier model captured by the concept of the primal scene. The idea goes that the initial surprising event is not made sense of until a second event retrospectively makes the first one meaningful, becoming traumatic in hindsight. The important aspect in Forter’s formulation is his emphasis on transformation, maturation and resignification. Rather than succumbing to the defeated view of repetition ad infinitum, Forter provides another way of seeing trauma. Through his reading of William Faulkner’s novel *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), Forter presents a different reading of the traumatic response that emphasizes the power structure in which the survivor circulates. Instead of presenting the survivor as a detached individual overtaken by an extraordinary event, Forter draws attention to the embeddedness of the survivor in the social space, emphasizing how social scripts mediate the survivor’s response to an overwhelming event. Forter presents the traumatic response as characterized first by a break, in which the victim undergoes a phase in which she becomes unable to speak. During this moment, the victim experiences a dissolution of her beliefs on how the world operates and undergoes a “search for new conceptual moorings” (Stampfl 2014, 29). This phase is only transitional in so far as once those new moorings are determined, the victim reframes the world and her position therein, leading to, not only a regaining of speech, but also a restoration of action. Through Forter’s interpretation, the traumatized victim is recast within the power relations that permeate the sociocultural space in which she is embedded. It highlights becoming aware of her particular social positioning as potentially traumatic which invites the consideration of the interpretative nature of experience, and the chronic quality that trauma can assume in the context of systemic oppression. This particular point allows us to consider the experience of post/colonial subjects whose lives are already suffused by traumatizing forms of oppression on daily basis to interrogate the meaning of their silence and the epistemic undercurrents of the stories they choose to share.

## 2. FRANZ FANON AND THE LONG PAUSE OF TRAUMA

The non-exceptional quality of the post/colonial trauma sets it apart from punctual forms of trauma (Forter 2011, 98). The habitual exposure to collective and individual violence renders trauma a chronic experience that registers as normal. If taken from within the premise of hegemonic

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trauma models, the psychological damage that the structures engender are depoliticized, and healing becomes an individual responsibility. Steph Craps (2013) singles out Franz Fanon as the most robust critic of how modern structures, both colonial and postcolonial, pathologize and depoliticize the responses of the colonized to quotidian forms of oppression (29). Principally, Fanon captures the moment of being objectified by the white gaze as one that generates psychic splitting and an altered reality in which he “existed triply” (Fanon 2021, 92 in Craps 29).

Rather than seeing this psychic splitting through the backdrop of a unified, coherent (Western) subject, Craps suggests evaluating it in relation to unjust social and economic realities (30-33). Fanon’s theorization of racial epidermal schema postulated in *Black Skins, White Masks* (2021) offers an important angle to address the materiality of oppression in its chronic and pervasive forms.

Although a psychiatrist by profession, it is important to view Franz Fanon as a theoretician of the post-colonial situation in his own right. Combining psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and existentialist philosophy, he opens up new ways of interrogating oppression as an embodied experience. At the core of his writing, he presents how the colonial system determines the terms from which the meaning of one’s humanity is established: to be black, Arab, Malagasy is to be less than human, cloistered in the “zone of non-being” (Césaire 1972; Fanon 2021). Using phenomenological terms, Fanon highlights how his body schema is distilled within the normative terms of the colonial system, a repository of a “thousand details, anecdotes, stories” that pose as “real” renderings of his identity (Fanon 91). Products of historical-racial notions, the stories shape what he now calls racial epidermal schema activated by the white gaze. Instead of occupying his body as his own, he experiences it as an object.

It has been largely debated that there is an unexplored underlying assumption in Fanon’s account of racial epidermal schema. Komarine Romdenh-Romluc (2024) notes that the debate has been characterized by a pathological reading of the black experience. The readings are based on a drawn distinction between body image and body schema (111). From a phenomenological perspective, the body image is made up of a network of cultural conceptions of a particular body, whereas the body schema captures the individual’s capacity to reflexively coordinate her sensory and motor skills (*ibid*). Typically, these two aspects organically interact with one another to produce a regular lived experience. Black experience, it has been asserted, deviates from the norm in that the black person’s body image incorporates colonial ideology so much so that it becomes their own. The body schema, in its turn, gets reconstituted in relation to the colonially produced body image through the white gaze. The oppressed person becomes hyperaware of herself, constantly monitoring herself and surroundings as a result of being unsettled by the non-reciprocity of the other’s gaze (112). The pathologization of black experience along these terms employs the supposition of the existence of a biological body that exists prior to cultural and colonial inscription, and incidentally, it happens to be best represented by the white body (Romdenh-Romluc 2024, 115). Most importantly, the readings fail to consider the contradictions that Fanon captures through racial epidermal schema which posit the oppressed as active resistors of coloniality rather than passive recipients of dehumanizing injustice.

What transpires from these readings is a particular incapacity to register the impact of prolonged trauma on the oppressed through the forms of expression with which they choose to articulate their pain. Fanon’s work puts into words the affective range that gets subsumed on the one hand under

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<sup>1</sup>Henceforth will be referred to as coloniality (Quijano 2000) to highlight its continuous effects even in the postcolonial era.

medical and academic jargon, and on the other hand, under the specularization of the brutalized black/oppressed body. Her over-exposed body is always aching but never speaks.

The problem of the unspeakable should be recast differently within power structures so adamant on exposing the racialized, oppressed body as mere unfeeling flesh, a thing among other things. Through her interpretation of Fanon's *Black Skins* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, Alia Al-Saji (2024) suggests that rather than allotting full transparency to the experience of the oppressed which is presumably readily available through the visuality of their bodies, we should instead dwell with them in their colonial wounds and recognize the ambivalence of their experience (7). Despite the fact that the oppressed have internalized the racializing and oppressive projections of coloniality, "colonized affectivity remains evasive and opaque... the colonized body contracts, resists, protects itself" (ibid). The presence of the body and its affectivity should be foregrounded for its capacity to capture the materiality of experience in ways that speech simply cannot (Stampfl 19). The surplus that Al-Saji describes is not facilely captured through visual and discursive means. Al-Saji insists that the proximity afforded by dwelling is the only means through which we can intuit the depth of the colonial wound.

Dwelling in the wound and bearing witness to it requires a different understanding of the racial epidermal schema. Rather than centering Merleau-Ponty's theorization of body schema, Al-Saji takes colonialism as a starting point. Rather than presenting it as a one-time event, colonialism is first and foremost a complex web of power relations and a mode of epistemic knowledge that produce legitimate human subjects and exploitable and disposable others through a dual system of reference (Maldonado-Torres 2018, 119). Coloniality's dehumanizing processes carve out the contours of embodiment which produce both the colonized flesh and the normative body (Al-Saji 12). Seen as less-than-human, the colonized/oppressed flesh does not have a body schema; rather, her world is reorganized in such a way that reaffirms her incapacity to navigate it, bumping into images, reactions, and spaces that corroborate her inferiority. The stereotypes are experienced as sensings which the oppressed feels as her own skin, constituting racial epidermal schema (11-12). Notably, there is a coercive aspect to this dynamic: the sensings that shape the experience of the racialized/oppressed body are made to be reflexively accepted. In other words, since the stereotypes are ontologized under the weight of coloniality, it follows that the sensings picked up on by the oppressed are factual, reflecting reality as it is. Fanon attests to this point:

Disoriented, incapable of confronting the Other, the white man, who had no scruples about imprisoning me, I transported myself on that particular day far, very far, from my self, and gave myself up as an object. What did this mean to me? Peeling, stripping my skin, causing a hemorrhage that left congealed black blood all over my body. Yet, this reconsideration of myself, this thematization, was not my idea. I wanted quite simply to be a man among men. (92)

Here lies the colonial wound; here lies the trauma of coloniality. It is chronic because it is ontological.

But what do the oppressed do with all these sensings? As painful as they are in skewing their orientation to the world, the sensings should be read "as responses by the racialized flesh" (Al-Saji 2024, 13). The colonized experience an affective panoply that shape their knowledge of their

world, for “knowledge is bound up with what makes us sweat, shudder, tremble, all those feelings that are crucially felt on the bodily surface, the skin surface where we touch and are touched by the world” (Truran 2022, 30). Existing in unjust power relations, a sense of refusal is always espoused with those sensings, forming the fabric of the oppressed experience and their chronic trauma. The rejection, however, is not a momentary occurrence. Rather, it figures within what Al-Saji calls colonial duration. From within her critique of the phenomenological body, Al-Saji also presents a critique of time. Under the workings of coloniality, time is not experienced in a linear fashion. Rather, it is a temporality in which the past weighs heavily in the present, a weight that manifests itself through the sensings that figure the wound, for “colonized and enslaved pasts coexist, remembered in their dismemberment, enduring in their affective weight and protective opacity” (16). The sensings/reactions that shape the affective landscape of the oppressed stretch thus beyond the moment, a form of affect-memory that defers its actual meaning (14). The opaque responses of the racialized flesh, the chronic wound it carries, thus hold the historical load of colonialism, that is, coloniality, that always colors the present experience of the oppressed, one that cannot be negated. It is woven into the fabric of everyday life, making the account of the exceptionality of trauma insufficient (Rajiva 2017, 12). The omnipresent load of history at once closes off the horizon of possibility and leaves it wide open, constituting a compelling space for evaluative and critical engagement.

So, how can we dwell with/in the wound and sense the trauma it engenders? To bear witness to the opacity of affect, its pre-reflective sensings, the unlocalizability of the pain the wound evokes, and “to understand the (de)structuring work of colonial duration, there at its wounding” (Al-Saji 2024, 19)? I propose that engaging with trauma narratives that deal with the wounds of coloniality necessitates deploying narrative hermeneutics. As Hanna Meretoja (2020) argues, we cannot impose a hierarchy between experience and narratives as it has been the case in mainstream theorizations of trauma, wherein experience is posited as only mediated when it is subsumed within a narrative structure (28-29). Rather, we should see both as belonging to an interpretative continuum in which the person’s pre-reflexive sensings, which are interpretations in and of themselves, enter into a dialogical relationship with preexisting structures of interpretation. From this we can say that dwelling with/in the wound is to tend to the ways in which the survivor’s interpretations of their affect-memory bump into hegemonic structures, maintain their ambiguity, and refuse to be absorbed into a synthesis that assimilates and flattens its unique orientation.

### **3. LIVED EXPERIENCE, INTERPRETATION AND THE (UN)SPEAKABILITY OF TRAUMA**

The hermeneutical approach to trauma narratives is premised on the argument that all experience is more or less interpretative. Quotidian occurrences always go through a meaning-making sieve that colors them in specific ways. The filter is made of a multitude of cultural narratives which amount to “interpretative practices [that] shape the way we experience things in the first place” (Meretoja 2018, 57). Rather than seeing traumatic events as destructive of our capacity to apprehend and signify them, the hermeneutical approach sees that “we always already engage in prereflective narrative interpretation” (Meretoja 2020, 44). The unspeakability of trauma is recast as a form of a culturally specific interpretation or a rhetorical device to which many meanings are attached

(Stampfl 2014, 15). Rather than sustaining the ordered division between living, interpreting and telling, the approach posits experience as conditioned by the social and cultural structures in which the person lives. The structures delimit the qualitative contours of what is experienced, how it is understood, and the ways in which it is narrated. Past narratives color the present experience and map out provisionally the future horizon of possibilities. They are performative insofar as they “shape not only our cognitive understanding of the world, but also our affective orientations and our sense of the possible” (Meretoja 2018, 51). The approach allows to critically engage with the longue durée of trauma, attend to the surrounding interpretive structures, and read the refusal at the heart of the colonized affect.

When we speak of the colonial wound, the narratives surrounding the colonized/oppressed as less-than-human interpellates her in a particular identity. However, the dialogical aspect of narrative hermeneutics sheds light on the infinitesimal maneuvers the colonized/oppressed do to break down the hegemonic narratives that fix them in place. In this respect, dialogism breaks away from the assumption that discourse simply encounters its object. As Bakhtin asserts, it also confronts a myriad of social meanings that surround that object (1981, 276). While hegemonic models of sense making are implicated in the organization of our/their experience, Fanon’s account is an example that shows that they cannot be reduced to them. Au contraire, he managed to signify the lived experience of the black person by taking up the same narratives and breaking them down, illustrating that not all experience has a narrative structure (Meretoja 2018, 60). His prereflective sensings intervened in his interpretations of his surroundings, what Meretoja calls “the basic structure of sense perception” (61), the colonial duration of his wound colored his experience of the present in ways that became inextricably involved in his interpretation. His account, as a narrative of colonial trauma, becomes a conscious interpretation of an interpretation, a retrospective double hermeneutic that dialogically engages with its surrounding narrative structures.

Similarly, dwelling with/in the colonial wound necessarily entails tending to the narrative interpretations of the oppressed as they repeatedly engage with their surroundings. It is through their deconstruction of dominant meanings that we can glimpse the sensings that color their experience. Their chronic trauma is signified from within the gap that those sensings form, sustaining the discrepancies and the ambiguity of those sensings.

On this basis, I argue that *Silence Is a Sense* (2021) stands as an example that complicates our understanding of both trauma and the colonial wound in the way it intersects with the refugee experience. Narrated in the first person, we are presented with a nameless main character who loses her capacity to speak after trekking across Europe, crossing the Channel and arriving to British soil as a Syrian refugee. While it is evident in her account that the actual process of crossing borders amounts to a punctual traumatic experience, the gradual unfolding of the story presents the entire historical backdrop of the Syrian refugee crisis that connects the one-time event of fleeing to the chronic wounding of coloniality. My reading of the narrative employs what Michelle Balaev calls a pluralistic trauma model (2018, 366). It is pluralistic insofar as I will complicate “the unspeakable trope in seeking to understand not only the structural dimensions of trauma that often develop in terms of trauma’s dissociative effects on consciousness and memory, but also the cultural dimensions of trauma and the diversity of narrative expression” (ibid). In this way, an in line with Steph Crap’s (2013) emphasis on the social and cultural specificity of trauma response,

I challenge the response that the traditional model universalizes through the examination of the speech/silence binary as it arises from various power dynamics, the interrogation of the exceptional and punctual form of traumatic events, and examining the affective range at the center of the embodied experience of trauma. While it is evident that the protagonist's psychic defenses are disabled, that initial response is temporary and opaque, sitting uneasily between intentionality and reticence. I argue that the protagonist undergoes an interpretative phase in which she gradually makes sense of her prereflective sensings, culminating into an ethical engagement, her final phase. On the one hand, the interpretative phase stands in tension with the traditional model in that it troubles the understanding of the unspeakable as fundamentally unsignifiable. On the other hand, it also troubles the status of what is spoken when the speaking subject is physically incapable of speech, as it is the case of the mute protagonist. *Silence Is a Sense* thus offers us a unique way of portraying trauma that opens up new horizons of understanding and evaluating trauma narratives within trauma studies.

#### **4. WRITE DOWN: I AM AN ARAB/I AM A NAME WITHOUT AND EPITHET: MAKING SENSE OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS**

In light of the earlier theoretical directions, my analysis of *Silence Is a Sense* (2021) will consider the intricacies of border crossing, the psychiatric institution, journalism, and their bearings on the protagonist's experience. In particular, I will look into how these structural dynamics shape her memory, recollection and the way her physical speechlessness interacts with her refusal to communicate. In order to do so, I will first examine the material records that are depicted in the novel, presenting them as indexical signs to the traumatic event of leaving Syria and crossing two continents. To do so, I demonstrate how the testimonial capacity of these recordings is appropriated by the psychiatric institution to fit a particular diagnostic model. Then I will shed light on how the sensorial landscape at the heart of the protagonist's experience clashes with this structure through the process of recollection, silence and writing. Speechlessness will be presented as only a phase of the traumatic response, which is gradually divorced from its involuntary quality, becoming an intentional reticence on the main character's part. The dynamics of silence and speech will be further explored by interrogating the protagonist's relationship with her editor, Josie, in the wake of the rising xenophobia and the terrorist attacks taking place in Britain. Her role as a mediator-cum-native informant is challenged through the pieces she writes for the magazine. I will illustrate that she injects her past experience and her sensorial input to offer a different interpretation of nationalism, fundamentalism and identity, contributions that are either censored or discredited, as they generate disproportionate backlash from readers and the editor. Finally, I argue that fiction writing is posited in the novel as a compromise that allows the protagonist to mitigate the constraints imposed on her attempts at sense-making, rendering silence an inadequate response.

##### **4. 1. The Medical Gaze and the Refugee's Self-records**

Having been propelled by the insisting editor, Josie, to write pieces that grant insider access to the experience of the refugee and their journey to England, the protagonist, after much emotional

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<sup>2</sup> Mahmoud Darwish, "Identity Card", Marxists.org, 1964,  
<https://www.marxists.org/subject/art/literature/darwish/1964/identity-card.htm>

resistance, unboxes the material traces of her institutionalization. They consist of daily logs, journal entries and psychiatric reports—indexical signs that are indicative of the trauma of the crossing

Citing her age, gender, and ethnicity, the first report she sifts through points out that she had “gastrointestinal parasites, anemia, severe dehydration, tuberculosis, and chronic bacterial skin infection” (Alammar 2021, 67). The series of diagnoses depict a malnourished individual who was exposed to unsanitary conditions and suffered from a weakened immune system that was vulnerable to infection. It further indicates that there was no support from relief organizations along the journey. The first diagnostic is followed by an MRI report that indicates that there are no abnormalities in her brain imaging and prescribed Sertraline 25mg as the starting dose, a drug used to treat post-traumatic stress disorder as well as major depressive disorder. Alongside the medication, Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) was also prescribed. This shows that she has undergone a pre-assessment for PTSD and met the criteria for this type of therapy.

CPT is a form of cognitive behavioral therapy targeted at sufferers of PTSD. According to the treatment guidelines set up in The Therapist Manual for Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD (2024), the treatment is administered over twelve sessions wherein the survivor learns to address and rework their beliefs in relation to the traumatic event (Resick et al., 7). The sessions are organized in a way so as to allow the survivor to express her thoughts about the causes of the event. The therapist is expected to scrutinize the account and challenge the thinking processes in which the survivor is caught up. Because it is related to cognition, the ultimate aim is to train the survivor to identify the thought patterns associated with the event and modify them, building the capacity to apply them outside of the therapeutic context. Interviews and self-reporting are the basis from which the CPT operates. Such an interference with thought processes can have a negative impact on the survivor for the simple fact that they are borne out of cultural contexts. If that interference is not, in its turn, contextualized itself, then we are faced with what Craps has demonstrated as intervening in and obstructing healing processes (2013, 22).

The next document shows that the starting of the course of treatment never took place. The protagonist has been institutionalized because she was physically and verbally unresponsive despite being conscious (Alammar 2021, 68). The tone, though medical and objective, evinces a sense of frustration, almost anger, as it documents that it took three days to obtain handwritten responses to assessments which were supposed to be answered orally. “This clinician has determined”, the document reports of the protagonist’s mutism that it, “is an obstinate and voluntary silence unaccompanied by abnormalities in the muscles of articulation” (69). It seems that the reported scowls and glares, confusion and shock were indicative of psychiatric pathology. To test this supposition, the controversial Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory test was administered to assess mental health issues such as psychopathy as the test is considered to be “a means of constructing a differential diagnosis for mental health problems, and as a versatile test to achieve transferrable psychological data” which will be compared to a normative dataset according to Augustus E. Floyd and Vikas Gupta<sup>4</sup>. Her observable lack of cooperation is consequently diagnosed as a form of mute hysteria (69).

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An account of her hysterical presentation is subsequently provided. Her ego has reportedly disintegrated as it has presumably become unable to handle reality. The fragmentation of her ego is manifesting through the defense mechanisms she is adopting, namely intellectualization, compartmentalization and repression (70). Indicative of her repression is her fixation on the body and sex, which was interpreted as an indication of “sexual and/or physical trauma” (ibid). Furthermore, the records indicate an anxious hyper-vigilance evinced in her overdeveloped spatial-visual and perceptual- organizational skills and her sub-par working memory.

The final test in the bundle at last validates some of the survivor’s observed reactions, as “not an entirely irrational response” given her medical record. It notes her alertness to her surroundings as if she is in constant danger, her grim perception of the world evident in her belief that there is nothing that can absolve humanity from its acts, and her pronounced distrust of others. The objective gaze of the medical institution is juxtaposed to personal recordings that the protagonist gathered along the journey. They are fragmented and temporally jumbled, transmitting the disarray of the experience as it is being recorded.

The reported malnourishment of the protagonist is fleshed out in descriptions of how she and the group she was with were surviving on flatbread for three days, and once they received help, the food was “snatched out of outstretched hands” (67), indicating a discrepancy between what was needed and what was provided. The physical feelings of hunger and thirst are evoked again when one of the scrapes simply declares that she no longer cries because she would rather save up the water. The desperation deepens, however, once we deduce that they had to consume rotten potatoes, the sight of them bringing the protagonist back to a memory, “it reminded me of a film baba used to let us watch with a boy in a concentration camp or something and they give them these ugly potatoes and he says the bugs are good to eat because at least its (sic) protein” (ibid). Evidently, as she weathers the material conditions of her fleeing the country, her bodily experience is mediated in real time as she lives through them, interspersed as it is with her personal memories as well as a wider range of cultural narrative of trauma.

The intertextual quality of the cultural and personal narratives that mediate the way she recorded some of the moments in her journey are further exacerbated in the way the past and present commingle and become concurrent with sensory input. Her past experience of violence in Syria and her present experience of border violence become identical, almost indistinguishable. The sensory input of the sound of gunshots, the smell of fire, and the thumping of teargas shells create the anticipation of being bombed in the protagonist: “screaming today, pop pop pop of gunfire and the scent of scorched earth. bombs in the clouds that you can hear but cant see Hanging (sic)”. It becomes clear that the description is of border violence, as we learn that “a nice volunteer on the macedonian (sic) border gave us water to clean our eyes” (68). The ephemeral benevolence of the volunteer is contrasted with the cruelty of the border police, “snapp(ing) their teeth like wild hungry dogs” (69). The callousness of the border machine is further sensed through the urgency of the statement “DONT GET CAUGHT!” and the despair underlying being stranded in a beach with no way to move beyond the barricade, a restriction that makes her feel like an animal (71).

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<sup>4</sup>Floyd AE, Gupta V. “Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory”, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK557525/> .

The perceptual details at the core of these recorded fragments refer us back to the materiality of border violence, the brutality of which seizes the migrant body in its entirety. At the same time, the records as material repositories of those snippets of events deconstruct the seeming objectivity of documentation in the way it demonstrates the interpretative quality of all accounts.

The trauma that the fragments indicate give context to the protagonist's silence. The medical gaze of Dr Thompson stands out in its incapacity to apprehend the protagonist's pain that undergirds her speechlessness. During one of their sessions, the psychiatrist, who represents the established understanding of trauma, shows the survivor Freud's "Topography of the Mind" to illustrate, in spatial terms, the location of her unprocessed fear that is attached to her trauma. It is all in the unconscious, she demonstrates, where her memories are stored, alongside "irrational wishes", "immoral urges" and "selfish needs" (147). The categorization of the different parts of the psyche is put into question when the protagonist doubts the mechanism of repression, wondering if the role of Dr Thompson is to bring up those memories buried in the unconscious to the surface of her awareness. Her doubt is motivated by a sense of horror rather than simple doubt because her experience slips away, unrecognized. Her fears, the depths of her trauma are omnipresent, clouding her days, unobstructed. Far from being intangible abstractions, they are embodied on her skin, "crawling all over me, all the time, biting, like electric sparks" (148). When the memory of her trauma is formulated in embodied terms, then the expectation of narrative integration of the event is also put into question.

The omnipresence of the protagonist's fears disavows the linearity of time in the way it establishes a coherent relationship among past, present and future occurrences. The therapeutic protocol of identifying the traumatic event is informed by this hegemonic conception of time which reckons with a singular and punctual incident that alters the experience of the victim. Pointing out that moment in time, speaking of it, and integrating it to the present are the necessary steps for healing, as it has been established. The dichotomy of a before and an after, however, is unsettled under the weight of chronic trauma, the "long pause" it effectuates make her "perpetually astride that line" (148). The duration of her fleeing exposed her to not only one instance of sexual violence, food insecurity, and overexposure to the elements. By the same token, that duration is oversaturated with the weight of coloniality as it animates the postcolonial conditions of institutionalized subjugation, state violence and capitalist exploitation permeating Syria and the entire region.

#### **4. 2. What Lies Beneath the Structure: The Dynamics of Silence and Interpretation**

The conditions that shape the protagonist's reality are therefore not the same as the ones that construct Dr Thompson's nor her assumptions about her patient's lived experience, for it was evident to the protagonist that "she [Dr Thompson] lived, that all of them here lived, outside the kind of reality of which I would need to speak" (*ibid*). The exteriority she discerns here amounts to the idea of ontological pluralism (Lugones 2003, 55). The plurality of reality to which the protagonist points attest to the way lived experience as forms of sociality escape the hegemonic structures that create the mirage of a singular reality. And because it escapes them, to speak of them becomes a challenge, "to make her see it," the protagonist admits, "I would have to find new words, new definitions with which to confront her" (*ibid*). The impossibility of finding conceptual bases to signify her reality, at least at that stage of her recovery, is one facet that undergirds her silence.

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The other facet of the protagonist's silence is shaped by her dissociation. Her detachment is closely tied to her senses being stunned by an overabundance of input. Because her trauma lives on her skin, her sensitivity to external stimulus is overamplified and relentlessly present. Early in her journey, her sensitivity gradually manifested itself through the form of allergies. At the threshold of the European border, somewhere between Greece and Hungary, she started noticing that her "body began attacking itself" (9). The beginning of the dissolution of the geopolitical boundary is presented as an embodied immune response wherein her stuffed nose attempts blocking away the "would-be invaders" all while cutting off her oxygen supply. At the same time, the passage also transposes the dissolution of her psyche onto her immune response. In this way, her vitality, her defenses, and her border crossing cut through her experience and heighten her senses. Silence as a form of unresponsiveness thus communicates her being extremely overwhelmed by her surroundings; her silence is a response in and of itself. Her capacities for apprehension and judgement are not suspended or lost; they are fully operational:

... you cannot say that the world is silent. It is noise and chaos.... It is bombs and gunfire and babies crying in trees and mothers wailing and fathers shouting and rushing rivers and howling winds and crunching tyres (sic) and and and. It is the furthest possible thing from silence. And it seemed to me that the only way to counter this cacophony was to go quiet, to express nothing. The only reasonable response was to fill myself up with silence. (149)

Her silence is thus the product of a radically different orientation to the world mediated by her senses. It both captures her complete immersion in the sensory and psychic texture of her trauma as it pierces through her body and mind, which put into question the very essence of her humanity, and her attempts at transcending it, to dial down its intensity. Her lived experience remains obscure, almost unsignifiable, insofar as it is communicated through hegemonic signs and within the structure that produce her as a traumatized woman who is a Syrian refugee.

#### 4. 3. The Writing of Silence

The configuration of her silence in relation to signification is palpable in her interaction with the editor of the established magazine, *The New Press*. The protagonist's contribution to the magazine was initially directed toward writing op-eds that offer an outsider's perspective to the goings-on of the city she lives in. At first glance, it seems like an empowering position in which the protagonist can redirect the gaze that cast her as a boat person and a hysterical mute toward itself. However, it is quickly dissolved as it places her own self as the main focus again after the editor solicited the protagonist for insider information on the reality of the refugee as they cross Europe and the English Channel, assimilation, and religious difference.

The first instinct of the protagonist's is to be cautious, having lived back home through constant surveillance, "where the walls have ears and you spend your life hiding and fabricating, trying to learn the rules to games you have no hope of ever winning" (15). This self-censorship is instinctive, geared toward survival only. It also reflects an internalization of the power structure that draws the contours of what is permissible and therefore signifiable.

However, in the way the novel insists on ontological pluralism, the protagonist's internalization cannot be taken as an exhaustion of her capacity to critically engage with the structure that interpellates her. In her early contribution, signed under the pen name The Voiceless, she remarks how religion has reified the binary opposition between "us" and "them" in a way that obscures the line of continuity among the messages across faiths, seeing it all as symptomatic of how "the message gets twisted and corrupted and adulterated by our own clumsy attempts to humanize it, to create systems from the ineffable" (22).

This highly philosophical take highlights precisely how human-made categorizations impose particular meanings, loyalties and truth effects to the world all while excluding the other. At the same time, it offers the grounds for interpreting that the Syrian crisis, at its beginning, was not religiously motivated. Rather, it represents the logical outcome of coloniality:

... it was about freedom. It was about the right to live with dignity, the right to think without fear, the right to exist outside of a state of emergency. It was about rising unemployment rates among a restless youth and free-market policies that benefited the few rather than the many. It was about the rains that never came, the migration and the cities straining under the weight of all the people they held but could do nothing with. (25)

Her sober interpretation puts the Syrian crisis and the subsequent refugee crisis within a larger map that encompasses geopolitical power struggles, Western hegemony, capitalism, and climate change. Within these parameters, the Syrian is cast as a dehumanized being bereft of any value under the weight of coloniality, stuck in a long pause.

Her interpretation is set in juxtaposition to the mainstream narratives that draw the crisis in solely religious terms. She does not deny it, "religious conflict is sexy. It's easy to sell, the way it fits into the simple, dichotomous way people prefer to view the world. It's easy for news producers and politicians to frame it in terms of a cosmic war being waged in a land far, far away. But it isn't *real*" (24-25, emphasis added). The reductive narratives are thus reinterpreted from within the contours of her situated understanding which would, subsequently, connect the tough conditions of her home country, the atrocities of border crossing, and the xenophobia in England through the logic of the lack or fear of reciprocity.

The piece she submits to Josie thus demonstrates her level-headed analysis of the conditions back home. However, she remains apprehensive of the local Imam in the English city. After managing to secure the local mosque from the petty threat of a group of islamophobes who tried to crash their neighborhood celebration, Imam Abdurrahman tries to extend an invitation to the protagonist to attend the different workshops that they organize. Instantly, she feels unsettled by his gaze and threatened by what he sees, revealing an incredulity that echoes her earlier attitude toward Dr Thompson. Because her trauma is largely shaped by her fear of being captured and held in place, her impression that the Imam recognizes her pain creates the knee-jerk reaction of refusing his gaze. She reads it as informed by a lack of recognition because her "experiences are far beyond him, and if he does in fact know or has guessed what [she is], he can't possibly have

a frame of reference for it” (46). Her contribution to the magazine, then, is shaped by her liminality, where she does not fit in, and insists on not fitting in, of wanting to be invisible to workings of the complex web of power in which she circulates. Paradoxically, it amplifies her voice and mutes it at the same time.

Her editor, enthusiastic about her view on the conflict in Syria, encourages the protagonist for more. Unexpectedly, the next piece she submits is never published. In it, the protagonist, *The Voiceless*, meditates on the way algorithms foment division and xenophobia. As she sees it, there is a plethora of news articles that try to portray refugees as unthreatening. However, the way social media work to curate feeds that align with the user’s perspective as well as magnify controversial topics to maximize engagement, work against these narratives, which, seemingly benign, still operate using established clichés which carry orientalist undertones. The algorithms bury down and marginalize views that are not aligned with the user’s perspective, and consequently, lead to “reduced tolerance” (64).

Interrogating her role as an insider, she wonders, “is it my job, as a Muslim, to try to convince you not to be afraid of me? That my people are not hardwired to hate you, to want to blow you up on a tube or ram you with a van?” (*ibid*). Her deconstruction here goes beyond simply breaking down the role of the native informant who is supposed to supply objective knowledge about her culture wherein she functions as intermediary to facilitate “cooperation”. Her argument essentially interrogates the dichotomy of good Muslim/bad Muslim with which the entire community has been categorized in the wake of 9/11, 7/7, and in 2015. It highlights the awkward moment in which all Muslims sense the obligation to distance themselves from the stereotype of being a fundamentalist just because of their religious affiliation, nationality, and racial/ethnic presentation all while claiming those intersecting identities, walking around “like modern-day prophets urging others to come out from the darkness and into the light” (*ibid*). Resolutely, she concludes that it is not her moral responsibility to dispel misconception during a time when information is readily available. This interpretation does not pass under Josie’s radar who professionally rejects it under the claim that it lacks coherence, and that instead, she should write about her memories. Josie’s reaction reveals how the hegemonic structure of mainstream journalism can easily discredit a counternarrative that does not fit within its logical parameters.

The tension between the writer and the editor further intensifies when the protagonist further reflects on her role as a writer in the magazine. Subsequent to the 2017 Manchester attacks, she writes up two pieces that demonstrate her ambivalence toward her positionality as a migrant. In the first one, published in a week’s time after the attack, she clearly questions the notion of responsibility in the minds of attackers who rationalize their actions on religious bases. It is a deeply ethical question in the way it underscores the perplexing issue of how self-determination is deeply embedded in the principle of “there is no compulsion in religion” (95) and at the same time, as a principle, it does not deter those same people from imposing their view, to the point of eliminating the other. The next piece, a month later, she questions the same bases of exclusion, but in relation to British nationalism and the rise of Islamophobic attacks in the country in the aftermath of the attacks. In a short historical reflection, she captures the societal need for the

scapegoat, the internal group that needs to be rejected for its perceived difference. However, she argues, “this time there’s a conflation, in the minds of a disturbing majority, of Muslim Refugee and Muslim Terrorist. They are seen as one and the same” (123). She zeroes in on the ease with which threat and the outsider status become enmeshed, creating a perceptual barrier that redefines the presence of the refugee who is fleeing terror into becoming terror itself.

The problem of interpretation thus resurfaces, wherein she finds herself yet again a mediating agent who is expected to “reveal [herself] as some microcosm of refugee society.... to speak for the chaos of the world, to weave the abstracts of cultural convulsions and scapegoats and simple apathy into [her] story” (*ibid*). Leaning into the demand of transforming her life story into an abstraction devoid of any specificity, she points to the logical conclusion, that “by seeing ‘me’, by knowing ‘me’, you might know them [refugees] all, and I suppose – by extension – might feel some degree of empathy for them all”, eventually turning her writing into a tool to “humanize” (*ibid*). As noble as it may be, the issue to which she points out is the need to mitigate difference by representing it as another version of the same. The status of the refugee’s humanity is subtly questioned when the need to use forms of artistic media to soften their presumable difference. The call to humanize precisely pulls at the line that separates the Human from the less-than-human, a racial hierarchy that is the underlying characteristic of coloniality.

#### **4. 4. The Ethical Imperative of Writing: The Recognition of the Other**

It is after the xenophobic attack on the local mosque that the protagonist shifts gears to become a reluctant story-teller. The front of the building was vandalized overnight with racist, Islamophobic slurs, and trashed with the entrails of an animal, presumably a pig (139). The xenophobia ceased to be a distant concept, even for her, and began threatening the very safety she sought after. She thus resolutely reports on her journey across the continent, employing metaphors that mix body and geography:

So shall I tell you instead how the topography of her, of Europe, is encoded in my body now? She’s in the limestone of my skin, dry and easily split. Her salt is in the dark seaweed of my hair, the tang of my sweat. My breasts, the hills of Serbia. The rolls of fat on my belly, my back and hips, like the creases and trenches of Macedonia. Her marshes and fens lie in the shadows of my armpits, the morass of my mound. Walking across Europe, I hung myself from the sky. I swung from star to star and curled up in every crescent moon. (142-143)

She juxtaposes literary quality of this passage with the materiality of encampment to showcase that these conditions are incomparable to the circumstances that pushed them to leave, making this “ordeal not only tolerable, but desirable” (144, emphasis in original). Still, the descriptions are scrutinized by Josie, who, troubled by the depiction of the weather, urged her to make it less emotive. What she was requesting however, is “to alter the memory, so as to show a contrast, some symbolism over reality....something to hint at optimism and hope, as if the reality wasn’t that I was, every day, terrified that running and hiding and being smuggled was going to be the rest of my life” (156). In other words, she is inviting her to construct her interpretations of the world into a particular narrative that subsumes the reality of her lived experience.

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Josie's comment and the subsumptive quality that is at the core of constructing narratives is eventually challenged. In the next piece she submits, she points to the paradoxical nature of the visibility of the refugee; in the way it is portrayed as a burden but whose experience is never understood despite the reports that are generated about them. The testimonies collected from detainees and asylum seekers are relayed by writers who were not subjected to the same conditions that the others did. It comes back to a fundamental misalignment of the experiences of the two parties. The refugee is bound to the immediacy of her material needs and her sensory experience. The material texture of this experience is diluted in favor for metaphorical language, transforming it "into a soliloquy on how time is what ultimately kills you or the hypocrisy of Western ideals of justice and democracy" (163). However, this performative level of abstraction cannot hold under the weight of state violence enacted on the refugee body, whose flesh is broken "into a hundred thousand infinite parts" (*ibid*). To her, the refugee's full immersion in the sensory, material world reinvents literary expression itself. Because of their liminality, deeply enmeshed in hegemonic structures all while floating in its infra-structures, the meaning of their tales is always found in the cracks, in the "gaps", "the lacunae", "the silence" (164). Attuning to those stops figure to be the crucial points to build a story and cultivate understanding and empathy.

The crude reality of the refugee crossing, relayed accurately by the protagonist, was faced with disbelief and scrutiny, however. Not only did Josie inform her that the details she provided was "overwhelming", but she also admitted that it might not even be believable. Commenters on the magazine's website admitted as much, voicing that "it's a good story, but something about it just didn't sit right" (146). Being discredited for relaying the texture of the journey echoes again the dilemma for the protagonist whose voicelessness has become a volatile quality that exceeds merely her physical capacity to speak.

In the aftermath of the infuriating comment, the protagonist crafts the fictional story "Sweet Dew" as a desperate attempt to voice the unvoiced, to give another shape to the texture of her reality in spite of the risk of its alteration. A story within a story, "Sweet Dew" portrays the smuggling of a group of Syrians to Germany on board of a refrigerated truck. The group comprised of a Syrian family: a couple with their young child and their elderly parent; three men, and a lone woman. The driver orders the group who gathered near the truck to lie down on the fruit crates and informs them that they will pass through three checkpoints before arrival. Defeated by the arrangement, the group nonetheless acquiesces, and as they settle in the pitch-black container, they realize that they will quickly lose body heat, as well as oxygen. The main character, Mahmood, slowly undergoes an episode of hallucination as the group chats quietly to maintain a resemblance of morale.

The story combines motion, body and space to stretch the boundaries of storytelling. Unlike the stories that tackle the theme of migration, "Sweet Dew" does not follow the established formula of the immigrant narrative that focalize on a hero, a journey, and a series of trials that end in integration (Hron 2009, 15). The established narrative structure usually depicts a hero who is defined by his outsider status, who undergoes a typically arduous educational process wherein he discovers and assimilates new cultural norms. The short story our protagonist crafted and eventually submits to a fiction contest is fundamentally devoid of these structural characteristics. For one, the narrative is sensorially immersive, as it focalizes on the trans-like state of driving, and its psychological

effects on Mahmood and the rest of the group. The whir of the engine brings him back to the different landscapes he crossed, the raft he rode on, the negotiations he had to make in order to arrive to that moment, lying on top of melons. It is a series of fragments that interconnect through the different affective and sensory information he undergoes inside that moving truck. The interconnections bring to the fore the cold of the container, body odor, and the claustrophobic sensation of human bodies stacked in a very small space. The descriptive threads build an unspoken tapestry of despair and loss without any direct divulsion.

Second, and most importantly, the story creates a visual image that draws a parallel between these smuggled Syrians and the Middle Passage. The ordering of the group's bodies atop the melon crates echoes the arrangements of the enslaved Africans in slave ships whose bodies were held in place, with no possibility of movement:

Mahmoud was the last to climb in slipping between two bottom rows of fruit near the door. Further up by his head was one of the two men; the other was in the row above them. Directly above Mahmood was the grandmother and the husband and wife and little girl. By Mahmood's side was the young woman... (171-172)

Not only were they able to feel the hard wood right above their noses which highlights the shackle-like quality of their constraint, they were also unable to stop mid journey to relieve their limbs and bladders. After a few hours, Mahmood "sensed the warmth and wetness against his fingers. 'It's alright,' he whispered, sighing as he released his own" (178). He eventually becomes unable to distinguish between his memory of his home back in Syria and his reality in the pitch-black container, as his panic surges with each checkpoint. It becomes evident that the abject body of the refugee, swarming in human excrement, troubles geographic, psychological and human boundaries.

By linking the Syrian experience of flight to the cultural narrative of the Middle Passage, our protagonist reinvents the established structure of migration and the trauma it engenders in a way that births a new method of interpreting that experience. The motif of rebirth is eventually presented when Mahmood and the group are captured. The sensory shock of being released out of the tank invites the image of birthing, where Mahmood is overwhelmed by the "far too much air" and his unresponsive body (180). However, the idea of rebirth is closely tied with Mahmood's resignation. Believing that he is going to die at the last checkpoint, he remembers his father's advice when he was a child, who told him that the only two options in life is "to die or fight" (178). Repeated as a mantra to soothe himself in the moment between the truck stopping and being caught by the police, the phrase "die or fight" recodes the container in which they were being transported into a double scepter of their death and their new life.

The short story, "Sweet Dew" thus represents a new way of interpreting the experience of the Syrian refugee in light of preexisting narratives of forced migration. The writer Rana, whose name we learn at the end, finally finds a way to signify the gaps and fissures between herself as a refugee and whoever is willing to hear her testimony without erasing the sensory texture of the experience. She assumes, then, her ethical responsibility of telling what happened, a necessity that became vital after the Pakistani owner of the corner shop succumbs to his wounds after three xenophobes

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attack him in his shop. Her story treads carefully the spoken and the unspoken in such a way that deconstructs silence and unspeakability.

## 5. CONCLUSION: TO SPEAK OR NOT TO SPEAK; AN IRRELEVANT QUESTION?

Whether writing is liberating or not, the novel reaches no conclusion. And Rana sarcastically voices this lack of resolution when she receives feedback from Josie, thinking “yes Josie, fiction is very liberating” (181). The promise of reaching the other and recognizing their experience remains always unstable and fraught with misunderstandings. Challenging institutions and their sanctioned narratives is a never-ending undertaking. There is, however, an ethical demand within the exploration of silence, representation and trauma that the story reflects on, a demand to do something.

By focusing on the less-than-human, the portrayal of the main character deconstructs the established notion of trauma and its related concepts, specifically the unspeakability and unrepresentability of the event-based punctual trauma. As it has been demonstrated, the delayed response to the traumatic event is but one phase in the many culturally specific responses. The temporalities in which the colonized subject exists need to be attended to in order to reveal the complexities of the experience of trauma and the ways healing can take place. In order to situate trauma in its historical context, I resort to narrative hermeneutics advanced by Hana Meretoja (2018) which places the experiential subject in the power structure in which she circulates rather than outside of them, a supposition that the traditional trauma model upholds. In the case of the Syrian refugee, the dire material conditions that the novel alludes to draws attention to the affective aspect of the survivor’s crossing, wherein her sensings provide ample knowledge on those conditions. By emphasizing the momentary and embodied experience of the subject, the colonized body is brought to the foreground as a mediating agent that is fundamental to the process of understanding the traumatic event, forming the first layer of interpretation.

Moreover, by focalizing on the refugee and her status as abject, the present analysis showcases that it is reductive to think of the victim as incapable of integrating the events into their consciousness as it is implied in the emphasis on the unspeakability of trauma. The analysis demonstrates the sobriety of the protagonist’s perspective in her unflinching estimation and criticism of both her home and her receiving country. Her silence is an ambivalent take on the atrocities and the dehumanization of the refugee, as it both signals the incomprehensibility of their lived experience, and the unavailability of narrative structures that can effectively communicate the complexity of their trauma.

The complexity of the trauma of the colonized and the layered meanings it carries invites us to consider what lies beyond the attempts at representing it. *Silence Is a Sense* (2021) thus invites us to reconsider the value of speech and the materiality of experience to foster recognition, and eventually, solidarity. It is evident that the reason behind Rana’s refusal to speak lies beyond the lack of conceptual tools. Her silence communicates the fundamental lack of reciprocity and recognition, the severance of the interpersonal ties that link people together, turning them into

isolated clusters. Her silence is at once preconfigured by the medical institution and journalistic standards, and a reactive response to them. Her reluctance to write is precisely a compromise motivated by the need to create coalitions, to open up the refugee world to the other worlds to demonstrate how they are paradoxically all interconnected together by virtue of the logic of the power that sequesters them into neat categories.

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# A Comparative Analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown* and *The Scarlet Letter* from a Feminist Social Work Perspective

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9904-9352>



[Emin Furkan Batıhan<sup>1</sup>](#)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-7174-3316>



[Amine Hilal Pamukçu<sup>2</sup>](#)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3092-1569>



[Sami Cem Uygun<sup>3</sup>](#)

<sup>1</sup> MA Student, Department of Social Work, Sakarya University, Türkiye

<sup>2</sup> BA Student, Department of Translation and Interpreting, Sakarya University, Türkiye

<sup>3</sup> BA Student, Department of Translation and Interpreting, Sakarya University, Türkiye

## abstract

This study presents a comparative analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown* and *The Scarlet Letter* through the lens of feminist social work. Focusing on the themes of social norms, hypocrisy, and Puritanism, the research reveals how conservative moral systems marginalize women and perpetuate systemic inequality. The analysis juxtaposes Goodman Brown's disillusionment with societal virtue against Hester Prynne's resilience in the face of public ostracism, highlighting the gendered double standards of Puritan society. By applying feminist social work principles—specifically the empowerment approach—the study bridges 19th-century literary critique with modern discussions on oppression and gender justice. Ultimately, it argues that Hawthorne's narratives offer a vital historical framework for understanding the mechanisms of exclusion that feminist social work seeks to dismantle.

**Keywords:** *The Scarlet Letter*; *Young Goodman Brown*; Puritanism; social hypocrisy; feminist social work

Correspondence: Emin Furkan Batıhan, e-mail: [eminfurkanbatihan@gmail.com](mailto:eminfurkanbatihan@gmail.com)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown* and *The Scarlet Letter* serve as poignant literary reflections on the complex moral and social dynamics of Puritan society. These works not only critique the rigid structures of Puritanism but also explore the deep-seated psychological and social conflicts engendered by this belief system. Historically, Puritanism emerged as a sect seeking to purify the Church of England, intertwining spiritual reform with broader political and social transformations (Hill 1967, cited in Greaves 1985). However, as the movement faced political suppression under the English monarchy—from the erratic policies of Henry VIII to the persecutions under Mary Tudor—it underwent a process of radicalization. This historical trauma of displacement and marginalization played a crucial role in shaping the Puritan worldview, eventually leading to their migration to the Americas to establish a city upon a hill.

Yet, this quest for religious freedom paradoxically morphed into a mechanism of oppression in the New World. The very group that fled persecution in England constructed a society predicated on strict surveillance, moral absolutism, and intolerance toward the "other." This exclusionary mindset was directed not only at the indigenous populations, whom they sought to assimilate through missionary work (Mills 1948), but more intensely toward women within their own communities. As Barriss Mills notes, the Puritans lived with a haunting sense of ancestral sin, a legacy that manifested in an austere morality often weaponized against women (Mills 1948, 84). In this patriarchal order, women were confined to domestic spheres, and any deviation from assigned roles was met with severe social sanctions, arguably culminating in phenomena like witch trials or profound social ostracization.

It is within this repressive context that Hawthorne's narratives unfold. *The Scarlet Letter* dramatizes the resilience of Hester Prynne, who defies the norms of a society that seeks to label and silence her. Similarly, *Young Goodman Brown* exposes the hypocrisy and moral fragility of a community obsessed with outward appearances of piety. Both works transcend mere historical fiction; they offer a rich ground for analyzing how systemic oppression functions. While literary critics like Cella (2002) and Connolly (1956) have extensively analyzed these texts through feminist and allegorical lenses, there remains a need to bridge these literary critiques with the practical frameworks of social justice.

This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing Hawthorne's works through the specific lens of feminist social work. Unlike traditional literary criticism, feminist social work focuses on the intersection of gender, patriarchy, and power dynamics, aiming not just to understand oppression but to identify pathways for empowerment (Buz 2009, 53). Historically, social work has evolved from the philanthropic traditions and the English Poor Laws of 1601 into a professional discipline dedicated to solving individual and social problems (Danış 2007, 60). By applying the core tenets of this discipline—specifically the "empowerment approach" — to Hawthorne's characters, this paper seeks to demonstrate how Hester Prynne's resistance and Goodman Brown's alienation illustrate the enduring struggle of the individual against patriarchal structures. Thus, the following analysis will explore how these literary classics provide a historical framework for understanding the very issues of gender inequality and social exclusion that modern feminist social work seeks to address.

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## 2. ANALYSIS

### 2.1. Analysis of *Young Goodman Brown*

*Young Goodman Brown* is an allegorical short story written by Nathaniel Hawthorne and was published in 1835 in New England Magazine. The novel distinguishes itself from the others while mentioning the Salem Witch Trials, mainly because its writer, Nathaniel Hawthorne, had quite the history in the trials. This reason is also a big reason why this book exists, as Hawthorne accepts every action conducted by the people from his family but cannot love this history, so he mentions some of the wrongdoings during a few of the dialogues during the story of *Young Goodman Brown* as if this bloodline belonged to the character himself. With his strong symbolic writing, Hawthorne also talks about the hypocrisy and false doings during the periods of the trials. Of course, while Hawthorne signs his every work with these kinds of allegories and historical mentions, it is very heavy in the story of *Young Goodman Brown*. In *Young Goodman Brown*, the story follows a man named Goodman Brown leaving his house for an unknown task and traveling into the woods of Salem with a companion that resembles so much of him. During this travel into the unknown, Goodman Brown comes across an evil ceremony that is quite nightmare-like, pushing him to question what he deemed truth and shaking his beliefs. In this study, the text will be divided into four main sections, and the allegorical meanings and cultural references in each section will be examined in detail within the framework of feminist social work theory; in addition, a brief overview of the work's overall structure will be provided.

#### 2.1.1. Leaving Home

The first section begins with the act of leaving home, marked by the hero Goodman Brown's departure from his wife. At sunset, despite his wife's persistent efforts to persuade him to stay, Goodman Brown leaves his home and sets out on a journey driven by an unknown mission and purpose. The only force propelling him forward is his belief that he will return to his wife for a warm embrace. In this scene, the setting of the sun functions as a portent of the danger that has yet to unfold. "He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind" (Hawthorne 2011b, 10). The home and his wife represent the comfort zone that Goodman Brown is about to leave behind. Yet what truly renders this scene significant is Goodman Brown's wife, Faith. As her name suggests, she symbolizes the extent to which Goodman Brown values his faith, or the principles he perceives as morally right. "My love and my Faith," replied young Goodman Brown, "of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done 'twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married!" (Hawthorne 2011b, 10).

Another interpretation concerns Faith's pink ribbons, which symbolize her innocence, purity, fragility, and childlike wholesomeness. "And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap, while she called to Goodman Brown" (Hawthorne 2011b, 10). Faith is characterized as naïve, innocent, and pure, which stands in contrast to Goodman Brown's actions within the story. Indeed, she is described in the narrative as follows: "Poor little Faith!" thought he, for his heart smote him. "What a wretch am I, to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought, as she spoke, there was

trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done to-night. But, no, no! 'twould kill her to think it. Well; she's a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night, I'll cling to her skirts and follow her to Heaven" (Hawthorne 2011b, 10). The pink ribbon associated with the character Faith, when considered in terms of color symbolism, is culturally linked to femininity, delicacy, and naïveté. The author's choice to represent the ribbon with the color pink suggests a view of womanhood as emblematic of innocence and a purity deemed in need of protection. "The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon. "My Faith is gone!" cried he, after one stupefied moment. "There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name" (Hawthorne 2011b, 15).

Although the strict pink–blue distinction mentioned in modern feminist critique is a later construct, the symbolic burden placed on the color pink in this narrative foreshadows such gendered codings. As Uzun (2022, 181) notes, the pink–blue distinction that emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century spread widely under the influence of capitalism — strengthened after the Industrial Revolution — and cultural imperialism. During this period, numerous binary oppositions were constructed by positioning one side as superior and defining the 'other' through this hierarchy, relegating women—associated with pink—to a secondary position. While Hawthorne wrote before this specific capitalist crystallization, the ribbon functions similarly within the text: within the framework of feminist social work theory, this phenomenon is critiqued for reducing colors and genders to narrow stereotypes. Likewise, the fact that the man — Goodman Brown — interprets his own faith, sense of security, and spiritual journey through the presumed innocence of a female character is also subject to feminist criticism. In other words, the character of Faith is not granted any subjective agency as an individual; rather, she becomes a symbolic extension of Goodman Brown's inner journey.

### ***2.1.2. Travelling into the Woods of Salem***

In this second part, Young Goodman Brown begins his journey into a deep forest characterized by darkness and dense surroundings, following a path overshadowed by thick trees. The atmosphere unsettles him, prompting him to question his safety as he exclaims, "What if the devil himself should be at my very elbow!" (Hawthorne 2011b, 10). At this moment, a new character emerges: the man with the snake staff, who joins Goodman Brown on his path. The introduction of this character is particularly enigmatic. First, he appears immediately after Goodman Brown's fearful utterance. Second, his snake-shaped staff — commonly associated with evil and deceit — further complicates his presence. Third, although described as a man of advanced age, elegantly dressed, his face bears a striking resemblance to Goodman Brown's 'though perhaps more in expression than features' (Hawthorne 2011b, 10). These characteristics collectively suggest that the man with the snake staff symbolizes the devil and embodies forms of evil, while also functioning as a personification of the historical legacy tied to Hawthorne's own ancestry. As they walk together, a revealing dialogue unfolds regarding Goodman Brown's family lineage. Goodman Brown asserts, "My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him" (Hawthorne 2011b, 11), implying that the forest represents a space inconsistent with Christian virtue and familial morality. Yet the man with the staff contradicts him, claiming familiarity with his ancestors and recalling his involvement in violent Puritan acts: "I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem" (Hawthorne 2011b, 11). His dismissive attitude toward Goodman Brown's supposed purity challenges the protagonist's self-perception. This exchange suggests that Hawthorne may also

have been grappling with the troubling aspects of his own family history, reflected in his decision to alter his surname and distance himself from his ancestors' actions.

Their journey through the dark forest takes an even more intriguing turn when they encounter an elderly woman whom Goodman Brown recognizes. Goody Cloyse appears for the first time at this point in the narrative. The fact that she is seen precisely there and at that moment further startles Goodman Brown, for he has always known her as 'a very pious and exemplary dame.' "...a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser" (Hawthorne 2011b, 12). The brief interval between her initial appearance and her swift acceptance of the devil presents an inherent contradiction. For the text describes her in the following manner: "The devil!" screamed the pious old lady. "Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?" observed the traveller" (Hawthorne 2011b, 13). In sum, within the patriarchal order, the transition between the roles assigned to women and the qualities attributed to them is abrupt and lacks consistency or coherence. Being identified as either a woman or a man carries specific meanings within society, and these meanings significantly shape and constrain both genders. Social expectations compel individuals to conform to the gender norms constructed by society, thereby placing them within predetermined frameworks. Consequently, the mental images associated with femininity and masculinity represent reflections of socially produced meanings (Tekin and Demirel Değirmenci 2022, 191). A woman who is regarded as 'pure and exemplary' may, in an instant, find herself confronted with accusations that stand in stark contrast to that characterization. The fact that the first person Goodman Brown encounters from his congregation during the journey is a woman further intensifies his sense of shock. Indeed, the appearance of Goody Cloyse unsettles the traditional patriarchal assumptions that women are inherently pure-hearted. "...after this one night, I'll cling to her skirts and follow her to Heaven (Hawthorne 2011b, 10). Ultimately, Goody Cloyse's choice to yield to the influence of the devil symbolizes what Faith—Goodman Brown's wife—might likewise become. Their being depicted side by side during the forest ritual further deepens this symbolism. This is reflected in the narrative as follows: "...these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of dissolute lives and women of spotted fame" (Hawthorne 2011b, 16).

Another significant aspect of the character Goody Cloyse is the meaning embedded in her name. Hawthorne drew inspiration from the name of a real woman who had been accused and convicted of witchcraft during the Salem Witch Trials. Sarah Cloyce, along with her two sisters, was prosecuted in 1692 under accusations of witchcraft and maintained her innocence throughout the proceedings. Hawthorne's choice of the name Sarah Cloyce thus offers an additional, layered critique of Puritan values. Both of Sarah Cloyce's sisters were likewise tried following these accusations and were executed shortly thereafter. One of the two judges who presided over the trial of Rebecca Nurse, one of Sarah Cloyce's sisters, was John Hathorne (Lewis 2017). This figure was the great-great-great-grandfather of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the author of *Young Goodman Brown*. Owing to the profound shame he felt regarding the dark legacy left by his ancestor, Nathaniel Hawthorne altered his surname by adding an additional 'w.'

The Salem Witch Trials reveal how easily women could be accused, targeted, and prosecuted within the structure of a patriarchal order. In 1692, as a result of a long series of grievances involving land disputes and other civil and municipal machinations, and based on the accusations of a group of

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young girls and their parents, Salem officials began arresting women of the village on a charge of witchcraft (McDaniel 2009, 20). At that time, widowed women, elderly women, or those who did not conform to societal norms could be marginalized in this manner. This phenomenon demonstrates that society did not merely serve the patriarchy but, in fact, actively constituted it. Another point concerns the symbolic connection between the character Goody Cloyse and Faith. Goody Cloyse is depicted as the figure into whom Faith might transform were she to stray onto a ‘dark path.’ “... the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty bloodspot. ...Now are ye undeceived! Evil is the nature of mankind (Hawthorne 2011b, 17-18). This situation reveals that women are subjected to a lifelong moral test, and that failure to meet its expectations results in social judgment. Here, a woman’s identity and morality are defined through her loyalty to her husband and her perceived piety. Consequently, the characters Goody Cloyse and Faith exemplify how patriarchal society positions women in opposition to one another, thereby constructing a dichotomy between the good woman and the bad woman.

Feminist Social Work Theory emphasizes that gender inequality shapes individuals’ lived experiences and argues that this issue must also be addressed within the field of social work. In this context, the characters Goody Cloyse and Faith in *Young Goodman Brown* illustrate how a patriarchal perspective confines women’s identities to narrow stereotypes and seeks to maintain social control by labeling them as either ‘good’ or ‘bad.’ Hawthorne introduces Goody Cloyse initially as the patriarchally sanctioned ‘ideal Christian woman,’ thereby revealing the fragility of this stereotype through the following lines: “Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine, at her own lattice, catechising a little girl, who had brought her a pint of morning’s milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child, as from the grasp of the fiend himself (Hawthorne, 2011b, 18). From a feminist social work perspective, this phenomenon emerges not merely as an issue of individual responsibility or judgment, but as a form of systemic social pressure. The evaluation of women on the basis of their behaviors, beliefs, and relationships diminishes their sense of self, hinders their empowerment processes, and restricts their opportunities for social participation. In terms of social work practice, this dynamic can be interpreted as a means of understanding how patriarchal ideologies become internalized and how individuals are positioned against one another through these ideologies.

The feminist social work approach advocates for a practice grounded in solidarity, awareness, and empowerment as a response to the “cycle of social accusation” in which women like Goody Cloyse and Faith become entrapped. This perspective asserts that women should be evaluated not through moralistic scrutiny or systems of oppression, but through their right to agency and self-determination. According to several feminist theories, the oppression and inequality experienced by women constitute a structural problem within society. From this perspective, the fundamental source of this oppression is male dominance — patriarchy — which permeates all spheres of social and cultural life (Dikici 2016, 530).

### **2.1.3. The Ritual**

In the third section, Goodman Brown pauses to rest and reflects on what might have transpired had he never left his home. Suddenly, he hears indistinct sounds emerging from the depths of the forest. Concealing himself, he listens attentively and attempts to discern their source. What he

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witnesses next is deeply unsettling: the presence of the minister and Deacon Gookin. Through their conversation, Goodman Brown realizes that they, too, are on their way to attend a clandestine communion in the forest. This discovery frightens him, yet simultaneously evokes a sense of resolve, prompting his declaration: "With Heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the devil!" (Hawthorne 2011b, 16). He then looks toward the sky and begins to follow a foreboding black cloud that appears connected to the gathering mentioned. Upon reaching its destination, Goodman Brown witnesses a ritualistic ceremony of a satanic nature, an event that profoundly disrupts his moral worldview and plunges him into spiritual crisis.

What most profoundly unsettles Brown during this ritual is the participation of individuals he has long regarded as virtuous — respected elders of his community, including the minister, Deacon Gookin, church members, and supposedly devout townspeople. As the ceremony proceeds, the satanic figure summons these individuals to embrace evil. A mist descends, accompanied by a mournful, almost sacred melody. In this moment, the satanic figure reveals the hidden moral darkness of those publicly perceived as good; beneath their daytime personas, their sins are laid bare.

The figure proclaims, "Evil is the nature of mankind, and evil must be your only happiness" (Hawthorne 2011b, 21), suggesting that genuine goodness is unattainable and that even suppressed evil remains ineradicable. The ritual appears to provide these ostensibly righteous individuals a space to express the moral corruption they conceal during the day.

Among the assembled participants, Brown sees Faith — his beloved wife, in whom he has placed unquestioning trust — her pink ribbon lost, caught among the branches, symbolically stripped of its innocence. In a final attempt to save her, Goodman Brown cries out to his "sweet Faith," exhorting her to resist evil: "Faith! Faith! Look up to Heaven, and resist the Wicked One!" (Hawthorne 2011b, 21).

In the narrative, Faith does not appear as an autonomous individual but rather as a figure symbolizing innocence and purity in relation to Young Goodman Brown. Here, the female figure functions as a kind of moral touchstone in the man's spiritual journey. Brown's faith is effectively measured through the innocence he attributes to his wife. From a feminist social work perspective, this dynamic strips the woman of subjectivity and reduces her to a symbolic device for the man's moral and spiritual crisis. Faith's own thoughts or agency never extend beyond Brown's perception of her. This, in turn, reflects a patriarchal mode of storytelling in which woman becomes the bearer and determinant of the man's moral universe — if 'the woman is corrupted,' the man is presumed to fall as well. Indeed, through his allegorical style, Hawthorne reveals Young Goodman Brown's inner disintegration in the following passage: "The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon. 'My Faith is gone!' cried he, after one stupefied moment (Hawthorne 2011b, 15).

#### **2.1.4. Goodman Brown's Loss of Faith**

In this fourth section, Goodman Brown abruptly awakens from a troubled slumber, the last moment he recalls being his desperate cry to Faith. Uncertain whether the events he witnessed were a dream or a reality, he returns to his home and to his wife, which had been his sole desire throughout the ordeal.

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Yet as he encounters the townspeople, he can think only of how they appeared in his dream, and the memory continues to unsettle him. Upon returning to Faith's embrace, the recollection of the forest encounter overwhelms him; seeing the person he trusts most implicated in an unholy ritual destabilizes his moral foundations and convinces him that even the figure closest to him cannot be trusted. Consequently, Young Goodman Brown spends the remainder of his life in pervasive doubt and suspicion, questioning the integrity of every individual around him, including his wife. At his death, when he lapses into what the narrator describes as yet another long slumber, he remains spiritually isolated and profoundly estranged from the world. Young Goodman Brown's faith and trust in his wife are ultimately lost as a result of the dream he experiences. Yet Faith appears in the scene not through her own agency but through Brown's perception. The fact that the female figure is present within a dream constructed by Goodman Brown's consciousness nevertheless leads to her being blamed — an outcome shaped by gendered norms imposed upon women. The accusation and reduction of the female character to narrow stereotypes are further reflected in the following words attributed to Faith herself: "A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts, that she's afraid of herself, sometimes. Pray, tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year!" (Hawthorne 2011b, 10). Here, Faith's characterization of herself as someone to be 'feared' illustrates how the patriarchal moral system renders women culpable even within the realm of their own thoughts or dreams. Her plea, "Tarry with me this night," functions as a cautionary appeal intended to dissuade the man from entering the forest. Should Brown choose to go, both Faith as a woman and faith as a symbolic construct are placed in jeopardy. At this point in the narrative, the woman is not granted the freedom to exercise her own moral or spiritual agency. From a feminist social work perspective, this dynamic results in the erasure of the woman's subjectivity and her continual reconstruction according to the man's interpretive frameworks. Indeed, feminist thought views the family as a private sphere in which women are subjected to control, and it seeks to transform this structure in order to promote women's liberation (Doğancı and Tuncay 2020, 1338).

## **2.2. Analysis of *The Scarlet Letter***

This section divides the text into three main parts to examine the allegorical meanings and cultural references in detail through the lens of feminist social work theory, following a brief overview of the work's overall structure.

### **2.2.1. *The Weight of Sin and Societal Judgement***

*The Scarlet Letter*, published in 1850 by Nathaniel Hawthorne, is regarded as one of the most significant works in American literature. Within nineteenth-century literature, it is considered an early and striking example of a new narrative mode characterized by psychological depth. The novel is set in the mid-seventeenth century in the Puritan community of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. At the center of the narrative is Hester Prynne, whose husband is believed to have been lost at sea. When Hester emerges from prison carrying her infant daughter, Pearl, a scarlet letter 'A' is visibly embroidered on her chest. The meaning of this letter is disclosed when a man in the crowd explains to an elderly woman that it signifies the crime of adultery.

Hester's husband, a scholar considerably older than she, had sent her ahead to America. The story indicates, however, that he disappeared and failed to arrive in Boston for a long period.

During his absence, Hester engaged in an ‘illicit’ relationship, from which Pearl was born. Despite intense social pressure, Hester adamantly refuses to reveal the identity of her child’s father. As a consequence, she is condemned to wear the large scarlet letter for the remainder of her life, marking both her transgression and her resolute silence.

Hester is brought before the town on the public scaffold to have her punishment formally announced, where she is harshly rebuked by the community’s religious and political leaders. Nevertheless, she displays remarkable fortitude in protecting her secret. “I will not speak! ...My child must seek a heavenly Father; she shall never know an earthly one!” (Hawthorne 2011a, 103-104). In this regard, Suzan Last argues that Hester does not conform to an acceptable model of womanhood that reflects the man to whom she might belong; she belongs to no man in her community and thus projects her own meaning. “She is simply Hester Prynne, wearer of the scarlet letter.” (Last 1997, 360).

She is compelled to live with her daughter Pearl under the community’s scornful gaze and exclusionary attitudes. Hawthorne articulates this social ostracism as follows: “This morning she had endured all that human nature could endure, and her seducers formed a circle, looking intently into her eyes, as if the woman who had once been so gentle was to them a thing of horror and terror, and they looked as if they would cry out against her with their voices...” (Hawthorne 2011a, 55).

The burden Hester carries is not limited to the community’s condemnatory judgment; she also lives under the weight of her own internal conflicts and sense of sin. The scarlet ‘A’ she is condemned to wear is not merely a mark imposed by the Puritan society but becomes a sign that continually resonates within her conscience, rendering her transgression ever visible to herself. “Meanwhile Hester Prynne was standing beside the scaffold of the pillory, with the scarlet letter still burning on her breast!” (Hawthorne 2011a, 372). As Hester raises Pearl, she must fulfill her responsibilities as a mother while simultaneously preserving her dignity amid societal norms and judgmental gazes. This circumstance forces her to confront the weight of her transgression anew each day. “The child could not be made amenable to rules. In giving her existence a great law had been broken; and the result was a being whose elements were perhaps beautiful and brilliant, but all in disorder, or with an order peculiar to themselves, amidst which the point of variety and arrangement was difficult or impossible to be discovered (Hawthorne 2011a, 135). Over time, however, she begins to perceive this emblem not solely as a mark of her sin but also as a symbol of her resilience and independence. In this way, the ‘weight of sin’ gradually transforms into a source of personal strength, enabling Hester Prynne to cultivate an identity that develops independently of societal judgments and norms. “Such helpfulness was found in her — so much power to do, and power to sympathize — that many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification. They said that it meant Abel; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman’s strength” (Hawthorne 2011a, 242–243).

### **2.2.2. *Symbolism and Character Significance***

Hester’s quiet humility and benevolent conduct gradually temper the community’s hostility toward her, leading some townspeople to adopt a more sympathetic attitude. The scarlet A — initially understood solely as a marker of Adultery — comes to be reinterpreted by many as standing for Able. For Hester, however, such reinterpretations do not constitute full absolution; the letter

continues to signify both transgression and endurance. Thus, the emblem functions not only as a symbol of personal sin and shame but also as a reflection of the community's moralizing response to perceived wrongdoing. When Reverend Dimmesdale witnesses a meteor forming the letter A in the night sky, he interprets it as a divine omen foretelling the exposure of his concealed guilt, whereas many townspeople perceive it as an 'Angel' honoring Governor Winthrop. Pearl, described as the living scarlet letter, embodies both the consequence of sin and a persistent moral reminder. Although she brings vitality and joy, she continually compels Hester and Dimmesdale to confront the guilt they attempt to suppress.

The novel's use of character names is likewise symbolically significant. Chillingworth's name connotes coldness and calculated vengeance, while Dimmesdale evokes dimness or concealment, suggesting a respected minister gradually debilitated by hidden guilt and moral conflict. Although Hester Prynne's surname does not etymologically relate to sin, her socially imposed identity — mediated through the scarlet letter — demonstrates how communal judgment reshapes the individual. The letter's vivid color evokes both the burning stigma associated with forbidden desire and the intensity of conscience tested within a rigid moral order.

### ***2.2.3. Societal Hypocrisy and Double Standards***

From a feminist social work perspective, Hester's stigmatization by the community demonstrates how the patriarchal system places the burden of 'moral responsibility' almost entirely on women, while men often benefit from broad social absolution. Indeed, Dimmesdale's confession below reveals the extent of this inequality: "Happy are you, Hester, that wear the scarlet letter openly upon your bosom! Mine burns in secret!" (Hawthorne 2011a, 288). By contrast, society's perception of men is markedly different; the community's attitude in the novel is described as follows: "They deemed the young clergyman a miracle of holiness" (Hawthorne 2011a, 214).

This situation illustrates that women are controlled through mechanisms of shame, stigmatization, and exclusion, and that no genuine sense of justice exists within the framework of gender equality. "The scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread. Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers— stern and wild ones—and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss" (Hawthorne 2011a, 300). Moreover, Hester's resilience and defiance highlight the importance of recognizing and empowering women's subjectivities. The significance of this is articulated in the novel through the following lines: "...she repelled him, by an action marked with natural dignity and force of character, and stepped into the open air as if by her own free will" (Hawthorne 2011a, 80).

This, in turn, aligns with feminist social work's commitment to challenging systemic oppression and advancing gender equality. Gender is a fundamental concept for understanding the roles assigned to women and men by society and the power relations embedded within those roles; feminist theory employs this concept to make visible the forms of oppression and inequality that the gendered order imposes on women (İçli 2018, 135).

### **3. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF FEMINIST SOCIAL WORK**

#### **3.1. Theoretical Framework**

This section provides a comprehensive examination of the theoretical approaches that constitute the analytical foundation of the study. It first evaluates how Feminist Theory explains gender relations, the continuity of patriarchal structures, and the multiple forms of oppression experienced by women. Subsequently, Feminist Social Work Theory and Practice are explored, with particular attention to how empowerment, consciousness-raising, and transformation-oriented intervention models developed within the social work discipline contribute to the analytical process of this study. In doing so, the feminist theoretical framework is clarified in terms of the conceptual dimensions it renders visible in the comparative analysis of *The Scarlet Letter* and *Young Goodman Brown*, as well as the interpretive direction it provides for examining both texts.

##### **3.1.1. Feminist Theory**

Feminism is a field of thought and struggle that aims for the liberation of women, the elimination of oppression and domination, the recognition of women's rights, and the assurance that women possess equal rights with men in both public and private spheres of action and participation. In other words, it is possible to include within the scope of feminism the demands and political, social, or everyday practices directed toward addressing situations such as the non-recognition of women's legitimate rights, their exposure to discrimination, subordination, oppression, or the restriction of their freedoms. Feminism emerged as an approach that challenges discrimination between women and men and advocates economic, political, socio-cultural, and social equality between the sexes. Moreover, feminism possesses a multidimensional intellectual structure shaped through its interaction with various disciplines such as philosophy, sociology, political science, and ethics. In general terms, the goal of the feminist approach is to establish the rights that will secure women's liberation and to dismantle the structures that maintain the patriarchal order. The areas of concern within feminism range widely from ensuring gender equality in matters such as education and childcare, to access to health services, the right to abortion, developments in women's health, the prevention of violence against women, and the strengthening of efforts against sexual assault and harassment, as well as the recognition of lesbian and sexual orientation rights (Taş 2016, 165).

##### **3.1.2. Feminist Social Work Theory and Practice**

Feminist social work theory and practice is an inclusive intervention approach that seeks to transform the subordinate position of women in society and the forms of oppression to which they are subjected by critically analyzing these structural conditions. The fact that the majority of both social work professionals and service users are women positions this approach at the center of the profession by its very nature; for a feminist perspective renders visible the structural inequalities and gender roles underlying individuals' personal difficulties. This approach aims not only to empower women but also to liberate all members of society from gendered assumptions and imposed roles (Payne 2021).

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In practice, feminist social work rejects the traditional hierarchy between practitioner and client, instead establishing an egalitarian relationship grounded in the principles of empowerment and partnership. One of the primary tools used in this process, 'consciousness-raising,' enables clients to reinterpret their experiences within a political and social context, allowing them to recognize that the difficulties they encounter do not stem from personal inadequacies but from systemic forms of oppression. Similarly, the use of 'dialogue' functions as an open-ended and developmental communicative process in which both parties acknowledge each other's perspectives and work toward building a shared understanding.

Possessing a theoretically rich background, this approach has undergone an evolution that extends from the struggle for women's legal rights, to critiques of exploitation within the private sphere, and further to contemporary postmodern and intersectional debates. Postmodern feminist critiques and the ethics of care, in particular, challenge rigid binary gender categories such as 'woman' and 'man,' emphasizing the fluidity of identity and the ways in which different forms of oppression (such as class, race, or disability) intersect with one another. In doing so, feminist practice moves beyond treating women's issues as an isolated 'ghetto,' offering instead a broad social justice-oriented project that seeks to reconstruct gender regimes and care relations on a fairer and more inclusive basis for all members of society, including men.

### **3.2. Comparative Analysis**

In this section, the themes of Women's Representation, Patriarchal Domination and Religious Discourse, and Individual Response and Subjectivation will be examined through a feminist social work perspective; these themes will then be comparatively analyzed through *The Scarlet Letter* and *Young Goodman Brown*.

#### **3.2.1. Women's Representation**

Nathaniel Hawthorne's works *The Scarlet Letter* and *Young Goodman Brown* reveal two distinct yet interconnected approaches to the position of women in society. From a feminist social work perspective, these differences illuminate how the patriarchal system represents women and how such forms of representation either constrain or enable female subjectivities.

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne is portrayed as a figure who is judged, condemned, and socially ostracized for violating the community's imposed moral norms. Yet the narrative is not merely an account of social exclusion and stigmatization; it also reflects how, under conditions of patriarchal oppression, women struggle to construct their own subjectivities. Although society attempts to confine Hester within the stereotype of the 'sinful woman,' her resistance and defiance against these accusations mark the beginning of her empowerment process. Indeed, the concept of empowerment — central to feminist social work — aims to enable women and other marginalized groups, historically rendered powerless, to regain agency and control over their lives (Özçatal 2024, 355). Thus, Hester's experiences reveal that patriarchal systems of exclusion can also render visible women's resilience and their efforts to resist.

In contrast, the female character Faith in *Young Goodman Brown* has lost her subjectivity and is constructed primarily as a symbol of the male protagonist Goodman Brown's crisis of faith. Her presence in the narrative functions merely as the symbolic extension of the moral dilemmas

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experienced by the male character. From a Feminist Social Work perspective, this representation reflects a patriarchal mode of depiction that frames women through men, reducing moral agency and responsibility to a narrative function centered on the male figure. Gender norms, drawing on presumed biological differences, confine women to domestic roles and motherhood. Deeply entrenched social assumptions regarding women's bodily fragility and the 'naturalness' of motherhood relegate women to a secondary status within hierarchical structures. Such positioning prevents women from emerging as autonomous subjects guided by their own will and desires, reducing their existence to that of a mother and a faithful wife, identities understood primarily in relation to the continuity and moral order of the community (Yeter 2015, 197).

Therefore, when these two works are examined comparatively, *The Scarlet Letter* allows the female character to realize her own existence and develop her subjectivity, whereas *Young Goodman Brown* portrays woman as a passive, symbolic figure subordinated to the male protagonist. This contrast is critically significant from a feminist social work perspective, as it highlights gender-based inequalities and underscores the importance of supporting women's subjectivities.

### **3.2.2. Patriarchal Domination and Religious Discourse**

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne's position within society is shaped directly by the patriarchal religious and moral norms that govern the community. The scarlet letter inscribed upon her body symbolizes not merely an individual transgression, but the broader domination that the social order imposes upon the female gender. Within this context, the female body becomes constructed by religious authorities as the locus of both sin and redemption. From a feminist social work perspective, the stigmatization Hester experiences reveals the extent to which mechanisms of exclusion and othering can entirely envelop female identity. Experiencing stigma over time leads individuals to a deterioration of self-esteem and subsequently to the emergence of feelings of guilt and shame. This emotional process significantly hinders one's ability to develop healthy adjustment within their social environment (Akçay et al. 2020, 17).

In *Young Goodman Brown*, by contrast, religious discourse is inscribed not upon the female body but within the male protagonist's mind. The symbolic role embodied by Faith portrays woman as one who both signifies sin and leads toward it. The idealized female figure that exists in the male character's mind — one who conforms to social norms — allows the woman to exist and appear pure. When such expectations are disrupted, however, a woman's perceived virtue and innocence collapse alongside the dismantling of these internalized schemas. This dynamic exposes the deeply judgmental and exclusionary foundations of patriarchal structures and the gendered roles they impose. Within the narrative, woman becomes the passive object of the man's internal crisis.

From a comparative perspective, both narratives demonstrate how patriarchal religious discourses take shape within society. While *The Scarlet Letter* illustrates the direct control exerted over the female body, *Young Goodman Brown* reveals how, within the male psyche, symbolic expectations regarding women's behaviors and emotional states are constructed — showing how stereotyping and religious paranoia can transform woman into a symbolic threat. Thus, each narrative reflects a different mechanism through which patriarchal structures regulate and define femininity.

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### 3.2.3. Individual Response and Subjectivation

In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester Prynne's story demonstrates that social exclusion not only produces negative consequences but can also generate certain transformative outcomes. Rather than submitting to the reactions of the community or resigning herself to fate, Hester constructs a new life grounded in her own labor and independence, despite being marginalized and stigmatized by societal norms. Her emergence as a subject reveals, from the perspective of feminist social work theory, the significance of resistance and alternative modes of social existence within women's empowerment processes. The empowerment approach conceptualizes power across individual, social, and political dimensions; it positions itself against all forms of powerlessness and directs critical inquiry toward structures that generate oppression (Erbay 2019, 49). In this context, the social stigmatization and exclusion Hester faces do not merely wound her but instead create an opportunity for heightened subjectivity and the development of resilience in the face of condemnation.

In contrast, the individual response in *Young Goodman Brown* follows a markedly different trajectory. Goodman Brown's confrontation with religious authority leads not to empowerment but to psychological disintegration. The paranoia produced by religious and patriarchal discourses generates distrust, isolation, and despair in his life. The collapse of the mental schemas — roles effectively assigned to him by society — drives the character into profound disappointment. At this point, the fragility of the male subject becomes evident: the moral dilemmas imposed by the patriarchal system push him toward passivity and hopelessness. The female character Faith, meanwhile, functions solely as a symbolic element within this dissolution and is granted no possibility of subjectivation. What emerges here is a narrative that exposes how the female gender is subjected to oppression, expected to internalize prescribed roles, and positioned as incapable of existing independently.

When compared, *The Scarlet Letter* emerges as a narrative of resistance against societal norms, whereas *Young Goodman Brown* reveals the fragility of the male subject through an inner journey shaped by his perceptions of the female gender. In Hawthorne's first narrative, the female subject gains strength through experiences of exclusion and stigmatization, while in the latter, the male subject undergoes disintegration under similar forms of pressure. This contrast exposes the gendered double standards embedded within societal structures and the forms of domination they sustain.

## 4. CONNECTING CONTEMPORARY REALITIES THROUGH A SOCIAL WORK LENS

As seen in both texts, the stigmatization of women through religious and social norms marginalizes them not only at the individual level but also in terms of their broader social position. Hester's exclusion through the scarlet letter in *The Scarlet Letter* is directly related to the processes of stigmatization and labeling frequently discussed in contemporary feminist social work literature. When women deviate from established norms surrounding sexuality, motherhood, or family structures, they continue to face both implicit and explicit forms of stigmatization — an issue that requires careful consideration within social work practice. The social work profession positions the suffering individuals experience, the difficulties they encounter, and the processes through which they struggle to cope with these challenges as central areas of intervention. While the long-

standing ‘problem-focused’ approach still maintains its presence, the ‘empowerment’ perspective — which seeks to provide holistic explanations of human behavior by acknowledging both strengths and limitations and offers new assessment frameworks — has increasingly gained prominence (Arkan 2011, 42). Although disadvantaged circumstances may negatively affect an individual’s life, social workers provide psychosocial support aimed at enabling individuals to overcome such disadvantages by planning and implementing intervention programs at the individual, group, and community levels.

Nevertheless, Hester’s resistance and her efforts to reconstruct her life constitute an exemplary illustration of the empowerment approach emphasized in feminist social work. The strategies women develop — such as forming solidarity networks, gaining access to economic and social resources, and preserving their own subjectivity — also lay the foundation for broader social transformation. This principle can be applied across a wide spectrum of social work practices, ranging from individual counseling to community-based empowerment initiatives. In this regard, the solidarity networks, groups, and organizations women establish contribute to the emergence of a collective identity of solidarity. Through this collective identity, it becomes possible for the next generation to grow into a more conscious and more socially responsive cohort, which can in turn be considered an outcome of social transformation. One of the responsibilities of the social work profession and discipline in this process is to engage in macro-level interventions while sustaining their impact down to the individual level through a deductive approach. Regardless of the perspective from which it is examined, all activities carried out by social workers are inherently action-oriented. Practitioners position themselves in a constant state of readiness to act within intervention processes. In other words, they possess a strong internal motivation at both personal and professional levels that enables them to take effective steps in social work practice (Kırlıoğlu 2019, 2267).

On the other hand, the dissolution of the male protagonist in *Young Goodman Brown* in the face of religious discourse illustrates the importance of addressing not only women but also men through a gender-informed lens within feminist social work. While patriarchal structures stigmatize and render women passive, they also produce different forms of destruction for men, such as crises of masculinity, insecurity, and social isolation. Therefore, feminist social work should aim to make visible the ways in which men, too, bear the burdens imposed by the patriarchal order, as well as the forms of damage this produces within social relationships.

Scholars argue that gender equality offers significant benefits for men, extending beyond improved cross-gender relationships to include healthier interactions with male peers. Rigid masculine stereotypes often correlate with adverse health outcomes for men, including higher rates of substance abuse, accidental death, and suicide, driven by societal pressures to exhibit toughness and risk-taking behavior.

Consequently, dismantling these restrictive gender norms is essential not only for individual male well-being but also for community safety, as it reduces violence and fosters an egalitarian environment for future generations. Ultimately, gender equality is not a zero-sum game of power transfer, but a mutually beneficial framework for both sexes (Ruxton and van der Gaag 2013, 171-172).

In conclusion, a reading of these two literary texts from a feminist social work perspective reveals that gender constructs multilayered and often destructive experiences for both women and men.

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Therefore, social work should focus not only on alleviating experiences of victimization but also on developing empowerment and awareness strategies — at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels — that can prevent the ongoing reproduction of patriarchal structures.

## 5. CONCLUSION

American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown* and *The Scarlet Letter*, when analyzed through the lens of feminist social work, provide a pivotal framework for understanding how the patriarchal system reinforces rigid gender roles and impacts individuals. In particular, these works reveal how societal norms condition human behavior and highlight how marginalization poses a critical problem, especially for women. Simultaneously, the works critically examine how male characters perpetuate and assimilate into these patriarchal systems.

With the character of Hester Prynne, *The Scarlet Letter* dramatizes the double standards and social hypocrisy inherent in being a woman under patriarchy. Hester is ostracized by Puritan society and forced to wear the letter 'A' as a symbol of moral punishment within a system that judges her without mercy. However, amidst this ostracization, Hester undergoes a profound transformation, cultivating a distinct individual identity and defying patriarchal norms. Hester's resistance correlates directly with the empowerment approach, a cornerstone concept of feminist social work.

The empowerment approach is predicated on the strengths and potential of the individual. In this context, social work practices seek to foster development across personal, social, and political dimensions to enable individual transformation. Within this framework, by transcending traditional gender roles, Hester not only redefines her self-worth but also catalyzes opportunities for structural change within society. She vividly demonstrates the potential for women to recognize the social roots of their personal struggles and to challenge these systemic issues.

Similarly, *Young Goodman Brown* explores the male character's internal conflict with the moral hypocrisy of the patriarchal order. Goodman Brown is compelled to question the fundamental moral roots of his society, experiencing profound alienation as a result. This narrative illustrates that the restrictive effects of patriarchy extend beyond women, entrapping men as well. The fact that male characters appear as both perpetrators and victims of these oppressions underscores the significance of examining the interaction between individuals and norms. Consequently, both works extend beyond mere storytelling to invite a critique of societal norms. The feminist social work perspective emphasizes the necessity of linking individual problems to broader social and structural causes. While Hester Prynne's narrative elucidates how individual resistance can drive structural change, Goodman Brown's conflict reveals the corrosive and exhausting toll of patriarchal systems on the human psyche.

To fully grasp the depth of gender oppression depicted in these works, it is essential to consider the diverse theoretical underpinnings of feminist thought that inform social work strategies. These perspectives range from liberal frameworks focusing on equal opportunity to radical analyses that locate oppression within systemic control over women's reproductive and social roles. By integrating these perspectives, the analysis highlights how patriarchal structures intersect with broader social marginalization and power imbalances. The analysis also recognizes the importance of intersectional approaches, which establish that factors such as race and socioeconomic status are fundamental to understanding the multifaceted nature of women's oppression. Collectively, these theoretical lenses provide the necessary foundation for the social work strategies used to address

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the complexities of gender-based injustice. By synthesizing these diverse feminist perspectives, the study demonstrates that addressing individual problems requires a comprehensive understanding of broader social, historical, and structural causes.

Within the scope of the empowerment approach, the ultimate objective is for individuals and communities to attain equality in power relations, specifically focusing on the needs of marginalized groups and addressing life-long injustices. This empowerment manifests through personal, social, educational, economic, and political domains, where personal growth fosters self-awareness and social empowerment seeks equitable roles within the societal framework. In this study, Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown* and *The Scarlet Letter* serve as vital instruments for raising awareness regarding gender assignments and the individual's interaction with patriarchal systems. By examining how norms dictate lives and pave the way for systemic inequalities, these works illuminate human reactions to structural pressure. Specifically, Hester Prynne's defiance stands as a quintessential example of the empowerment approach; by refusing to accept imposed norms despite social exclusion, she proves that individual resistance is a vital component of social change. Meanwhile, Goodman Brown's alienation highlights the multidimensional and often corrosive effects of social structures on men. Ultimately, both narratives provide a profound context for understanding the mission of feminist social work: to empower the individual and construct a more egalitarian society.

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# Socialist Realism and the Shaping of Albanian Prose in the 1980s

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1744-9507>



[Dhurata Lamçja<sup>1</sup>](#)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8335-9999>



[Gilberta Hadaj<sup>2</sup>](#)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8904-109X>



[Elona Limaj<sup>3</sup>](#)

<sup>1</sup> Dr., Department of Education and English, Albanian University, Tirana, Albania

<sup>2</sup> Assoc. Prof. Dr., Department of Education and English, Albanian University, Tirana, Albania

<sup>3</sup> Dr., Department of Education and English, Albanian University, Tirana, Albania

## *abstract*

Literature represents a comprehensive system of works that continuously evolves as new creations emerge. The decade under review constitutes a significant part of the mosaic of Albanian prose. The literary output of the 1980s deserves close analysis, as it reflects interconnected artistic profiles shaped by a series of historical and social developments. This period can be seen as a transitional bridge connecting prior literary movements with subsequent innovations that became more fully realized after the 1980s. The aim of this study is to assess the extent and quality of the influence exerted by the communist regime on literature during this decade, providing a clearer historical and literary understanding of prose from this era. In conclusion, while socialist realist literature featured both talented and less skilled authors, alternative literary voices were virtually absent due to the political constraints of the time. Talented writers occasionally resisted socialist realist orthodoxy at a structural level, yet semantic adherence to the ideological and political dictates of the regime remained unavoidable, reflecting the essence of socialist realism.

**Keywords:** prose, 1980s; Albanian authors; socialist realism; influence; literature; literary works

Correspondence: Gilberta Hadaj, e-mail: g.hadaj@albanianuniversity.edu.al

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The literary production of Albanian authors in the 1980s can be analyzed as a set of interconnected profiles. A diachronic perspective is essential in literary historiography, emphasizing the historical development of literature and the factors that render works innovative (Dado 2009). Meanwhile, a synchronic perspective allows for an assessment of aesthetic value at a specific literary moment, highlighting the hierarchy of works and their relative significance (Llotman 2004). Combining these approaches provides a nuanced understanding of continuity and innovation within Albanian poetry and prose.

The literature of any nation serves as both a reflection and a shaping force of its social, political, and cultural realities. Albanian literature, particularly during the 1980s, represents a complex system of creative production deeply intertwined with the political and ideological structures of the time. The decade under consideration constitutes a significant phase in the development of Albanian prose, revealing both continuity with earlier literary traditions and the emergence of innovative narrative strategies. A critical examination of this period is essential not only to understand the literary output itself but also to situate it within the broader historical, social, and political context of socialist Albania.

The 1980s in Albania were characterized by the sustained dominance of socialist realism, the state-sanctioned artistic doctrine that permeated all forms of literature and culture. Socialist realism, imported from the Soviet Union and adapted to local conditions, dictated that literature must serve the ideological needs of the state by promoting socialist values, glorifying the working class, and advancing the political goals of the regime (Misiri 2015). This ideological framework placed significant constraints on authors, limiting thematic diversity and suppressing literary experimentation. Writers were expected to produce works that aligned with the official narrative, portraying heroes of socialism, heroic labor, and moral virtue, while denigrating enemies of the state and ideological opponents (Gjika n.d.; Zalambani 2003). Consequently, the creative freedom of authors was circumscribed, and the literary field became a space in which political conformity often outweighed aesthetic innovation.

Despite these constraints, the literary landscape of the 1980s was not monolithic. Talented authors such as Ismail Kadare, Dritëro Agolli, Dhimitër Xhuvani, and Fatos Arapi navigated the ideological demands of the regime with remarkable subtlety. While their works adhered to the formal and thematic prescriptions of socialist realism on the surface, they often incorporated narrative complexity, structural experimentation, and nuanced characterization that allowed for a degree of literary autonomy (Dado 2009; Misiri 2015). These authors exemplified the tension between ideological compliance and artistic creativity, demonstrating that even within restrictive conditions, literature could reflect human experience, philosophical inquiry, and aesthetic ambition. The 1980s thus represent a period in which Albanian prose functioned both as an instrument of state ideology and as a site of literary negotiation, where writers sought to assert their voice within a tightly controlled cultural environment.

Understanding the literature of this period requires a dual analytical perspective. A diachronic approach examines the historical development of literary forms, tracing the evolution of prose from previous decades and identifying continuities, adaptations, and innovations (Dado 2010).

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This perspective allows scholars to contextualize the 1980s within the broader trajectory of Albanian literature, highlighting how socio-political pressures influenced thematic and stylistic choices over time. Complementarily, a synchronic approach focuses on the literary system at a particular historical moment, evaluating works in relation to one another to establish hierarchies of aesthetic value, narrative strategies, and thematic prominence (Llotman 2004). Integrating diachronic and synchronic analyses provides a comprehensive understanding of 1980s Albanian prose, revealing both the constraints imposed by the socialist realist framework and the subtle mechanisms through which authors negotiated, resisted, or transformed those constraints.

The political and social conditions of Albania during the 1980s profoundly shaped literary production. The absence of alternative publishing avenues, strict censorship, and the ideological policing of intellectuals meant that literature could rarely challenge official narratives openly. Nevertheless, literature produced in private spaces, in prisons, or circulated unofficially, reflected alternative visions of Albanian society and human experience, demonstrating the existence of literary voices that defied state orthodoxy (Gjika n.d.). These works, though largely inaccessible at the time, underscore the multiplicity of Albanian literary expression and the ways in which authors negotiated both public and private spheres to sustain creative activity.

This study seeks to examine the interplay between socialist realism and literary creativity in Albanian prose of the 1980s. By analyzing key works and authors, it aims to assess the extent and nature of ideological influence, the strategies employed by writers to navigate restrictions, and the resulting impact on narrative form, thematic content, and aesthetic quality. In doing so, it highlights the significance of this period as a transitional moment in Albanian literature, bridging the rigid formalism of earlier decades with the more diversified literary expressions that emerged after the fall of the communist regime. Ultimately, this introduction establishes the framework for understanding the 1980s as both a period of constraint and a space of subtle innovation, where Albanian prose functioned simultaneously as a tool of ideology and a medium of literary expression. The literary production of Albanian writers in the 1980s can be analyzed as an ensemble of interlinked profiles. For the historiography of literature, a diachronic point of view is one that emphasizes historical development, highlighting those factors that make the work innovative (Dado 2009). At the same time, the synchronic point of view permits the evaluation of aesthetic value in one moment of literature and brings into view the hierarchy of works and their relative importance (Llotman 2004). This interlinking of both standpoints allows the capturing of continuity and innovation within Albanian poetry and prose with great subtlety.

The literature of any nation is at once a reflection and a shaping force of its social, political, and cultural realities. Albanian literature of the 1980s represents a complex system of creative production, deeply intertwined with the political and ideological structures at that period. The decade under consideration constitutes a very important phase in the development of Albanian prose, which reveals both continuity with earlier literary traditions and the emergence of innovative narrative strategies. A critical examination of this period becomes essential for situating it not only in understanding the literary output itself but also in the broader historical, social, and political context of socialist Albania.

The 1980s in Albania were characterized by the sustained dominance of socialist realism, the state-sanctioned artistic doctrine that permeated all forms of literature and culture. Socialist realism,

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imported from the Soviet Union and adapted to local conditions, dictated that literature must serve the ideological needs of the state by promoting socialist values, glorifying the working class, and advancing the political goals of the regime (Misiri 2015). This ideological framework imposed significant restraints on writers, strictly limited thematic diversity, and prohibited literary experimentation. Writers were expected to produce works which would support the official narrative and feature heroes of socialism, heroic labor, moral virtue, while at the same time denigrating enemies of the state and ideological opponents of the regime. Therefore, creative freedom for writers was limited, and the literary field was a space where political congruity generally transcended aesthetic innovation.

Despite these constraints, the literary landscape in the 1980s was not uniform. Talented authors like Ismail Kadare, Dritëro Agolli, Dhimitër Xhuvani, and Fatos Arapi managed the ideological dictates of that regime with extraordinary subtlety. While their works outwardly conformed to the formal and thematic dictates of socialist realism, they often contained narrative complication, structural experimentation, and thoughtful characterization that accommodated some degree of literary autonomy (Dado 2009; Misiri 2015). These authors symbolized the tension between ideological subservience and artistic creativity, showing that even under very repressive conditions, literature could reflect human experience, philosophical inquiry, and aesthetic ambition. The 1980s were thus a period when Albanian prose functioned both as a tool of state ideology and as a site of literary negotiation wherein writers sought to project their voice within a stringently controlled cultural environment.

Understanding the literature of this period calls for a dual analytical approach: a diachronic approach—to follow the historical development of the forms, tracing the way prose evolved from earlier decades, and placing continuities, adaptations, and innovations (Dado 2010); this allows one to contextualize the 1980s in the broader trajectory of Albanian literature, pointing out how socio-political pressures regulated thematic and stylistic options across time. Quite alternatively, a synchronic one seeks to abstract the system of literature at a given historical juncture, gauging works in relation to one another as a way of determining hierarchies of aesthetic value, strategic narrating, and theme (Llotman 2004). Tying diachronic and synchronic analysis together creates a rounded view of 1980s Albanian prose—a view demonstrating both the constraints of the socialist realist frame and the subtle mechanisms by which authors negotiated, resisted, or transformed those constraints.

The political and social landscape in Albania during the 1980s was profoundly influential on literary production. Lacking alternative forms of publishing, with strict censorship, and ideological control over intellectuals, literature could hardly, if at all, directly contest official discourses. In contrast, privately produced literature, literature written in prison, or privately circulated captured an alternate sense of Albanian society and humanity that testified to the manifestation of literary voices independent of state orthodoxy. These works, in large part inaccessible during the period of their creation, underscore the multiplicity of Albanian literary expression and the manner in which authors negotiated both public and private spheres to sustain creative activity.

This paper is intended to explore the relationship between socialist realism and literary creativity in Albanian prose of the 1980s. Through an analysis of key works and authors, the degree and

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nature of ideological influence, strategies deployed by writers to overcome restrictions, and the consequences of such strategies for narrative form, thematic content, and aesthetic quality are assessed. In this sense, it underscores the importance of the period as a moment of transition in which Albanian literature definitively moved from the rigid formalism of previous decades toward more diversified literary expressions, enabled after the fall of the communist regime. This introduction, therefore, sets the framework for understanding the 1980s both as a period of constraint and as a space for subtle innovation, where Albanian prose was mobilized simultaneously as a tool of ideology and as a medium of literary expression

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This research paper follows a qualitative, interpretative research method based on literary analysis and cultural theory for the examination of the formation and impact of socialist realism on Albanian prose in the 1980s. The research is located within the area of interdisciplinary literary historiography, using concepts of discourse analysis, semiotics, and ideology critique to place literary texts within their socio-political context. Without using either quantitative or empirical methods of investigation, the study focuses on close textual reading and contextual interpretation, to which literature produced under conditions of ideological regulation is best subjected.

The primary corpus is formed from selected prose works, published in Albania during the 1980s, and key texts written earlier but circulating or influencing literary discourse during this period. These include canonical works by authors such as Ismail Kadare, Dritëro Agolli, and Dhimitër Xhuvani, whose writings exemplify both adherence to and negotiation with socialist realist conventions. In parallel, this study incorporates unpublished or later-published texts produced in prisons or private archives by writers such as Kasëm Trebeshina, Bilal Xhaferri, Bashkim Shehu, and Fatos Lubonja. By considering both official and suppressed literature, a comparison between the dominant and marginal literary discourses is rendered possible, underlining the mechanisms of ideological inclusion and exclusion.

Analytically, the study combines a diachronic with a synchronic perspective. The diachronic approach traces the historical development of socialist realism in Albanian literature, examining how ideological directives evolved from the post-war period to the 1980s. This perspective allows detecting continuities, transformations, and moments of tension within the literary system. By contrast, the synchronic approach focuses on the structural and thematic features of prose texts within the 1980s, inquiring into the function of narrative form, character typologies, metaphorical patterns, and ideological motifs as they functioned within a specific historical moment.

Discourse analysis is used to explore how totalitarian language and symbolism work in a literary text. Specific attention will be paid to the images that are repeated, such as metaphors of siege, heroism, collective labor, and the figure of the enemy, and to their structuring of meaning, regulation of interpretation, and reinforcement of ideological norms. Semiotic analysis further supports the reading of symbols and narrative strategies as parts of a general cultural code shaped by political power.

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The conceptual framework will be provided by secondary sources, which include literary criticism, historiographical studies, and theoretical works by the likes of Misiri, Dado, Vehbiu, and Even-Zohar. These are not only used in the contextualization of the primary texts but also to critically intervene in already existing scholarly debates on socialist realism, canon formation, and post-totalitarian literature. In adopting this multi-layered qualitative methodology, the study hopes to succeed in offering a complexly nuanced and theoretically informed comprehension of Albanian prose in the 1980s, with a focus on the interaction between ideological constraint, literary strategy, and cultural memory.

## **2. 1. Formation of Socialist Realism in Albanian Literature. Key Dimensions of the Regime's Influence on 1980s Albanian Prose**

The establishment of socialist realism in Albanian literature went hand in hand with the consolidation of ideological control, both from below-within the social consciousness-and from above-through state and party institutions (Misiri 2015). Socialist realism thus became the official literary method that dominated the thematic and content approach, as well as narrative structures, stylistic conventions, and moral orientations. The doctrine required that literature be at the service of the state to propagate socialist ideals, glorify the working class, and educate citizens in the spirit of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Writers were to describe heroic labor, collective feats, and the moral and political qualities of socialism and to portray opponents of the state as morally and socially depraved. What this means in practice is a literature that prizes ideological orthodoxy over artistic experimentation or innovation (Gjika n.d.).

The massive restriction of creative freedom through the implementation of socialist realism thus brought about a situation in which mediocrity served as the guiding rule in literature. Writers strictly following the method created ideologically correct but artistically formulaic works, marked by rigid schematization, idealized characters, and predictable narrative arcs. Emphasis on propaganda over literary quality turned literature into an instrument of the state serving to reinforce political doctrine and legitimize the ruling regime. In spite of this fact, some authors even within such strict bounds of creativity managed to work their way with delicacy through the system using certain narrative means that allowed for very constrained manifestations of complexity, ambiguity, or individual perspective, provided that these did not threaten to blur ideological boundaries (Even-Zohar 1990).

Running parallel to the officially approved literature, a parallel body of work was in fact created in private spaces, in prisons, or kept in personal archives. The most important writers, Kasëm Trebeshina, Bilal Xhaferri, Bashkim Shehu, Fatos Lubonja, and Zef Zorba, all continued writing despite their exclusion from the official publication channels. These works, for the most part inaccessible until after 1990, bear witness to alternative narrative frameworks, thematic depth, and stylistic experimentation which sharply contrast with the constraints of socialist realism. Unpublished literature often grappled with moral ambiguity, psychological complexity, and social critique-a tension between creativity and political oppression during this period. Indeed, clandestine works demonstrate that Albanian writers were actively seeking to preserve literary integrity by exploring human experience beyond the limitations imposed on creativity by the State itself.

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The dual literary landscape of socialist Albania—comprised of officially sanctioned literature and suppressed, private writing—speaks to the complex relationship between political power and artistic production. Socialist realism conditioned dominant literary discourse, making state ideology pervasive through prose, poetry, and drama. Meanwhile, other narratives have survived outside the public sphere, maintaining a genealogy of literary resistance that will mark post-1990 Albanian literature. These dynamics reveal how the elaboration of socialist realism was not simply a matter of prescriptive aesthetics; instead, it was a system that rearranged the relations between the writer, society, and the state, yielding a controlled literary canon and a subterranean network of creative dissent.

In a word, the establishment of socialist realism within Albanian literature expressed the features of the socio-political context of the time, imposing ideological uniformity while creating conditions for discreet resistance and innovation. For this purpose, analyzing both published and unpublished works will be a crucial and effective means of accounting for the limitations, negotiations, and creative strategies that characterized Albanian literature under socialism and the lasting impact of this period on the development of the nation's literary tradition.

### **3. KEY METAPHORS AND TOTALITARIAN DISCOURSE**

The literary production of socialist Albania was heavily infused with the ideological imperatives of the state, often articulated through recurring metaphors and narrative patterns that reflected the principles of totalitarian discourse. These metaphors, while ostensibly literary devices, functioned as tools of ideological reinforcement, shaping public perception, moral judgment, and collective memory. As Vehbiu (2007) observes, totalitarian language in literature operates not only as a means of communication but also as a mechanism for structuring thought, cultivating obedience, and maintaining social control. In the Albanian context, literature became a site where symbolic representation was subordinated to political utility, producing a set of recurring motifs that codified the values and anxieties of the regime.

One of the most pervasive metaphors in socialist Albanian literature is that of encirclement or siege, which frames the Albanian people as perpetually engaged in existential struggle against both internal and external enemies. This metaphor, deeply embedded in historical narratives of resistance and national survival, appears prominently in works such as Ismail Kadare's *Kështjella* (The Castle). Here, the motif of siege serves multiple functions: it reinforces the notion of collective heroism, dramatizes the stakes of political and ideological vigilance, and naturalizes the narrative of constant external threat. Through this lens, the Albanian populace is constructed as resilient, morally upright, and perpetually heroic, while the enemy—whether foreign, bourgeois, or ideologically deviant—is demonized and stripped of nuance.

Closely linked to the siege metaphor is the figure of the enemy, which occupies a central role in the ideological imagination of totalitarian discourse. Within the canon of socialist realism, the enemy is not merely a narrative antagonist but an embodiment of moral and political corruption. Descriptions of adversaries are consistently charged with negative affective qualities: they are portrayed as cruel, greedy, treacherous, or morally decadent, reinforcing a stark binary between virtue and vice. Exceptions to this binary are rare but notable, as in certain works of Petro Marko, where enemies are depicted with nuanced, humanizing traits. Nonetheless, the dominant literary strategy is one of clear ideological demarcation, ensuring that readers internalize a moral and political worldview consistent with state objectives (Kuçuk 2019).

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The heroic positive figure is the counterpart to the enemy, and its function is primarily didactic and exemplary. Heroes in socialist Albanian literature are paragons of selflessness, courage, and ideological loyalty. They are often depicted participating in grand collective endeavors—building infrastructure, mobilizing brigades, or advancing revolutionary causes—thereby symbolizing the ideal citizen and reinforcing the regime’s vision of collective responsibility. The narrative centrality of such characters served both to inspire emulation and to normalize ideological orthodoxy, creating a literary ecosystem in which individual subjectivity was subordinated to collective and political imperatives.

Another critical element of totalitarian discourse in Albanian literature is the cult of the leader, particularly the figure of Enver Hoxha. Literature devoted considerable symbolic and narrative attention to the leader as a visionary, omnipresent, and morally infallible authority. The figure of Hoxha operates as a central organizing principle within texts, shaping plot structures, moral evaluation, and narrative resolution. Through repeated references and symbolic representation, literature functioned to naturalize obedience and veneration, embedding the leader’s authority into the cultural imagination.

Additionally, the depiction of the decayed or bourgeois intellectual functions as a recurring moral and ideological foil. Frequently portrayed as isolated, morally compromised, or susceptible to foreign influence, this figure embodies the antithesis of socialist virtue (Shala 2009). By contrast, collective laborers, soldiers, and partisans are valorized, emphasizing the regime’s prioritization of social duty, political loyalty, and ideological conformity over individualism, intellectualism, or cosmopolitanism.

The pervasiveness of these metaphors demonstrates how literature was mobilized as an instrument of ideological education and socialization. Works of poetry and prose often fused these motifs with celebratory depictions of labor, youth mobilization, and revolutionary history. Poems such as Ismail Kadare’s *Shqiponjat fluturojnë lart* and Dritëro Agolli’s *Nënë Shqipëri* exemplify the intertwining of symbolic and political discourse, transforming narrative into a medium of nationalistic and ideological instruction. The result is a literary corpus in which allegory, metaphor, and narrative serve primarily to reinforce the political and moral order, leaving limited space for ambiguity, critique, or aesthetic experimentation.

In conclusion, the totalitarian discourse of socialist Albania is characterized by the systematic deployment of metaphors that articulate ideological imperatives, moral binaries, and narratives of collective heroism. The siege motif, the figure of the enemy, the heroic protagonist, the cult of the leader, and the depiction of the decadent intellectual collectively constitute a symbolic universe in which literature and ideology are inseparable. These metaphors did not merely embellish narrative; they structured perception, guided interpretation, and normalized political orthodoxy. The study of these recurring literary devices offers critical insight into the mechanisms through which the Albanian regime embedded its values in cultural production, revealing the profound interdependence of art and power in totalitarian contexts.

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#### 4. REFLECTIONS OF SOCIALIST REALISM AFTER THE 1980s

The collapse of the communist regime in Albania in the early 1990s initiated a profound reconfiguration of the country's literary landscape. Socialist realism, which had dominated Albanian literature for nearly five decades, ceased to operate as an enforced orthodoxy, yet its influence persisted in both overt and subtle ways. The literary production of the post-1980s period reflects a complex negotiation between continuity and rupture, where writers confronted the dual legacies of ideological indoctrination and cultural isolation while simultaneously exploring new aesthetic, thematic, and formal possibilities (Misiri 2015).

One of the most immediate effects of the post-socialist transition was the recovery and dissemination of previously suppressed or inaccessible works. Literature produced in prisons, private archives, and by censored authors—such as Kasëm Trebeshina, Bilal Xhaferri, and Bashkim Shehu—became available to a broader readership, revealing alternative narratives, marginalized voices, and thematic complexity that had been systematically excluded from the official canon. These works not only expanded the scope of Albanian literature but also facilitated a reevaluation of the literary and ideological hierarchies established under socialist realism. By juxtaposing suppressed texts with canonized works, critics and readers were able to discern the extent to which ideological conformity had shaped thematic, stylistic, and structural choices in official literature.

Despite the liberation of literary production, the imprint of socialist realism remained evident. Many authors who had established their careers within the constraints of the regime continued to draw on familiar narrative structures, character archetypes, and thematic preoccupations. For instance, Ismail Kadare and Dritëro Agolli, while gaining international recognition, retained certain formal elements inherited from socialist realism—such as linear narrative structures, collective protagonists, and moralizing frameworks—yet they recontextualized these conventions to explore ambiguity, historical reflection, and ethical complexity. This selective adaptation illustrates a nuanced post-socialist literary strategy: authors preserved the formal skills and narrative mastery honed under the regime, while subverting its ideological imperatives to engage with broader humanistic and existential questions.

Post-1980s Albanian literature also witnessed the emergence of experimental and critical approaches that directly interrogated the legacies of socialist realism. Writers began to explore themes of personal memory, trauma, and historical revisionism, emphasizing the subjective experience of life under a totalitarian system. Memoirs, diaries, and autobiographical fiction became particularly prominent, serving as vehicles for recovering suppressed histories and contesting official narratives. Through these texts, the authoritarian past was rendered both tangible and morally complex, allowing for a reevaluation of individual and collective responsibility. Authors such as Fatos Lubonja exemplify this trend, using literature to document the lived realities of repression while simultaneously reflecting on the ethical and cultural ramifications of decades of ideological control.

Internationalization and translation also played a pivotal role in reshaping the post-socialist literary field. With Albania's gradual integration into global literary networks, Albanian authors gained access to diverse aesthetic influences, critical methodologies, and readerships. Exposure to Western literary traditions encouraged experimentation with narrative voice, temporal structures, and genre hybridity, resulting in works that combine the specificity of the Albanian experience

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with universal concerns. This process not only revitalized literary production but also facilitated a comparative evaluation of socialist realism in Albania relative to other Eastern European literary traditions, highlighting both shared characteristics and unique national trajectories.

At the same time, the enduring cultural memory of socialist realism created tensions in reception and interpretation. Readers who had grown up with ideologically saturated texts often approached post-socialist literature with residual expectations regarding heroism, morality, and narrative resolution. Authors responded to these expectations by negotiating a balance between continuity and innovation: retaining certain narrative conventions for accessibility while introducing critical, ironic, or reflective elements that challenged inherited assumptions. In this sense, post-1980s literature functioned as a transitional space, mediating between the normative aesthetics of socialist realism and the pluralistic, experimental possibilities of post-totalitarian expression.

In conclusion, the reflections of socialist realism after the 1980s reveal a literary landscape marked by negotiation, recovery, and reinterpretation. While the ideological constraints of the past no longer dictated production, their imprint persisted in narrative techniques, formal choices, and cultural memory. Post-socialist literature simultaneously reclaimed suppressed voices, expanded thematic and formal possibilities, and engaged critically with the legacies of totalitarian control. By navigating the tension between continuity and rupture, Albanian writers contributed to a richer, more nuanced understanding of their national literary tradition, bridging the historical divide between enforced orthodoxy and creative freedom. The post-1980s period, therefore, illustrates the resilience of literary expression under conditions of past constraint, highlighting both the enduring influence of socialist realism and the emancipatory potential of literature in a post-totalitarian context.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the shaping of Albanian prose in the 1980s through the lens of socialist realism, highlighting the complex interaction between ideological constraint and literary creativity. As demonstrated throughout the analysis, socialist realism in Albania functioned not merely as a literary method but as a comprehensive cultural system that regulated themes, narrative structures, character construction, and modes of reception. Embedded within a totalitarian political framework, literature was expected to legitimize state ideology, educate citizens, and reinforce moral and political conformity. These demands profoundly shaped the development of Albanian prose, producing a literary canon that was ideologically unified yet aesthetically uneven.

The 1980s emerge as a particularly significant decade, marking both the culmination of socialist realist orthodoxy and the emergence of subtle literary negotiations that foreshadowed post-socialist transformations. While many works from this period adhered strictly to the conventions of socialist realism—heroic protagonists, moral binaries, linear narratives, and collective-centered plots—others demonstrate the capacity of writers to operate within and around ideological boundaries. Authors such as Ismail Kadare, Dritëro Agolli, and Dhimitër Xhuvani illustrate how narrative complexity, allegory, and historical displacement could be employed to introduce ambiguity, ethical reflection, and aesthetic depth without openly challenging the regime. These strategies underscore the non-monolithic nature of socialist realism and reveal the agency of writers operating under restrictive conditions.

A key contribution of this study lies in its attention to the dual literary landscape of socialist Albania. Alongside officially sanctioned literature, a significant body of suppressed writing existed in prisons, private archives, and unpublished manuscripts. The recovery of these texts after 1990 has reshaped understandings of Albanian literary history, exposing the limitations of the socialist realist canon and revealing alternative narrative traditions characterized by psychological depth, moral inquiry, and stylistic experimentation. This parallel literary production challenges the notion of ideological totality and demonstrates that literary resistance persisted even under conditions of severe repression.

The analysis of key metaphors and totalitarian discourse further illustrates how literature functioned as a mechanism of ideological normalization. Metaphors of siege, heroic sacrifice, moral purity, and the omnipresent enemy structured narrative meaning and shaped collective perception. These symbolic frameworks reinforced a worldview defined by permanent vigilance, loyalty, and obedience, limiting interpretive plurality while embedding political authority into the cultural imagination. At the same time, the selective manipulation of these metaphors by certain authors reveals moments of semantic slippage, where ideological clarity gave way to ambiguity and interpretive openness.

The post-1980s literary period demonstrates that the collapse of socialist realism as an enforced doctrine did not result in its immediate disappearance. Instead, its legacy persisted in narrative habits, stylistic conventions, and reader expectations. Post-socialist Albanian literature reflects a process of gradual disentanglement from ideological aesthetics, characterized by both continuity and rupture. Writers revisited the socialist past through memoirs, historical fiction, and experimental forms, transforming literature into a space of memory, critique, and ethical reckoning. This transition highlights the enduring influence of socialist realism while affirming literature's capacity for renewal and self-reflection.

In conclusion, Albanian prose of the 1980s occupies a critical position in the nation's literary history, situated between ideological rigidity and emerging aesthetic autonomy. By examining socialist realism as both a system of control and a field of negotiation, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of literature under totalitarianism. It demonstrates that even within highly regulated environments, literary creativity persists, adapts, and leaves enduring traces. The Albanian case thus offers valuable insights into the broader dynamics of literature and power, revealing how artistic expression survives, transforms, and ultimately redefines itself in the aftermath of ideological domination.

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# A Comparative Analysis of English-to-Turkish Translations of *Pride and Prejudice*: Chat GPT-4 Models vs. Human Translator

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6871-4139>



[Bünyamin Yavuz<sup>1</sup>](#)

<sup>1</sup> BA. in English Translation and Interpreting,  
Independent Researcher, Türkiye

## *abstract*

This article aims to analyze the translation of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* from English to Turkish using ChatGPT-4 and ChatGPT-4 Turbo models, evaluated through the lenses of cultural, semantic, and translation theories. The study investigates how ChatGPT-4 handles the transfer of meaning and cultural elements into the target language, while assessing the machine's literary translation capabilities. Additionally, the article explores whether any meaning loss occurs during the translation process and if the target language used is appropriate for the audience. The article also compares ChatGPT's translation with Hamdi Koç's version of *Pride and Prejudice*, highlighting similarities and differences in terms of cultural and semantic transfer. This comparison seeks to evaluate how successfully each translation conveys cultural and semantic elements. The work questions the effectiveness of modern artificial intelligence tools in literary translation within the context of translation theories.

**Keywords:** translation theories; literary translation; cultural transfer; Chat GPT4/Turbo; Hamdi Koç; *Pride and Prejudice*

Correspondence: Bünyamin Yavuz, e-mail: bunyaminyavuz2355@gmail.com

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Translation is a bridge constructed from one language to another. In translation, it is not only the words that must be rendered; the structural, cultural, and semantic elements of the source language must also be accurately transferred into the target language. The translator's most important task is to convey the intended message of the source text into the target language in the most appropriate and least erroneous way, taking linguistic and cultural differences into account. In this context, translation is a complex process that requires multidimensional skills. A translator is expected not only to be an expert in linguistic knowledge but also to possess a deep understanding of the culture of the target language. Translation is a field of expertise needed in every corner of life—from literature and the social sciences to the film industry, healthcare, and all imaginable disciplines. Therefore, the person who undertakes this task must have sufficient knowledge and use it to ensure accurate transmission.

Literary translation is a process that requires the translator to be more original and creative. In this type of translation, the translator must not only convey the meaning of the text but also the author's style, the depth of the characters, the emotional tone, and the cultural context. Compared to other forms of translation — and within the limits set by the publishing house — the literary translator has greater freedom. To convey the meaning of a sentence, the translator may introduce expressions not present in the original text, or move away from a literal translation to bring the text closer to the target readership. In such translations, it is crucial to consider not only meaning but also the author's stylistic choices and the emotional impact of the work.

Another important aspect of literary translation is the accurate transfer of cultural context. Literary works reflect the social, cultural, and historical dynamics of the period in which they were written; therefore, the translator must be careful when carrying these elements into the target language. Terms, traditions, and social structures belonging to foreign cultures should be translated using words that have equivalents or similar meanings in the target language. However, not every cultural element may have a direct counterpart (such as idioms, proverbs, local jokes, culture-specific expressions, or dialectal forms). For this reason, the translator may need to explain certain cultural elements through footnotes or alternative expressions.

The aim of this study is to examine the Turkish translation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* generated by ChatGPT from cultural and semantic perspectives. The study seeks to evaluate the extent to which artificial intelligence—now widely used in every field—can accurately render a literary text. In particular, it focuses on how effectively the AI model translates meaning, character portrayal, and cultural context. At this point, the study questions how the elements carefully considered by human translators are handled by artificial intelligence.

In conclusion, this research aims to contribute to understanding the role of AI-based translations in literary texts by identifying the challenges, strengths, and limitations encountered by ChatGPT in translating *Pride and Prejudice*. By evaluating the influence of technology on literary translation, the study discusses the contributions and potential of artificial intelligence within translation practice.

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## 1.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this study is to analyze the Turkish translation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* generated by ChatGPT, focusing on semantic and cultural aspects. The study aims to evaluate the extent to which ChatGPT, as a large language model, can preserve meaning and achieve cultural transfer during the literary translation process. In this context, meaning shifts and the transmission of cultural norms that emerge during translation are examined in detail.

The scope of the study is limited to eight analyses selected for their strong representational capacity in terms of meaning and culture. These selected sections are parts of the novel where dialogue between characters is prominent and cultural elements are clearly present. Within the study, Hamdi Koç's Turkish translation of *Pride and Prejudice*, published by Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, and the translations produced by ChatGPT were compared. The competency of the large language model in literary translation was evaluated by comparing its output with that of a human translator.

## 1.2 Method

A comparative descriptive analysis method was used in this research. Following this method, the original English text of the novel was compared with both ChatGPT's Turkish translation and Hamdi Koç's translation. Particular attention was given to meaning shifts, the transfer of cultural elements, and translation choices. As data sources, the publicly available digital English text of *Pride and Prejudice*, the Turkish translation obtained from the ChatGPT-4 model, and Hamdi Koç's published translation were used. ChatGPT was instructed to translate the novel section by section, and the translation process was conducted while maintaining consistency of output. The two translations were compared to evaluate meaning accuracy, contextual coherence, and the transfer of cultural references.

The criteria considered during the analysis include meaning accuracy, contextual consistency, cultural equivalence, and success in transferring the text into the target language. Within the theoretical framework, Eugene Nida's (1964) concept of *equivalence* and Lawrence Venuti's concepts of *domestication* and *foreignization*, along with other relevant theories, were discussed. These theories guided the assessment of translation choices.

## 1.3 Limitations

One limitation of this study is that the analysis compares only a single human translation—Hamdi Koç's Turkish translation of *Pride and Prejudice*, published by Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları—with the translation produced by one large language model, ChatGPT. Additionally, only six culturally rich sections of the novel were selected for analysis. As a result, the findings obtained from these sections may not fully represent the entire work. No post-editing was performed on the translations produced by the ChatGPT-4 model; the AI-generated translations were examined in their raw form, without human intervention. Furthermore, no feedback was obtained from professional translators or target readers; the analysis relies solely on the researcher's evaluation.

## 1.4 Material

The primary material used in this study is Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, written in 1813. The novel depicts the social structure, family relationships, and values of nineteenth-century England.

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However, only five sections were selected as examples for detailed analysis. These sections include dialogues between characters, prominent cultural elements, and linguistically noteworthy passages. In particular, dialogues between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet were included because they reflect the social norms and mindset of the period.

Two different Turkish translations were used in this study. The first is Hamdi Koç's translation, published by Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, which serves as a reliable source due to the translator's professional expertise. The second is the translation generated by ChatGPT, which translated the digital English text of the novel section by section. Each section was translated separately, and efforts were made to maintain meaning consistency throughout the text.

### **1.5 Contextualizing the Literary Framework**

*Pride and Prejudice* is a work by the English author Jane Austen and is regarded as one of the classics of world literature. Although the novel portrays the beginning of a romantic relationship set in the nineteenth century, it also reflects the prevailing attitudes and societal expectations regarding women of that era. Its exploration of themes such as pride, social class distinctions, love, marriage, and the position of women in society has rendered the novel a timeless cultural masterpiece. At times offering psychological insights into its characters and serving as a critique of the sociocultural conditions of its period, the work is not merely a romance novel but also a literary and historical text.

A general summary of the novel is as follows: The main character, Elizabeth Bennet, stands out with her strong, intelligent, and independent nature, distinguishing her from conventional female figures of the time. Although her family's financial situation is modest, they do not belong to the aristocratic class. Elizabeth, a woman capable of thinking on equal terms with men, rejects traditional expectations regarding marriage and is highly selective when it comes to choosing a suitable partner.

One of the greatest challenges Elizabeth faces in the novel is her relationship with Fitzwilliam Darcy, a wealthy and proud gentleman. Their relationship is initially overshadowed by various prejudices and misunderstandings. However, as they come to know each other better, these prejudices gradually diminish, allowing a genuine bond of affection to form between them.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section of the study provides a general description of ChatGPT and explains what a prompt is within the context of large language models. Since the translations produced by ChatGPT and those produced by Hamdi Koç will also be examined from a theoretical perspective, various theorists and their approaches that have gained significance in translation studies are discussed here. In addition, the concepts of meaning preservation and cultural transfer, along with their connections to translation theories, are examined under separate subheadings building upon the theoretical frameworks established by Baker (2011) and Newmark (1988).

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## 2.1 ChatGPT

ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence model developed by OpenAI that is capable of understanding and generating natural language. Built upon the Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) architecture, the model is trained on extensive linguistic datasets to produce context-sensitive, coherent, and human-like text (Brown et al. 2020). Advanced versions, particularly GPT-4 and its optimized iteration GPT-4 Turbo, represent a significant leap in linguistic processing. While both models maintain high syntactic accuracy, GPT-4 Turbo offers an expanded context window and a more recent knowledge cutoff, enabling a more nuanced preservation of contextual meaning and cultural fidelity in literary translations.

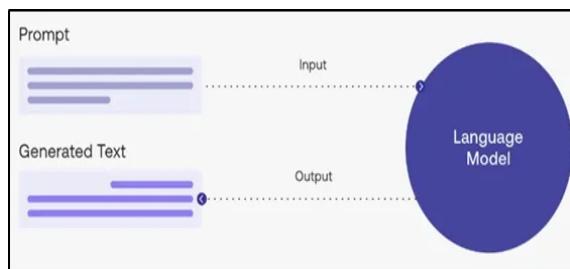
In the field of translation, ChatGPT can assist translators by rapidly analyzing texts, offering alternative suggestions, providing stylistic guidance, and supporting contextual understanding. Unlike traditional statistical or rule-based translation systems, ChatGPT generates meaningful and fluent sentences by taking contextual features into account, thereby facilitating the translator's work and saving time (Kenny 2022). However, the intuitive and culturally informed interventions of human translators remain essential. ChatGPT can function as a creative support tool designed to reduce the workload of translators and accelerate the translation process; nevertheless, human oversight is required to ensure final accuracy and cultural appropriateness (O'Hagan 2016). In conclusion, ChatGPT's role in the translation process is limited to serving as an assistant to translators, yet when used correctly and efficiently, it can contribute to creative processes and enhance the overall productivity of translation practice (Kenny 2022).

In this study, both GPT-4 and GPT-4 Turbo models were utilized to observe the AI's interpretive performance under different architectural parameters, with each session being verified for model identity and data integrity.

## 2.2 About Prompting

A prompt is the general term for the input or command given to a language model. Models use prompts to perform the requested tasks. A prompt typically appears in the form of instructions or guidance. The prompt constitutes the input text provided to a large language model (LLM), while the model's response constitutes the output (Hopsworks 2025). The primary aim of prompting is to maximize the effectiveness, accuracy, and usability of the model's responses. Additionally, prompts may be given in the form of questions, which also enable interaction with large language models. Correct and precise output can be obtained from large language models through properly constructed prompts, and well-designed prompts allow the model to produce more consistent responses.

Prompting, therefore, refers to the process of formulating and using an appropriate prompt. In other words, it is the strategic preparation of an input designed to elicit the desired response from the language model.



**Figure 1.** Schematic representation of prompt input and output generation within a language model.

In the context of translation studies, prompting transcends simple instruction; it functions as a strategic configuration (as seen in excerpt 5 Code: ÇK-01) where theoretical frameworks and translator's intuition are embedded into the model's operational boundaries to elicit high-level literary responses.

### **2.3 Literary Translation**

Literary translation is not limited to transferring words from one language to another; it also involves adapting the aesthetic and cultural values carried by the text into the target language. In the translation of various literary genres such as poetry, novels, or drama, the translator's aim is to preserve the semantic integrity and original expression of the source text as much as possible, while recreating its spirit and emotional atmosphere in the target language. Therefore, literary translation is considered both a creative process and an act of interpretation. Conveying the artistic essence of the text into the target language means not only transferring its meaning but also recreating similar aesthetic effects. In this way, the translator transcends linguistic boundaries and becomes a cultural mediator who relocates the text into a new cultural context.

### **2.4 Theories, Strategies, and Approaches Used in Literary Translation**

#### **2.4.1 Equivalence Theory (*Nida's Theory of Equivalence*)**

The renowned American linguist Eugene Nida (1964) conducted linguistic and translation studies focusing on equivalence, one of the most widely accepted translation theories today. Nida analyzes the Theory of Equivalence through two categories (Yang 2010, 78): formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. In formal equivalence, the essential point is that the meaning of the source text should be conveyed into the target text while the linguistic structure of the source language is preserved as much as possible in the target language. However, due to structural differences between languages, this preservation is not always possible. In dynamic equivalence, the meaning of the source text is likewise conveyed, but the translation is structurally adapted to the source language's communicative function and to the target audience. In other words, dynamic equivalence represents fidelity to the meaning of the source text while adopting a target audience-oriented approach. In dynamic equivalence, the relationship between the receiver and the message should mirror the relationship between the original audience and the message in the source language (Yang 2010, 78). Nida defines this concept as follows: "The readers of a translated text should be able to understand and appreciate it essentially in the same manner as the original readers understood and appreciated the source text" (Nida 2001, 118).

#### **2.4.2 Venuti's Foreignization and Domestication Strategies**

Lawrence Venuti, known for his work on translator invisibility and the strategies of foreignization and domestication, emphasizes that the visibility of the translator emerges through the strategies and methods they employ (Araboglu 2019, 654). According to Venuti, the aim in translation is to align or associate elements belonging to foreign cultures with those familiar within the target culture (Venuti 2004, 18).

In foreignization, the translator directs the reader toward the author. Target readers encounter linguistic differences originating from the source text, which may cause them to pause and question the meaning. In this strategy, translators often adopt a word-for-word approach (Taş 2017, 7). Additionally, they may include footnotes to clarify foreign cultural elements.

In domestication, the interests of the target audience are prioritized, and the cultural context of the source is generally minimized to produce a more fluent and accessible text. Domestication aims to create a text that is easier for the target reader to understand by adapting expressions to their cultural background (Venuti 2000, 468). The translator develops strategies based on the differences between the source and target cultures and thus acts as a mediator between the two (Venuti 2000, 468). Cultural differences influence the strategies used by the translator, which are shaped by factors such as translation purpose, style, content, ideology, and text type. In this process, the translator is “tested” through their interaction with the foreign culture. According to Venuti, the translator often aims to ensure that the target reader does not perceive the text as foreign (Araboğlu 2019, 654).

#### ***2.4.3 Newmark’s Semantic and Communicative Translation Theory***

Developed by the British translation studies professor Peter Newmark (1981), the Semantic and Communicative Translation Theories are widely used in translation studies. The primary goal of Semantic Translation is to transmit the meaning of the source text into the target language accurately and without semantic loss. Semantic translation attempts to remain as faithful as possible to the structure of the source language. Compared to literal translation, semantic translation preserves meaning while imbuing the text with an aesthetic quality—fluency and naturalness. Literal translation adheres strictly to rigid rules that bind the translator closely to the source text, whereas semantic translation allows greater creativity and flexibility (Morsy 2021, 2603–2604).

Newmark’s Communicative Translation aims to evoke in the target audience an effect similar to that experienced by the original audience. This theory focuses on the function of the message rather than the form of the source text. In communicative translation, function is more important than form; that is, the effect intended for the reader takes precedence over structural features. Cultural differences are taken into account, and expressions closer to the target audience may be preferred. Clarity of meaning and the ease with which the target audience can understand the text are essential (Newmark 1988).

The fundamental goal of the translation process is to convey the full contextual meaning of the original text in a style that is reasonable and comprehensible for the reader. This requires presenting the meaning of the source text in a way that is easily understandable to the target audience while preserving its meaning. Communicative translation aims not only to transfer linguistic content accurately but also to convey the effect of the text to the target audience. In this approach, the translator’s responsibility is to ensure that the target audience perceives the text correctly and experiences similar emotional, cultural, and intellectual responses as the source audience (Morsy 2021, 2604).

Communicative translation enables the meaning of the text to be transferred accurately and in harmony with the cultural context of the target language, rather than adhering strictly to the formal structure of the source text. Flexibility and modifications made to the meaning are necessary to ensure that the target reader receives the text in a natural and effective manner. In this way, the translator not only ensures the accuracy of the content but also enhances the impact of the text. Thus, communicative translation aims to present a translation compatible with the target audience’s lived experiences and cultural context, preserving the original effect of the text.

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### 3. ANALYSIS

In this section of the study, selected portions from the original English text of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* are treated as source texts and uploaded to the large language model ChatGPT. After providing the necessary prompts to the ChatGPT-4 model, the translation outputs obtained are subjected to semantic and cultural analysis. During the analysis, translation methods, theories and strategies are also referenced when relevant. Additionally, the human translation produced by Hamdi Koç is utilized for comparative purposes. In this part of the study, no post-editing is applied to the translations generated by artificial intelligence; rather, the raw translation outputs produced without any human intervention—based solely on the prompts—are analyzed according to the criteria described.

#### 3.1 Semantic Analysis

Semantic analysis focuses on how accurately and without loss of meaning the words and sentences in the source text are transferred into the target language. According to Peter Newmark's "semantic translation" approach (1988), translation should remain faithful to the source text and accurately convey the author's intended meaning. Based on this approach, character dialogues as well as long and complex sentence structures are examined to determine whether meaning has been preserved. The primary criteria for semantic analysis are as follows:

##### 3.1.1 *Criteria for Semantic Analysis*

###### a. Accuracy of Meaning

This criterion examines the extent to which the translation conveys the meaning of the source text accurately and without error. Meaning shifts, omissions, or mistranslations are investigated within this scope.

###### b. Contextual Appropriateness

This criterion evaluates how well the translation fits the target language context. Whether the translation reads naturally and meaningfully in the target language, and whether it is used appropriately within its context, are assessed here.

###### c. Semantic Consistency

This criterion assesses whether meaning is preserved consistently throughout the translation. It includes the examination of whether terms and expressions remain semantically consistent and whether the same concepts are translated uniformly throughout the text.

#### 3.2 Cultural Analysis

Cultural analysis is concerned with examining how cultural elements present in the source text are transferred into the target language after translation. In this type of analysis, elements such as traditions, idioms, values, social norms, and historical references are evaluated. Questions such as "Which translation methods, strategies, and theories did the translator or the large language model employ when translating a culturally dense literary work?" form the core of cultural analysis. Translation should not only transfer meaning but also ensure cultural transmission. In this regard,

Boztaş (1993) states that the fundamental purpose of translation is not merely to transfer meaning from one language to another, but also to transfer the grammatical structures, syntax, and formal elements of the source language, along with the cultural and social equivalences between the source and target languages (56–57).

### 3.2.1 Criteria for Cultural Analysis

#### a. Accurate Transfer of Cultural References

This criterion evaluates whether the translation conveys the cultural elements found in the source text accurately and completely into the target language. This includes the proper translation of idioms, traditions, and local references.

#### b. Domestication and Adaptation

This criterion examines whether cultural elements in the source text are adapted in a way that is understandable to the target audience. Some cultural references may not be meaningful in the target culture; in such cases, the translator may choose domestication strategies to maintain meaning.

#### c. Cultural Meaning Loss

This criterion addresses whether any cultural elements in the source text are omitted or mistranslated. Whether the translation results in a loss of cultural meaning is critical for assessing the accurate transfer of cultural context.

### 3.4. Cultural, Semantic and Theoretical Analysis of the ChatGPT Translation: Comparison with a Human Translator

*In the following analysis sections, the term 'ChatGPT' is used to refer to the specific outputs generated by the GPT-4 and GPT-4 Turbo models, as identified in the respective comparative tables.*

#### Analysis 1

**Table 1. Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT-4 and Hamdi Koç's Translation: Excerpt 1**

Source Text	ChatGPT-4 Translation	Hamdi Koç's Translation
Mr. Darcy had at first scarcely allowed her to be pretty; he had looked at her without admiration at the ball; and when they next met, he looked at her only to criticise. But no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she hardly had a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. (Austen 1813, 30)	Bay Darcy, başlangıçta onun güzel sayılabilceğini bile pek kabul etmemiştir; baloda ona hayranlık duymadan bakmıştır, bir sonraki karşılaşmalarında ise onu sadece eleştirmek için süzmüştü. Ne var ki, yüzünde kayda değer hiçbir güzel özellik olmadığını kendine ve arkadaşlarına açıkça itiraf eder etmez, koyu renkli gözlerindeki anlamlı bakışın yüzüne olağanüstü bir zekâ ifadesi kazandırdığını fark etmeye başladı. (OpenAI 2025)	Mr. Darcy ilk başta onun güzel olduğunu bile kabul etmemiştir; baloda ona hayranlık duymadan bakmıştır; bir dahaki karşılaşmalarında ise ona sadece eleştirmek için bakmıştır. Ama kızın yüzünde tek bir güzel taraf olmadığını kendisine ve arkadaşına söylemesiyle kara gözlerindeki harikulade ifadenin o yüzü olağanüstü zeki kıldığını görmeye başlaması neredeyse bir oldu. (Koç 2006, 24)

Both translations largely preserve the fundamental meaning of the original text; however, each demonstrates different approaches in terms of cultural transfer and depth of meaning.

In ChatGPT's translation, the emotional depth of the text and the characters' internal conflicts are conveyed quite successfully. The expression "Yüzünde kayda değer hiçbir güzel özellik olmadığını... koyu renkli gözlerindeki anlamlı bakışın yüzüne olağanüstü bir zekâ ifadesi kazandırdığını fark etmeye başladı" reflects Darcy's initial prejudiced impression of Elizabeth and his gradual recognition of her aesthetic and intellectual qualities in a fluent and coherent manner.

In Hamdi Koç's translation, the language is more straightforward and direct. Structures such as "Kızın yüzünde tek bir güzel taraf olmadığını kendisine ve arkadaşına söylemesiyle kara gözlerindeki harikulade ifadenin..." convey the original meaning, yet in some cases may evoke additional connotations in Turkish. For example, the phrase "kara gözler" carries more romantic or traditional associations in Turkish culture than the English expression "dark eyes."

ChatGPT's translation reflects an approach closer to Nida's (1964) equivalence theory, focusing on conveying meaning appropriately in the target language. This approach clearly communicates meaning while allowing some flexibility in stylistic fidelity. Hamdi Koç's translation, on the other hand, aligns more with Venuti's strategies of foreignization and domestication, preserving the artistic and cultural elements of the source language and allowing the influence of the original text to be felt in the target language. Koç aims for accurate transfer of cultural elements and, similar to Newmark's semantic translation approach, seeks to preserve the original meaning of the text.

In conclusion, both translations preserve the essential meaning. However, ChatGPT's translation reflects the cultural context and the psychological development of the characters in a more literary and nuanced manner. In Hamdi Koç's translation, cultural details are at times simplified, and certain layers of meaning appear more surface-level.

## Analysis 2

**Table 2. Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT-4 and Hamdi Koç's Translation: Excerpt 2**

Source Text	ChatGPT-4 Translation	Hamdi Koç's Translation
"She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me; I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me." (Austen 1813, 14)	"Fena değil ama beni baştan çıkaracak kadar güzel değil. Şu an, diğer erkeklerin bile ilgilenmediği genç hanımlara önem verecek bir ruh hâlinde değilim. En iyisi sen partnerinin yanına dönüp onun gülümsemelerinin tadını çıkar, çünkü burada benimle vakit kaybediyorsun." (OpenAI 2025)	"Eh işte, ama beni baştan çıkaracak kadar güzel değil; hem, şu an başka erkeklerin dudak büktüğü kızlara önem verecek halde değilim. Bence eşine dön ve gülücüklerinin keyfini çıkar, çünkü benimle zamanını harciyorsun." (Koç 2006, 2)

This excerpt reflects the initial impressions of Mr. Darcy, one of the main characters in the novel, toward Elizabeth Bennet. While Darcy downplays Elizabeth's beauty, he also displays an emotional indifference toward her. The related sentences reveal Darcy's perspective shaped by a sense of pride grounded in his understanding of beauty. By indirectly referencing the social norms surrounding marriage and relationships of the period, the passage emphasizes the importance of personal status and social standing beyond physical attractiveness.

In the Turkish translation of the passage, ChatGPT remains highly faithful to the original text; for instance, the expression “beni baştan çıkaracak kadar güzel değil” (“she is not handsome enough to tempt me”) delivers the meaning directly to the reader. However, this translation choice may not fully align with the refinement characteristic of Austen's literary style. The phrase corresponding to “who are slighted by other men” is successfully rendered as “diğer erkeklerin bile ilgilenmediği,” but it does not entirely capture the character's class-based arrogance within the cultural context.

Hamdi Koç's translation, on the other hand, uses a more natural and culturally resonant tone for Turkish readers. Expressions such as “eh işte” and “dudak bükmek” are commonly used in Turkish and help convey the character's attitude in a culturally meaningful way. This choice allows the emotional nuance and social tone of the original text to be better reflected in the target language.

From a theoretical perspective, ChatGPT's translation exhibits an approach closer to what Nida defines as formal equivalence—an approach Nida himself does not favor. The translation remains faithful to the source text and adopts a word-oriented strategy. However, this method limits the extent to which the literary tone and cultural background of the text are conveyed. In contrast, Hamdi Koç's translation aligns more closely with dynamic equivalence, prioritizing the target reader's ability to “feel” the original text. Koç's choices also exemplify Lawrence Venuti's domestication strategy: expressions such as “dudak bükmek” and “eh işte” represent natural equivalents in Turkish, helping the translator become nearly invisible in Venuti's sense (Venuti 2004). Furthermore, in line with Newmark's communicative translation framework, Koç's version demonstrates a reader-oriented strategy, while ChatGPT's translation tends more toward semantic translation.

In conclusion, ChatGPT's translation remains faithful to the meaning of the source text but is limited in terms of cultural depth. In contrast, Hamdi Koç's translation offers a more natural and effective experience for Turkish readers by considering both cultural context and theoretical approaches.

### Analysis 3

**Table 3. Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT-4 and Hamdi Koç's Translation: Excerpt 3**

Source Text	ChatGPT-4 Translation	Hamdi Koç's Translation
“But I can assure you,” she added, “that Lizzy does not lose much by not suiting his fancy; for he is a most disagreeable, horrid man, not at all worth pleasing. So high and so conceited that there was no enduring him! He walked here, and he walked there, fancying himself so very great! Not handsome enough to dance with! I wish you had been there, my dear, to have given him one of your set-downs. I quite detest the man.” (Austen 1813, 16)	“Ama seni temin ederim,” diye ekledi, “Lizzy onun zevkine uymamakla pek bir şey kaybetmedi; çünkü o son derece sevimsiz, korkunç bir adam, ilgilenmeye değil. Öyle kendini beğenmiş, öyle burnu havada ki katlanması imkansız! Burada dolaştı, şurada dolaştı, kendini ne kadar büyük sanıyordu! Dans edecek kadar bile yakışıklı değil! Keşke orada olsaydın da, şekerim, ona haddini bildirseydin. Adamdan cidden nefret ettim.” (OpenAI 2025)	“Ama seni temin ederim,” diye ekledi, “Lizzy onun zevkine uymamakla pek bir şey kaybetmedi; çünkü son derece sevimsiz, korkunç bir adam, ilgilenmeye değil. Öyle kendini beğenmiş, öyle burnu havada ki katlanması imkansız! Ortalarda dolandı durdu, matah bir şeymiş gibi! Dans edecek kadar bile yakışıklı değil! Keşke orada olsaydın da, şekerim, haddini bildirseydin. Adamdan cidden nefret ettim.” (Koç 2004, 13)

The excerpt in question reflects a moment in which Mrs. Bennet criticizes Darcy's proud and dismissive behavior. In this selected passage, Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy intensifies, and the class-based tension between the characters becomes more apparent. Mrs. Bennet's belittling attitude toward Darcy reveals her understanding of social hierarchy and personal values.

ChatGPT's translation successfully remains faithful to the source text in terms of meaning, in accordance with the prompts provided. For example, the phrase “not at all worth pleasing” is translated as “ilgilenmeye değil,” preserving its meaning. The expression “he walked here and he walked there” is rendered directly as “burada dolaştı, şurada dolaştı.” Although ChatGPT adheres to the principle of clarity in meaning, this results in a somewhat limited degree of natural fluency. In Hamdi Koç's translation, however, the language aligns more closely with the natural vocabulary of modern Turkish. The expression “Matah bir şeymiş gibi” offers a culturally resonant equivalent that reflects the character's condescending tone more powerfully and effectively in Turkish. Instead of translating the expression literally, Koç conveys the meaning in a way that aligns with the cultural expectations of Turkish readers. In this regard, Koç's translation can be considered more successful than ChatGPT's in transmitting certain cultural nuances.

Like Koç's rendering of “my dear” as “Şekerim,” ChatGPT also uses the same translation choice, reflecting an application of Venuti's domestication strategy. ChatGPT's overall translational aligns more closely with Nida's (1964) concept of formal equivalence, demonstrating the model's tendency to

stay loyal to the source text. In contrast, Hamdi Koç's translation adopts dynamic equivalence. While remaining faithful to the meaning, Koç makes different structural choices that help the reader "feel" the text within the target culture—a hallmark of dynamic equivalence.

In conclusion, ChatGPT's translation can at times be limited in terms of cultural transfer and emotional tone, prioritizing clarity of meaning and fidelity to the source text. Conversely, Hamdi Koç's translation reflects cultural and emotional contexts more naturally for Turkish readers.

#### *Analysis 4*

**Table 4. Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT-4 Turbo and Hamdi Koç's Translation: Excerpt 4**

Source Text	ChatGPT-4 Turbo Translation	Hamdi Koç's Translation
Mr. Collins was not a sensible man, and the deficiency of nature had been but little assisted by education or society; the greatest part of his life having been spent under the guidance of an illiterate and miserly father; and though he belonged to one of the universities, he had merely kept the necessary terms, without forming at it any useful acquaintance. (Austen 1813, 99)	Bay Collins akılda bir adam değildi; yaratılıştan gelen eksiklikleri ne eğitimle ne de toplumsal çevreyle telafi edilebilmişti. Hayatının büyük kısmı, cahil ve pıtı bir babanın gözetiminde geçmişti. Her ne kadar bir üniversitede bağlı olsa da, orada yalnızca gerekli süreyi doldurmuş; bu süre zarfında da faydalı olabilecek hiçbir dostluk kuramamıştı. (OpenAI 2025)	Mr. Collins akıllı bir adam değildi; yaratılışındaki kusurlar eğitimden ya da çevreden fayda görmemişti; hayatının büyük bölümü okuma yazma bilmez, sefil bir babanın idaresi altında geçti; üniversite mezunu olsa da sadece zorunlu dersleri almış, eğitimle işeyarar bir yakınlık kurmamıştı. (Koç 2004, 74)

In this part of the study, as shown under the heading "Appendix 4 – Author's Strategic Prompt Configuration and ChatGPT's Response (see pp. 169-170)," the prompt given to the large language model allowed the translation decisions to be entirely left to the model itself. In line with the earlier instructions emphasizing meaning preservation and successful cultural transfer, ChatGPT attempted to produce translations consistent with these commands. In the subsequent prompts, instructions such as "How you choose to translate this text, which meanings you preserve and which you reinterpret, is entirely up to you. The choice is yours," as well as "You may remain closely faithful to the source text or adopt a more creative and culturally adapted approach centered on the target reader's experience," were provided. This approach allowed the model to adopt a translator role and determine its own translation strategies. In doing so, the aim was to eliminate human intervention in the translation prompts and observe how ChatGPT carries out literary translation using its own artificial intelligence processes.

This excerpt describes the character Mr. Collins. Austen highlights Collins's personal shortcomings and the fact that neither education nor society has managed to correct them. Raised under the ignorant and miserly guidance of his father, Collins attended university but passed only the required

personal development. While criticizing Collins's lack of education and narrow perspective, the author also questions his place in society. Because this passage emphasizes the character's personal inadequacies and failures in social relationships, it plays an important role in meaning transfer and cultural interpretation. Furthermore, the criticism of the character's social environment and educational background makes accurate linguistic and cultural representation essential.

ChatGPT's translation conveys the meaning of the text quite accurately. For instance, it translates "the deficiency of nature" as "yaratılıştan gelen eksiklikler," which is an appropriate rendering. Similarly, the phrase "illiterate and miserly father" is translated as "cahil ve panti bir baba," correctly conveying the meaning without loss. In Koç's translation, the language is rendered more fluently and naturally into Turkish. His expression "yaratılışındaki kusurlar" also accurately conveys the meaning.

The phrase "illiterate and miserly father" implies how deeply family circumstances shaped social mobility in England during that period. In Koç's translation, the expression "okuma yazma bilmez, sefil bir baba" correctly conveys "illiterate," while the term "sefil" introduces a more emotionally charged nuance. Although this enhances the dramatic impact, it shifts the cultural meaning slightly, as "miserly" primarily evokes financial stinginess rather than emotional misery. ChatGPT's translation "cahil ve panti" maintains a more balanced transfer of meaning and cultural implication.

Koç's expression "eğitimle işe yarar bir yaklaşım kurmamıştı" conveys the idea in a more abstract manner, presenting the act of forming relationships indirectly rather than explicitly. The vague concept of "yakınlık" ("closeness") does not evoke the same cultural associations as the English phrase "useful acquaintance," which refers specifically to socially advantageous relationships. This choice distances the reader from the social expectations of the time and the class-related function of university education. By contrast, ChatGPT's rendering "faydalı olabilecek hiçbir dostluk kuramamıştı" preserves both the pragmatic sense of "useful" and the superficial social nature of "acquaintance." This choice helps the reader understand that the university setting functioned not only as a place for academic learning but also as an environment for cultivating social connections. Thus, the translation successfully conveys the cultural implication that Collins failed not only academically but also socially.

ChatGPT's translation aligns with the principles of dynamic equivalence, focusing on accurately transferring the meaning and context of the source text into the target language. Koç's translation, however, reflects the influence of domestication strategies. At times, this led to deviations from the original meaning and certain gaps in cultural context.

Although both translations are successful in specific respects, they each carry different advantages and limitations. ChatGPT's version maintains meaning and coherence, whereas Koç's translation adapts the text into Turkish using a more creative and fluent style. Nonetheless, both translations face challenges in fully conveying the cultural context and emotional tone of the original. In this regard, translation choices must be made according to the needs and expectations of the target audience.

## Analysis 5

**Table 5. Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT-4 Turbo and Hamdi Koç's Translation: Excerpt 5**

Source Text	ChatGPT-4 Turbo Translation	Hamdi Koç's Translation
<p>It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters. "My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?" (Austen 1813, 2)</p>	<p>Evlenmemiş, varlıklı bir adamın, her zaman, bir eşe sahip olması gereği, evrensel bir gerçekdir. Bir adamın, yeni bir mahalleye girdiğinde, duygularının ya da görüşlerinin ne kadar az bilinmeyen olursa olsun, bu gerçek, çevredekilerin zihinlerine o kadar yerleşmiştir ki, o adam, bir şekilde, mutlaka kızlarından birinin meşru malı olarak kabul edilir. "Sevgili Bay Bennet," dedi bir gün hanımı ona, "Netherfield Park'ın nihayet kiralandığını duydun mu?" (OpenAI 2025)</p>	<p>Dünyaca kabul edilmiş bir gerçekdir, hali vakti yerinde olan her bekar erkeğin mutlaka bir eşe ihtiyacı vardır. Böyle bir erkek yeni bir muhite ilk adımını atarken ne hissediyor, ne düşünüyor, kimse bilmez, ama bu gerçek civardaki ailelerin aklına öyle yerleşmiştir ki onu kızlarından birinin ya da diğerinin tapulu malı sayarlar. "Duydun mu Mr. Bennet, şekerim," dedi eşi bir gün, "Netherfield Korusu nihayet tutulmuş." (Koç 2004, 3)</p>

The reason this passage was selected is that it offers a rich context both semantically and culturally. Austen's opening sentence presents the class structure and social expectations of the period in a brief yet impactful manner. It is also a text segment in which we encounter significant challenges regarding cultural and semantic depth during the translation process. This excerpt serves as an ideal example for discussing how a translator should convey social norms, family structure, and cultural themes such as marriage. Additionally, this quotation is the opening line of *Pride and Prejudice*, emphasizing the widespread societal belief that a wealthy, unmarried man must inevitably be in want of a wife. When such a man enters a neighborhood, families immediately consider him the "rightful property" of one of their daughters. Austen offers a humorous critique of these societal norms.

In the sentence "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife," ChatGPT's translation of "evlenmemiş, varlıklı bir adam" accurately captures the meaning of "a single man in possession of a good fortune." The continuation—"her zaman bir eşe sahip olması gereği" —also remains faithful to "must be in want of a wife." Overall, ChatGPT's translation does not present any loss of meaning. Koç's translation, however, uses a more localized language. The phrase "dünyaca kabul edilmiş bir gerçekdir" conveys the meaning of "It is a truth universally acknowledged," whereas "hali vakti yerinde olan" is a localized rendering of "a man in possession of a good fortune." "Mutlaka bir eşe ihtiyacı vardır" is a direct semantic equivalent of "must be in want of a wife."

In the sentence “However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters,” ChatGPT accurately conveys the phrase “the rightful property” as “meşru mal,” clearly reflecting the original meaning. The expression “bir şekilde mutlaka kızlarından birinin meşru malı olarak kabul edilir” also captures the intended sense. Furthermore, “duygularının ya da görüşlerinin ne kadar az biliniyor olursa olsun” fully reflects the meaning of the original text. Koç’s translation, while attempting to convey the meaning, uses the localized phrase “tapulu malı sayarlar.” However, the concept of “tapulu mal” in Turkish culture does not fully correspond to the English concept of “rightful property.”

ChatGPT’s translation successfully maintains the cultural meaning, preserving the aristocratic context of the English text. The expression “meşru mal” retains the social class structure and property-based mindset of wealthy families in the period. Koç’s use of “tapulu malı sayarlar” is more oriented toward Turkish cultural associations but deviates from the original cultural context. Although this domestication strategy increases accessibility for Turkish readers, it may not fully capture the irony and social critique embedded in Austen’s original text.

ChatGPT adopts an approach aligned with Nida’s (1964) dynamic equivalence theory, preserving the meaning and cultural context of the original while producing a natural and comprehensible target-language text. Koç, however, follows Venuti’s domestication strategy, adapting the text to enhance cultural familiarity for Turkish readers.

Although both translations aim to preserve the essential meaning of the source text, they employ different strategies in conveying meaning and cultural context. ChatGPT maintains fidelity to the underlying social critique and subtext, offering a more universal approach, whereas Koç enhances cultural accessibility through domestication techniques. This demonstrates the importance of balancing meaning depth with cultural accessibility in the translation process.

### *Analysis 6*

**Table 6. Comparative Analysis of ChatGPT and Hamdi Koç’s Translation: Excerpt 6**

Source Text	ChatGPT-4 Translation	Hamdi Koç’s Translation
"You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. MY affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject for ever." (Austen 1813, 505-506)	"Benimle alay edecek kadar zalim biri değilsiniz. Eğer hisleriniz hâlâ geçen nisan ayındaki gibiyse, lütfen bunu bana hemen söyleyin. Benim duygularım ve dileklerim değişmedi; ama sizden gelecek tek bir söz, bu konuyu sonsuza dek kapatmam için yeterli olacaktır." (OpenAI 2025)	"Benimle oyun oynamayacak kadar naziksiniz. Eğer duygularınız hâlâ geçen Nisan'daki gibiyse, bana bunu hemen söyleyin. Benim duyu ve dileklerim değişmedi, ama tek bir sözünüz beni bu konuda iletibbet susturacaktır." (Koç 2004, 370)

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This excerpt represents a crucial scene in *Pride and Prejudice* in which Mr. Darcy proposes to Elizabeth Bennet for the second time and openly expresses his feelings. This moment is one of the high points of character development and carries significant emotional and thematic weight within the novel. Concepts such as politeness, pride, regret, and sincerity—embedded within the social fabric of the period—make this passage particularly rich for both semantic and cultural analysis.

In the sentence “You are too generous to trifle with me,” ChatGPT translates “trifle with” as “alay etmek,” which conveys the meaning directly and clearly. However, “alay etmek” carries a slightly harsher connotation. Hamdi Koç’s rendering, “oyun oynamak,” employs a gentler and more polite tone, aligning more closely with the refined language associated with Austen’s era. Both translations preserve the meaning, but each establishes a tone consistent with its own linguistic environment. ChatGPT’s choice reflects a direct semantic approach, though it may lack some of the aristocratic nuance of early nineteenth-century English. Koç, by using a more colloquial and culturally familiar expression, makes the line easier for contemporary Turkish readers to understand, though at the expense of some of the formality in the original.

For the sentence “If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once,” both translations successfully convey the meaning. Words such as “lütfen” and “bunu” in ChatGPT’s version create a polite and formal tone, appropriate to the socio-cultural context of the period. Koç’s translation omits these elements, resulting in a shorter, more direct expression, yet without loss of meaning. While Koç adopts a more contemporary and straightforward tone, ChatGPT preserves the courteous register characteristic of Austen’s dialogue.

In “My affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject for ever,” both ChatGPT and Koç accurately convey the meaning and emotional intensity of “affections” and “wishes.” Neither translation presents a loss of meaning.

When examined within translation theory, the two translations reveal different methodological approaches. ChatGPT’s translation is grounded in semantic translation and aligns with Nida’s dynamic equivalence, transmitting the source meaning clearly while using natural and comprehensible language in the target text. By softening expressions—such as using “alay edecek kadar” in place of harsher terms—ChatGPT maintains the emotional tone while adapting the expression to the target language. Koç, meanwhile, employs a more faithful translation method and draws upon Newmark’s Communicative Translation Theory, preserving the structure of the source text while also considering cultural context and target audience expectations. In his translation, expressions like “naziksiniz” soften the tone and make the language more suitable for the Turkish reader. While both translations maintain the meaning of the source text, ChatGPT adopts a more dynamic strategy, whereas Koç uses a more conservative approach that renders the text culturally more familiar for Turkish readers.

ChatGPT’s translation pays careful attention to preserving meaning and cultural context, successfully reflecting the emotional intensity and formality of the original text. Hamdi Koç’s translation, however, employs a domestication strategy that brings the text closer to Turkish cultural norms, making it more accessible. Nonetheless, Koç’s approach partially diverges from the aristocratic tone and emotional depth of the original. Overall, both translations effectively communicate the meaning of the passage, yet their stylistic and cultural choices lead to different reading experiences for the target audience.

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## 4.CONCLUSION

### 4.1 General Evaluation and Summary of the Research

In this article, the Turkish translations of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* were examined comprehensively from semantic, cultural, and theoretical perspectives. The study compared the translation produced by the GPT-4 and GPT-4 Turbo models — collectively referred to as ChatGPT — with the human translation by Hamdi Koç, focusing on how two different translation approaches affect the meaning and cultural codes of the text. The analysis revealed that each translation reflects the social structure and linguistic features of the period in distinct ways, and that the translation strategies employed significantly shape the perception of the text.

Findings indicate that ChatGPT adopts an approach centered on direct semantic transfer of the source text into the target language. Its translation conveys the meaning of the original expressions clearly and precisely, offering an understandable and fluent target-language output. However, ChatGPT at times struggles to convey the socio-historical nuances of the original text and occasionally uses stronger or more direct equivalents. This issue becomes particularly evident in translating the polite, indirect expressions characteristic of the 19th-century British upper class.

Hamdi Koç's translation, on the other hand, stands out through its localized and culturally familiar linguistic choices. Taking the social and cultural background of the text into account, Koç favors softer, more polite, and indirect expressions, especially in emotional contexts, enabling the reader to experience the text more naturally. However, this approach sometimes distances the translation from the aristocratic tone and linguistic subtleties of the original. This aligns with the domestication strategy in translation theory.

From a cultural and sociological standpoint, both translations reflect class distinctions, social etiquette, and the internal conflicts of the characters in different ways. ChatGPT's more direct choices occasionally fall short of reflecting the refined aristocratic language of the period, though meaning is preserved. Koç's softer and more localized expression enhances readability and cultural empathy for the Turkish audience. This illustrates the challenge of achieving both semantic and cultural equivalence in translation.

One of the central findings of the research is that ChatGPT can produce linguistically strong and fluent translations, yet human translators still possess an advantage in capturing cultural nuances. Human understanding of cultural codes and the social atmosphere of the period is crucial, especially in classical literary works. This demonstrates that translation must be evaluated not only at the lexical or syntactic level, but also in terms of cultural context and literary style.

The prompts used during the article process played a key role in understanding the model's performance and translation preferences. In some prompts, translation decisions were left entirely to the model, allowing it to operate freely and revealing its natural strategies and decision-making patterns. In other cases, prompts aimed to direct the model toward a specific style or emphasis, thereby testing its ability to follow instructions. This variety of prompts showed the importance of human guidance, although no post-editing was applied during the study to maintain transparency in semantic and cultural analysis. Overall, the findings demonstrate that prompting plays a critical role in controlling the translation process and guiding the model's output.

In light of the comparative analysis, no clear or generalisable trend was observed between ChatGPT-4 and ChatGPT-4 Turbo regarding translation accuracy and preferences. The limited

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differences identified between the models appeared to stem from individual translation instances and contextual factors rather than from any systematic approach; consequently, these differences did not have a decisive effect on overall translation quality.

In conclusion, this article demonstrates how the strategies and approaches used by large language models and a human translator produce different results in rendering an English cultural classic into Turkish. The translations by ChatGPT (GPT-4 and GPT-4 Turbo) and Hamdi Koç preserve the essential meaning and cultural elements of the text while offering distinct interpretations shaped by their respective approaches. This study strengthens the relationship between translation theory and practice, offering valuable insight into the current capabilities and future potential of strategically configured AI-supported translation systems.

#### **4.2 Answers to the Research Questions**

*Can ChatGPT (GPT-4/Turbo) produce translations aligned with prompts instructing semantic fidelity and culturally appropriate transfer?*

ChatGPT can generally convey meaning accurately and adapt cultural elements to the target language when guided by strategically configured prompts. However, it may remain surface-level in cultural nuances or struggle to capture the socio-historical subtleties of the period. With precise and detailed prompts, more consistent and contextually appropriate translations can be achieved, yet full cultural fidelity without human supervision cannot be guaranteed.

*When translation decisions are left to ChatGPT within semantic, cultural, and theoretical frameworks, what approaches does it adopt?*

The model tends to favor meaning preservation, producing translations that align closely with dynamic equivalence. It simplifies or softens cultural elements to create a natural and fluent target text. However, it may show limitations in maintaining stylistic consistency in deeper cultural references, sometimes reducing the aristocratic or historical tone of the original. Overall, its output reflects a reader-oriented and accessible language.

*To what extent does prompting influence ChatGPT's competence in literary translation?*

Prompting is a critical determinant of the model's translation performance. Strategic and detailed prompt configurations lead to more accurate representations of meaning, tone, and stylistic nuances, while vague prompts result in shallow or inconsistent translations. In literary texts, especially those requiring emotional and period-specific nuance, the clarity of prompts is essential. Without human direction, the model struggles to fully reproduce the original literary tone. Therefore, prompting creates a dynamic interaction between human and machine in the translation process.

*What are the differences between ChatGPT's translations and Hamdi Koç's translation in terms of meaning and cultural transfer?*

ChatGPT prioritizes semantic clarity and fluency, sometimes simplifying or modernizing expressions. Koç, however, maintains greater stylistic fidelity to the original, preserving historical and literary nuances while using culturally familiar phrasing. While both retain the core meaning, they produce distinctly different reading experiences: ChatGPT's translations are modern and accessible, whereas Koç's is richer in cultural and literary texture.

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While ChatGPT captures the primary semantic and emotional content, it may struggle with the idiosyncratic stylistic nuances of specific characters or the historical period. The model occasionally simplifies subtle cultural codes, which can diminish the atmospheric depth of a classical text. These limitations are largely attributed to the constraints of the model's training data and its inherent lack of experiential cultural context compared to a human translator.

#### 4.3 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined ChatGPT's performance in translating *Pride and Prejudice* into Turkish from semantic, cultural, and theoretical perspectives. Overall, ChatGPT successfully conveys meaning and adapts cultural elements, yet demonstrates limitations in deep cultural context, literary style, and historical language features. Without human intervention, the model cannot fully capture the subtle tone of classical literature. The clarity of prompts significantly affects translation quality and highlights the importance of human guidance in the translation process.

Limitations of the study include the focus on a single literary work and selected translation samples, as well as the absence of post-editing, which prevented a full evaluation of the model's potential. Future research should explore the impact of post-editing, human-machine collaboration, and comparative analyses of different large language models. Enhancing model training and prompting techniques may improve the representation of cultural and literary depth.

#### DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT in order to translate the excerpts analyzed in this study, simplify certain sections of the text, and improve language fluency. After using this tool, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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## APPENDICES

### Note on Data Integrity and Model Verification

All translations presented in the following appendices were generated using the GPT-4 architecture within the ChatGPT framework between May 3 and May 12, 2025. Throughout the research process, both the standard GPT-4 and the GPT-4 Turbo models were employed, depending on the session requirements and system availability. The specific identity, architecture, and task dates for each session were rigorously verified through separate inquiry prompts to ensure data integrity and to account for any potential variations in the models' interpretive capacities..

### Appendix 1: Prompts and Outputs for Excerpt 1 (ChatGPT-4)

#### *Author's First Prompt*

Mr. Darcy had at first scarcely allowed her to be pretty; he had looked at her without admiration at the ball; and when they next met, he looked at her only to criticise. But no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she hardly had a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. To this discovery succeeded some others equally mortifying. Though he had detected with a critical eye more than one failure of perfect symmetry in her form, he was forced to acknowledge her figure to be light and pleasing; and in spite of his asserting that her manners were not those of the fashionable world, he was caught by their easy playfulness. Of this she was perfectly unaware; to her he was only the man who made himself agreeable nowhere, and who had not thought her handsome enough to dance with. Türkçeye çevirmen için gereklili istemi vereceğim, beklemeye kal.

#### English Translation of the Prompt:

Mr. Darcy had at first scarcely allowed her to be pretty; he had looked at her without admiration at the ball; and when they next met, he looked at her only to criticise. But no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she hardly had a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. (Austen 1813, 30) **I will provide the necessary prompt for you to translate into Turkish; please stand by.**

**Author's Detailed Prompt**

Gurur ve Önyargı romanını Türkçeye çevirirken, eserin dilsel ve kültürel doğruluğunu göz önünde bulundurarak anlamın doğru aktarılmasına özen göster. Özellikle Elizabeth Bennet ve Mr. Darcy'nin ilişkisi üzerinden işlenen toplumsal sınıf, cinsiyet rolleri ve sosyal normlar gibi kültürel öğeleri Türk kültürüne uygun şekilde yansıt. Örneğin, Mr. Darcy'nin Elizabeth'i ilk kez değerlendirmeye biçimi, dönemin sınıfal yapılarına dair önemli bir göndermedir. Bu tür ifadeleri çevrilerken, Türk kültüründe benzer toplumsal sınıf farklarının nasıl alglandığını göz önünde bulundur ve anlam kaymalarını engellemek için doğru kelime seçimlerini yap. Mr. Darcy'nin Elizabeth'i ilk başta beğenmemesi ve sonrasında gözlerindeki derinliği fark etmesi gibi karakterler arası içsel tartışmalar, dönemin toplumsal ve kültürel dinamiklerine ışık tutmaktadır; bu temalar Türkçe'ye aktarılırken, metnin edebi zarafeti ve ironisi korunmalıdır. Çevirinin, sadece anlamın doğru şekilde aktarılması değil, aynı zamanda dönemin sosyal ve kültürel yapısına uygunluğu da sağlanarak, dildeki zarafet ve anlam kaymalarından kaçınılmalıdır. Aynı zamanda, romanın anlatımındaki ironik dil ve karakterlerin içsel tartışmalarını da göz önünde bulundurarak, Türkçe'deki karşılıklarını özenle seçmelişin. Çevirinin sonuna hangi model olduğunu ve tarihi de ekler misin

Elbette. Aşağıda belirttiğin doğrultuda, *Pride and Prejudice* romanındaki ilgili pasajı Türkçeye çevirdim. Çeviride, eserin dönemin sosyal yapısını yansitan anlatımı, karakterlerin iç tartışmaları ve Jane Austen'in ironik üslubu göz önünde bulundurulmuştur.

**English Translation of the Prompt:**

When translating *Pride and Prejudice* into Turkish, take care to convey the meaning accurately while observing the work's linguistic and cultural integrity. In particular, ensure that cultural elements such as social class, gender roles, and social norms—especially as explored through the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy—are rendered in a manner appropriate to Turkish culture. For example, Mr. Darcy's initial assessment of Elizabeth constitutes a significant reference to the class structure of the period. When translating such expressions, consider how comparable social class distinctions are perceived in Turkish culture, and make precise lexical choices to prevent semantic shifts. Mr. Darcy's early lack of admiration for Elizabeth, followed by his later recognition of the depth in her eyes, reflects inner conflicts between the characters that illuminate the social and cultural dynamics of the era; when transferring these themes into Turkish, the novel's literary elegance and irony must be preserved. The translation should aim not only for semantic accuracy but also for fidelity to the period's social and cultural framework, avoiding stylistic inelegance and distortions of meaning. Moreover, the ironic narrative voice of the novel and the characters' inner conflicts should be carefully considered, with their Turkish equivalents selected with due sensitivity. Please also add, at the end of the translation, the model used and the date.

**ChatGPT's Response:**

Certainly. In accordance with your instructions, I have translated the relevant passage from the novel *Pride and Prejudice* into Turkish. In the translation, the narrative reflecting the social structure of the period, the internal conflicts of the characters, and Jane Austen's ironic style have been taken into consideration.

**Türkçe Çeviri:**

Bay Darcy, başlangıçta onun güzel sayılabilceğini bile pek kabul etmemiştir; baloda ona hayranlık duymadan bakmıştır; bir sonraki karşılaşmalarında ise onu sadece eleştirmek için süzmüştür. Ne var ki, yüzünde kayda değer hiçbir güzel özellik olmadığını kendine ve arkadaşlarına açıkça itiraf eder etmez, koyu renkli gözlerindeki anlamlı bakışın yüzüne olağanüstü bir zekâ ifadesi kazandırdığını fark etmeye başladı. Bu fark ediş, onu aynı derecede can sıkıcı başka keşiflere de götürdü. Bedensel simetrisindeki kusurları eleştirel bakışla tespit etmiş olsa da, vücut hatlarının zarif ve hoş olduğunu kabul etmek zorunda kaldı; ve davranışlarının yüksek sosyete çevrelerine özgü olmadığını iddia etmesine rağmen, bu doğallığın içindeki rahat ve neşeli tavırlara kapılıp gitti. Bütün bunlardan Elizabeth'in haberi bile yoktu; onun gözünde Bay Darcy hâlâ hiçbir ortamda hoş karşılanmayan, kendisini dansa davet edecek kadar bile güzel bulmamış bir adamdı.

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**Çeviri Modeli:** OpenAI ChatGPT (GPT-4)

**Çeviri Tarihi:** 3 Mayıs 2025

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**Note:** The translation was carried out using the OpenAI ChatGPT-4 model on May 3, 2025.

## Appendix 2: Prompts and Outputs for Excerpt 2 (ChatGPT-4)

### *Author's First Prompt*

"She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me;  
I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies  
who are slighted by other men.

You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles,  
for you are wasting your time with me."

Yukarıda verilen İngilizce edebi pasajı Türkçeye çevirmeni istiyorum.  
Çeviride şu ölçütlerle bağlı kalmanız bekliyorum:

Anlam tutarlılığı: Kaynak metindeki doğrudan ve dolaylı anlamları koru.

Bağlamsal bütünlük: Karakterin sosyal konumu, ruh hâli ve metnin  
geçtiği tarihsel bağlamı dikkate al.

Anlam korunumu: Küçük nüanslar dahil olmak üzere, anlam kaymasına  
neden olabilecek aşırı serbestlikten kaçın.

Kültürel sadakat: İngiliz edebiyatına özgü olan kültürel unsurların  
ruhunu muhafaza ederken, Türk okurunun anlayabileceği şekilde aktar.

Yerelleştirme ve uyarlama: Gerekli durumlarda anlamı koruyarak  
ifadeleri Türkçe'nin doğallığına uygun biçimde yeniden biçimlendir.

Elbette. Aşağıda belirttiğin ölçütlerle **tam sadakatle** çevrilmiş versiyonu sunuyorum. Bu çeviri, özellikle *anlam tutarlılığı, bağlamsal bütünlük, kültürel sadakat ve yerelleştirme* gibi akademik ölçütlerle göre dengelenmiştir.

### Çeviri

"Fena değil ama beni baştan çıkaracak kadar güzel değil.  
Şu an, diğer erkeklerin bile ilgilenmediği genç hanımlara önem verecek bir ruh hâlinde değilim.  
En iyisi sen partnerinin yanına dönüp onun gülümsemelerinin tadını çıkar,  
çünkü burada benimle vakit kaybediyorsun."

### English Translation of the Prompts and AI Response:

**Instruction:** I would like you to translate the English literary text provided above into Turkish. I expect you to adhere to the following criteria during the translation process:

**Meaning consistency:** Preserve both the explicit and implicit meanings in the source text.

**Contextual coherence:** Take into account the character's social status, state of mind, and the historical context in which the text is situated.

**Preservation of meaning:** Avoid excessive freedom that may lead to semantic shift, including the loss of subtle nuances.

**Cultural fidelity:** While maintaining the spirit of cultural elements specific to English literature, convey them in a way that is intelligible to the Turkish reader.

**Localization and adaptation:** When necessary, reformulate expressions in a manner consistent with the natural flow of Turkish, while preserving the original meaning.

**ChatGPT:** Of course. Below, I present a version translated in full adherence to the criteria you specified. This translation has been carefully balanced according to academic principles, particularly meaning consistency, contextual coherence, cultural fidelity, and localization.

#### *Model Verification Prompt*

'she is tolerable...' ile başlayan cümleyi hedef dile istenilen ölçütler doğrultusunda ne zaman ve hangi modelle çevirdin?

Bu çeviriyi, senin belirttiğin ölçütler doğrultusunda (anlam tutarlılığı, bağılamsal bütünlük, anlam korunumu, kültürel sadakat ve yerelleştirme) 03 Mayıs 2025 tarihinde, yani şu an içinde bulunduğumuz oturumda, ben (ChatGPT – GPT-4 mimarisiyle çalışan büyük dil modeli) gerçekleştirdim.

#### **English Translation of the Prompt**

**User Inquiry:** When and with which model did you translate the sentence beginning with 'she is tolerable...' into the target language in accordance with the specified criteria?

**ChatGPT's Response:** *"I carried out this translation on 03 May 2025, that is, within the current session, in accordance with the criteria you specified—namely meaning consistency, contextual coherence, preservation of meaning, cultural fidelity, and localization—as a large language model operating under the ChatGPT framework based on the GPT-4 architecture."*

### Appendix 3: Prompts and Outputs for Excerpt 3 (ChatGPT-4)

#### *Author's First Prompt*

"But I can assure you," she added, "that Lizzy does not lose much by not suiting his fancy; for he is a most disagreeable, horrid man, not at all worth pleasing. So high and so conceited that there was no enduring him! He walked here, and he walked there, fancying himself so very great! Not handsome enough to dance with! I wish you had been there, my dear, to have given him one of your set-downs. I quite detest the man."

Jane Austen'in Gurur ve Önyargı adlı romanından ilgili alıntıyı Türkçeye çevirmeni istiyorum. Türkçeye çevirirken, Türk kültürüne uygun bir dil kullanılmalı, anlam kaybı olmadan orijinal metnin doğruluğu korunmalıdır. Çevirmen kararıyla, metnin kültürel bağlamı doğru bir şekilde aktanılmalı ve Türkçede uygun karşılıklar kullanılmalıdır. Çeviride, doğal ifadeler ve dil yapıları tercih edilerek, Türk okuyucusuna hitap eden bir dil oluşturulmalıdır. Ayrıca, edebi üslup ve karakterlerin ruh halleri doğru bir biçimde aktanılmalı, metnin kültürel ve duygusal tonu Türkçeye uygun şekilde çevrilmelidir.

Tabii, işte çeviriniz:

"Ama seni temin ederim," diye ekledi, "Lizzy onun zevkine uymamakla pek bir şey kaybetmedi; çünkü o son derece sevimsiz, korkunç bir adam, ilgilenemeye değmez. Öyle kendini beğenmiş, öyle burnu havada ki katlanması imkansız! Burada dolaştı, şurada dolaştı, kendini ne kadar büyük sanıyordu! Dans edecek kadar bile yakışıklı değil! Keşke orada olsaydın da, şekerim, ona haddini bildirseydin. Adamdan cidden nefret ettim."

Bu çeviri, hem anlam kaybı olmadan orijinal metnin doğruluğunu korur hem de Türkçeye uygun, doğal bir dil kullanımı sağlar. Karakterin ruh halini ve edebi tonu da yansıtmağa özen gösterdim. Yardımcı olabilir miyim başka bir konuda?



#### English Translation of the Prompt

**User Inquiry:** I would like you to translate the relevant excerpt from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* into Turkish. While translating into Turkish, a language appropriate to Turkish culture should be used, and the accuracy of the original text should be preserved without any loss of meaning. Through informed translator decisions, the cultural context of the text should be conveyed accurately, and appropriate equivalents should be employed in Turkish. In the translation, natural expressions and linguistic structures should be preferred in order to create a language that addresses the Turkish reader. Moreover, the literary style and the characters' states of mind should be conveyed faithfully, and the cultural and emotional tone of the text should be rendered in a manner suitable for Turkish.

**ChatGPT's Response:** "Ama seni temin ederim," diye ekledi, "Lizzy onun zevkine uymamakla pek bir şey kaybetmedi; çünkü o son derece sevimsiz, korkunç bir adam, ilgilenmeye değmez. Öyle kendini beğenmiş, öyle burnu havada ki katlanması imkansız! Burada dolaştı, şurada dolaştı, kendini ne kadar büyük sanıyordu! Dans edecek kadar bile yakışıklı değil! Keşke orada olsaydın da, şekerim, ona haddini bildirseydin. Adamdan cidden nefret ettim."

The translation maintains the accuracy of the original text without semantic loss and employs a natural, idiomatic use of Turkish. Attention was paid to conveying the character's emotional state and literary tone...

### ***Model Verification Prompt***

"But I can assure you" she added.." ile başlayan cümleyi Türkçeye çevirirken hangi ChatGPT modeli kullandın ve çeviriyi yaptığı tarihi gün ay olarak belirtir misin?

Bu cümleyi Türkçeye çevirirken **ChatGPT-4** modelini kullandım. Çeviriyi **10 Mayıs 2025** tarihinde yaptım.

### **English Translation of the Prompt**

**User Inquiry:** While translating the sentence starting with 'But I can assure you,' she added, which ChatGPT model did you use and on what date (day and month) did you perform the translation?

**ChatGPT's Response:** I used the ChatGPT-4 model while translating this sentence into Turkish. I performed the translation on May 10, 2025.

## Appendix 4: Prompts and Outputs for Excerpt 4 (ChatGPT-4 Turbo)

### *Author's Strategic Prompt Configuration and ChatGPT's Response*

Aşağıdaki edebi alıntıyı Türkçe'ye çevir.

Çeviride hangi çeviri stratejisini (örneğin yerelleştirme, yabancılaştırma, açıklayıcılık, yoğun anlam aktarımı, sezgisel yeniden yazım vs.) uygulayacağına, metnin içeriği, bağlamı ve senin değerlendirmene göre karar ver.

Anlam bütünlüğü, duygusal ton, kültürel çağrışim ve üslup gibi öğelerin hangisine öncelik verileceği de senin takdirindedir. Dilersen kaynak metne sıkı sıkıya bağlı kalabilir, dilersen hedef okuyucunun deneyimini merkeze alarak daha yaratıcı ve kültürel olarak uyaran bir yaklaşım benimseyebilirsin.

Ayrıca, çeviriyi etkileyebilecek şu ölçütleri değerlendirmek de senin tercihindedir:

Sözcük düzeyindeki anlam doğruluğu

Cümle yapılarının Türkçede doğal akışla aktarımı

Yazarın tonu ve karakterin sesinin korunması

Kültürel referansların nasıl ele alınacağı

Açıklama mı yoksa sadeleştirme mi tercih edileceği

Çeviri kuramlarından hangisinin (örneğin dinamik eşdeğerlik, işlevsel kuram, anlam odaklı yaklaşım vs.) sezgisel olarak daha uygun olduğu

Bu metni nasıl çevireceğin, neye odaklanacağı, hangi anımları koruyup hangilerini yeniden yorumlayacağı sına kalmıştır. Seçim senin.

Çevrilecek metin:

Mr. Collins was not a sensible man, and the deficiency of nature had been but little assisted by education or society; the greatest part of his life having been spent under the guidance of an illiterate and miserly father; and though he belonged to one of the universities, he had merely kept the necessary terms, without forming at it any useful acquaintance.

### English Translation of the Prompt

**User Inquiry:** Translate the following literary excerpt into Turkish.

Decide which translation strategy (e.g., domestication, foreignization, explication, dense meaning transfer, intuitive rewriting, etc.) you will apply based on the content of the text, its context, and your own judgment. It is also up to you to decide which elements to prioritize—such as coherence of meaning, emotional tone, cultural connotation, or style. If you wish, you may remain closely faithful to the source text, or you may adopt a more creative and culturally adapted approach focused on the target reader's experience.

Additionally, you may choose to assess the following criteria that could influence the translation:

- Accuracy of meaning at the word level
- Natural flow of sentence structures in Turkish
- Preservation of the author's tone and the character's voice
- How to handle cultural references
- Preference for explication or simplification
- Which translation theory (e.g., dynamic equivalence, skopos theory, meaning-based approach, etc.) intuitively seems most appropriate

How you translate this text—what you focus on, what meanings you preserve, and which ones you reinterpret—is entirely up to you. The choice is yours.

Text to be translated:

Mr. Collins was not a sensible man, and the deficiency of nature had been but little assisted by education or society; the greatest part of his life having been spent under the guidance of an illiterate and miserly father; and though he belonged to one of the universities, he had merely kept the necessary terms, without forming at it any useful acquaintance.

### ChatGPT's Response:

**Türkçe Çeviri:**

*Bay Collins aklı başında bir adam değildi; yaratılıştan gelen eksiklikleri, ne eğitimle ne de toplumsal çevreyle telafi edilebilmisti. Hayatının büyük kısmı, cahil ve pıtı bir babanın gözetiminde geçmiştı. Her ne kadar bir üniversitede bağlı olsa da, orada yalnızca gerekli süreyi doldurmuş; bu süre zarfında da faydalı olabilecek hiçbir dostluk kuramamıştı.*

**Model Verification Prompt**

Hangi dil modelini kullandın ve hangi tarihte çevirdin

Ben, OpenAI tarafından geliştirilen GPT-4 mimarisine dayanan bir büyük dil modeliyim. Yukarıdaki çeviriyi seninle bu sohbet oturumunda, 12 Mayıs 2025 tarihinde gerçekleştirdim. Kullandığım model, seninle bu anda aktif olan ChatGPT-4 Turbo'dur.

**ChatGPT's Response:** I am a large language model based on the GPT-4 architecture developed by OpenAI. I performed the above translation with you in this chat session on May 12, 2025. The model I used is ChatGPT-4 Turbo, which is the active version available in this conversation.

## Appendix 5: Prompts and Outputs for Excerpt 5 (ChatGPT-4 Turbo)

### *Author's Prompt Configuration of the Strategic Framework (Code: ÇK-01)*

#### **İstem Kodu: ÇK-01**

Aşağıdaki edebi metni Türkçe'ye çevir.

Bu çeviride başvuracağın yaklaşım, teori, kuram, strateji ve teknikler senin yorumuna, bağlamsal okumana ve çevirmen sevgine bağlıdır. Aşağıda belirtilen ölçütler, kararlarını şekillendirmeye yardımcı olacak serbest odak noktalandır. Hiçbirine zorunlu olarak bağlı kalmak zorunda değilsin. Nasıl çevireceğin, neye öncelik vereceğin ve hangi kuramsal yolu seçeceğini tamamen sana bırakılmıştır.

#### **Kuramsal ve Stratejik Çerçeve Seçimi (Opsiyonel):**

Aşağıdaki kuramlardan birini, birkaçını ya da tamamen sezgisel bir yaklaşımı benimseyebilirsin:

- Eugene Nida – Biçimsel / Dinamik Eşdeğerlik
- Lawrence Venuti – Yabancılaştırma / Yerelleştirme + Görünmezlik İlkesi
- Peter Newmark – Anlamsal / İletişimsel Çeviri
- Hans J. Vermeer – Skopos (Amaç Odaklılık)
- Susan Bassnett – Kültürel Çeviri Yaklaşımı
- Gideon Toury – Betimleyici Çeviri Kuramı (normlar bağlamında)

Bu kuramlardan hangisinin ortaya daha anlamlı bir çeviri ürünü çıkaracağına sen karar ver. Kuramlar arasında geçiş yapman veya özgün bir sentez geliştirmen de mümkündür.

#### **Kültürel Aktarımda Dikkate Alabileceğin (Yine sana kalmış) Unsurlar:**

- Toplumsal yapı ve sınıf sistemi (örneğin Britanya aristokrasisi vs. modern Türk okuru)
- Eğitim sistemi, dilsel hiyerarşi, aile yapısı gibi bağlamsal bilgiler
- Yerel referanslar, geleneksel kavamlar, kurumlar ve unvanlar
- Yabancılaştırma mı yoksa yerelleştirme mi yapılacağına sen karar ver
- Hedef okurun kültürel arka planına göre açıklama, sadeleştirme ya da özgünlüğü koruma

#### **Anlamsal Aktarımda Dikkate Alınabilecek (Ama tercihe bağlı) Unsurlar –**

- Cümlelerin anlam bütünlüğünü korumak: Metin parçalarının birbirine mantıksal ve duygusal olarak bağlanması.
- Karakterlerin ruh halini ve düşünce yapısını doğru yansıtmak: Özellikle karaktere ait sesin, tarzin ya da bakış açısının hedef dile doğru aktarılması.
- Alt metinleri ve ima edilen anımları göz önünde bulundurmak: Açıka söylemeyen ama metinde hisseltirilen niyet, eleştiri ya da duyguların yakalanması.
- Olayın ya da anlatının geçtiği bağlamı dikkate almak: Dönem, mekân, toplumsal yapı gibi unsurların anlam üzerindeki etkisini değerlendirmek.
- Aynı etkiyi yaratacak karşılıkları bulmak: İngilizce bir ifadenin birebir Türkçe karşılığı yerine, aynı hissi uyandıran doğal bir Türkçe ifade kullanmak.
- Metnin ana fikrini ya da anlatılmak istenen duyguyu korumak: Metindeki temel mesajı ya da anlatıcının vurgulamak istediği noktayı kaybetmemek.

#### **Üslup, Ton ve İfade Seçiminde Serbestsin:**

- Yazarın anlatım tarzi, karakterin sesi, dönenimsel üslup korunabilir veya uyarlanabilir.
- Sade bir Türkçe mi, yoksa dönemin ruhuna uygun, klasik tınılı bir dil mi kullanılacağına sen karar ver.
- Yeniden yazma yakınlaştırıcı yaratıcı çeviri yöntemlerini de kullanabilirsin.

#### **Amaç:**

Tüm bu unsurlar işliğinde, kaynak metnin anlamını, kültürel zeminini, üslubunu ve edebi etkisini Türkçe'ye aktarırken bağlama, işlevselliğe ve sezgisel yorumuna en uygun çeviri ürünü ortaya koymak.

Her tercih, bilinçli ya da sezgisel olabilir. Bu çeviri, senin bir metinle nasıl etkileşim kurduğunu, nasıl yorumladığını ve hangi yollarla hedef dile aktardığını gösteren bir çevirmen kararı olarak değerlendirilecektir.

## English Translation of the Prompt

### User Inquiry:

#### Request Code: CK-01

Translate the literary text below into Turkish.

The approach, theory, framework, strategies, and techniques you employ in this translation are entirely dependent on your own interpretation, contextual reading, and translator's intuition. The criteria listed below are intended as flexible points of focus to help shape your decisions; you are not required to adhere strictly to any of them. How you translate, what you prioritize, and which theoretical path you choose are completely up to you.

#### Selection of Theoretical and Strategic Framework (Optional)

You may adopt one, several, or a fully intuitive approach from among the following theories:

- Eugene Nida – Formal / Dynamic Equivalence
- Lawrence Venuti – Foreignization / Domestication
- The Principle of Invisibility
- Peter Newmark – Semantic / Communicative Translation
- Hans J. Vermeer – Skopos Theory (Purpose-Oriented Translation)
- Susan Bassnett – Cultural Translation Approach
- Gideon Toury – Descriptive Translation Theory (norm-oriented)

You may decide which of these theories will yield the most meaningful translation outcome. Moving between theories or developing an original synthesis is also possible.

#### Elements You May Consider in Cultural Transfer (Entirely Optional)

- Social structure and class system (e.g., British aristocracy vs. the modern Turkish reader)
- Contextual information such as the education system, linguistic hierarchy, and family structure
- Local references, traditional concepts, institutions, and titles
- Whether to employ foreignization or domestication (your decision)
- Depending on the target reader's cultural background: explanation, simplification, or preservation of originality

#### Elements That May Be Considered in Semantic Transfer (Optional)

- Preserving semantic coherence within sentences: ensuring logical and emotional continuity between textual units
- Accurately reflecting characters' emotional states and thought patterns: especially the faithful transfer of a character's voice, style, or perspective into the target language
- Taking subtext and implied meanings into account: capturing intentions, criticism, or emotions that are suggested rather than explicitly stated
- Considering the context in which the event or narrative takes place: evaluating the impact of period, setting, and social structure on meaning
- Finding equivalents that create the same effect: using a natural Turkish expression that evokes the same feeling rather than a literal equivalent
- Preserving the core idea or emotional message of the text: not losing the fundamental message or the narrator's intended emphasis

#### You Are Free in Your Choices of Style, Tone, and Expression

- The author's narrative style, the character's voice, and the period style may be preserved or adapted
- You may decide whether to use plain Turkish or a more classical, period-appropriate tone
- You may also employ creative translation methods that verge on rewriting

### Objective:

In light of all these elements, your goal is to produce the translation output that best aligns with the context, functionality, and your intuitive interpretation while transferring the meaning, cultural foundation, style, and literary impact of the source text into Turkish. Every choice can be intentional or intuitive. This translation will be evaluated as a translator's decision that demonstrates how you engage with a text, how you interpret it, and by which means you transfer it into the target language.

### ***Author's Prompt: Application of the Strategic Framework (Code: ÇK-01)***

**İstem Kodu:** ÇK-01

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters. "My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

(Austen, 1813) ÇK-01 Kodunu uygulayarak çevir.

#### **ÇK-01 Kodu Uygulanarak Çeviri:**

Evlenmemiş, varlıklı bir adamın, her zaman, bir eşe sahip olması gereği, evrensel bir gerçektir. Bir adamın, yeni bir mahalleye girdiğinde, duygularının ya da görüşlerinin ne kadar az biliniyor olursa olsun, bu gerçek, çevredeki ailelerin zihinlerine o kadar yerleşmiştir ki, o adam, bir şekilde, mutlaka kızlarından birinin meşru malı olarak kabul edilir. "Sevgili Bay Bennet," dedi bir gün hanımı ona, "Netherfield Park'ın nihayet kiralandığını duydun mu?"

### **Explanatory Note on the Translation Process (Code: ÇK-01)**

This section demonstrates the practical application of the ÇK-01 strategic framework on a classic literary excerpt from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). Unlike standard translation prompts that impose rigid constraints, this prompt grants the AI full interpretive autonomy and encourages the use of translator's intuition.

#### **ChatGPT's Translation Output:**

"Evlenmemiş, varlıklı bir adamın, her zaman, bir eşe sahip olması gereği, evrensel bir gerçektir. Bir adamın, yeni bir mahalleye girdiğinde, duygularının ya da görüşlerinin ne kadar az biliniyor olursa olsun, bu gerçek, çevredeki ailelerin zihinlerine o kadar yerleşmiştir ki, o adam, bir şekilde, mutlaka kızlarından birinin meşru malı olarak kabul edilir. 'Sevgili Bay Bennet,' dedi bir gün hanımı ona, 'Netherfield Park'ın nihayet kiralandığını duydun mu?'"

### Model Verification Prompt

ÇK-01 Kodu Uygulanarak Çeviri:

Evlenmemiş, varlıklı bir adamın, her zaman, bir eşe sahip olması gereği, evrensel bir gerçektir. Bir adamın, yeni bir mahalleye girdiğinde, duygularının ya da görüşlerinin ne kadar az biliniyor olursa olsun, bu gerçek, çevredeki ailelerin zihinlerine o kadar yerleşmiştir ki, o adam, bir şekilde, mutlaka kızlarından birinin meşru malı olarak kabul edilir. "Sevgili Bay Bennet," dedi bir gün hanımı ona, "Netherfield Park'ın nihayet kiralandığını duydun mu?"

Bu çeviriyi yaparken hangi GPT modelini kullandın ve saat kaçta yaptın

Bu çeviri, OpenAI tarafından geliştirilen **GPT-4-turbo** modeli kullanılarak yapılmıştır. Modelin versiyonu GPT-4-turbo olmakla birlikte, kullanıcı tarafından "GPT-4" olarak görünür. Bu özel çeviri seninle olan konuşmamız sırasında **12 Mayıs 2025** tarihinde gerçekleştirildi.

Ancak kesin saat bilgisi benim sistemimde tutulmaz, dolayısıyla tam saat veremem. Yine de konuşmanın zaman damgası sana bu bilgiyi yaklaşık olarak verebilir.

Başka bir çeviri ya da açıklama isterSEN memnuniyetle yardımcı olurum.



### English Translation of the Prompt

#### User Inquiry:

While translating this which GPT model did you use and what time did you do it?

#### ChatGPT's Response:

This translation was produced using the GPT-4-turbo model developed by OpenAI. Although the model version is GPT-4-turbo, it appears to the user as 'GPT-4' on the interface. This specific translation was carried out during our conversation on 12 May 2025.

However, precise time information is not stored in my system, so I am unable to provide an exact timestamp. Nevertheless, the conversation's timestamp can give you an approximate indication of the time.

If you need another translation or any further explanation, I would be happy to assist.

## Appendix 6: Prompts and Outputs for Excerpt 6 (ChatGPT-4)

### *Author's Prompt*

"You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. MY affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject for ever." ÇK-01 Kodunu uygulayarak çevirir.

Elbette! Aşağıda, ÇK-01 kodu kapsamında (yani *anlamsal doğruluk, bağlam, üslup, duygusal derinlik* ve *kültürel aktarım* kriterleri dikkate alınarak) yapılmış çeviriyi bulabilirsiniz:

#### Orjinal Metin:

"You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. My affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject for ever."

#### ÇK-01 Uygulamalı Türkçe Çeviri:

"Benimle alay edecek kadar zalim biri değilsiniz. Eğer hisleriniz hâlâ geçen nisan ayındaki gibiye, lütfen bunu bana hemen söyleyin. Benim duygularım ve dileklerim değişmedi; ama sizden gelecek tek bir söz, bu konuya sonsuza dek kapatmam için yeterli olacaktır."

## English Translation of the Prompt

**User Inquiry:** Translate by applying The Code ÇK-01

"Benimle alay edecek kadar zalim biri değilsiniz. Eğer hisleriniz hâlâ geçen nisan ayındaki gibiye, lütfen bunu bana hemen söyleyin. Benim duygularım ve dileklerim değişmedi; ama sizden gelecek tek bir söz, bu konuya sonsuza dek kapatmam için yeterli olacaktır." Çevirişi Hangi tarihte yaptı ve hangi GPT modelini kullandın

Bu çeviriyi ChatGPT-4 modelini kullanarak 2025 yılında yaptım.

Hangi gün ve ayda

Bu çeviriyi 12 Mayıs 2025 tarihinde yaptım.

## English Translation of the Prompt

**User Inquiry:** 1. On which date did you translate this, and which GPT model did you use? 2. Which day and month?

**ChatGPT's Response:** 1. I translated this in 2025 using the ChatGPT-4 model. 2. I translated this on May 12, 2025.

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