

YENİ TÜRK EDEBİYATI ARAŞTIRMALARI

Modern Turkish Literature Researches

Temmuz-Aralık 2018/10:20 (61-72)

Makalenin Geliş Tarihi: 31.10.2018 Makalenin Kabul Tarihi: 29.11.2018

GLOBAL EXPOSURES IN TURKISH LITERATURE: THE CASE OF ROBINSON CRUSOE*

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ABSTRACT

The texts entitled "Robenson" as adopted in Turkish influenced in one way or another by **Robinson Crusoe**, Daniel Defoe's renowned novel that has become a global figure, will be discussed in this article.

These texts are Abdülhak Hâmid Tarhan's poem entitled **Robenson**, Sait Faik Abasıyanık's short story entitled **Robenson**, Orhan Veli Kanık's poem entitled **Robenson**, Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı's poem entitled **Robenson** and Mahmut Bahar's poem entitled **Robenson Crusoe**, respectively.

The aim here is to determine the nature, change and transformation of the exchange between a main text and the subtexts that are directly or indirectly derived and fed from it and refer to it, in order to understand the continuity of the connection of Turkish literature with global literature, albeit on a specific example, in the world which is increasingly shrinking through the means of communication nowadays.

In this evaluation, Daniel Defoe's Robenson **Crusoe** will be occasionally discussed with the mainland metaphor, and five texts that we have mentioned in Turkish literature will be discussed with the island metaphor.

Keywords: Global literature, Robinson Crusoe, Texts named Robenson in Turkish Literature, Abdülhak Hamit, Sait Faik, Orhan Veli, Cahit Sıtkı, Mahmut Bahar.







^{*} This article was produced within the framework of the project entitled "Turkish Literature in the Globalization Process: An Outlook on Turkish Literature after 1980 from an International Perspective" supported by TUBITAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey).

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TÜRK EDEBİYATINDA KÜRESEL ETKİLENMELER: ROBİNSON CRUSOE ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZ

Bu yazıda adı Türkçede benimsenmiş şekliyle "Robenson" olan ve Daniel Defoe'nun global bir figür haline gelmiş ünlü romanı **Robinson Crusoe**'dan şu ya da bu şekilde etkiler taşıyan metinler üzerinde durulacaktır.

Bu metinler sırasıyla Abdülhak Hâmid Tarhan'ın **Robenson** adlı şiiri, Sait Faik Abasıyanık'ın **Robenson** adlı şiiri, Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı'nın **Robenson** adlı şiiri ile Mahmut Bahar'ın **Robenson Crusoe** adlı şiirleridir.

Buradaki amaç bir ana metin ile dolaylı ya da dolaysız ondan türeyen, ona atıfta bulunan, ondan beslenen alt metinler arasındaki alışverişin niteliği, değişim ve dönüşümünü tespit etmek; bugün iletişim araçları vasıtasıyla gittikçe küçülen dünyada spesifik bir örnek üzerinden de olsa Türk edebiyatının global edebiyatla bağlantısının devamlılığını anlamaya çalışmaktır.

Bu değerlendirmede zaman zaman Daniel Defoe'nun Robenson **Crusoe**'su anakara metaforuyla, Türk edebiyatındaki bahsini ettiğimiz beş metin ise ada metaforuyla ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Küresel edebiyat, Robinson Crusoe, Türk Edebiyatında Robenson isimli metinler, Abdülhak Hamit, Sait Faik, Orhan Veli, Cahit Sıtkı, Mahmut Bahar.

Nowadays, as a popular concept, globalization is defined as an interaction and adaptation process among different countries, companies and governments in different fields, which is also supported by information technologies. This process has different effects on the world societies in the areas such as environment, culture, politics, economics, thought, arts and education. Global fluctuations are always encountered throughout history, although they are not as fast and deep as they are nowadays. These exposures, which are sometimes guided by different centers, may also transform into a spontaneous global meaning since they sometimes strongly reflect a common feeling and thought of people in all cultures.

The novel Robinson Crusoe, which has been translated into almost all languages of the world today, has led to different effects in many cultures in this context. It is possible to see that Robinson Crusoe was novelized again in a side story from time to time or a critical view or a postmodern perspective at times until French author Michel Tournier's *Friday* or the *Other Island* or South African author J.M. Coetzee's *Foe.* A point that is so advanced is also the criticisms and interpretations of Robinson Crusoe. Literature and novel, especially, have become a material for many areas of discussion from economy to politics, from religion to education, philosophy, cultural imperialism and colonialism, except for theoreticians and critics. It is also possible to see the effects created by it in a very large area from cinema to theater, television series and even to thematic parks. All of these are important in the sense that they show the global effect created by Robinson Crusoe. In this sense, James Joyce's statement "The real symbol of the British Empire is Robinson Crusoe" should be remembered.

Robinson Crusoe written by Daniel Defoe in 1719 has been considered as the pioneer of modern

novel by many researchers. In the novel, Robinson who had a passion for going to high seas survives a shipwreck alone, takes to an island and lives there for twenty-eight years. Robinson Crusoe has been greatly recognized for its features such as discovering new places and passion for adventure in the whole world literature and has been widely known in the manner that novels with this content include those before it.

It can be said that it has also gained many readers in Turkish literature when it is considered that it is one of the first novels that was translated into Turkish during the Tanzimat period and then it was repeatedly translated by various authors.² When it is also discussed together with **Les Aventures de Télémaque** and **Les Misérables** that are among the first novel translations into Turkish literature, it is obvious that it actually carries a sense of life based on an individualand wants to foreground the individual's will. Undoubtedly, this is a very important step for a traditional social structure based on association and community. Therefore, these texts have also appeared in Turkish literature as a "prototypical text" bearing the western human type. This side of the matter can normally be taken for literature and society that wants to change. However, the fact that the hero of a foreign novel sometimes turns into a culture code, an image, a mental perception and a global way of thinking by going beyond the limits of the novel means that it also carries the world of meanings it contains with itself. However, within the context of Robinson, this effect has not been within the frame of the passion for adventure, discovering new places or popularizing a world-view based on individual in the texts that we discussed, and also it has occasionally appeared with a number of different forms of perception that are not present in the main text as a message element.

Within the Western culture, Robinson is the explorer of the "other" as an individual and society and the nature outside the western life that began to modernize. The consciousness of "appropriating" the other, transforming the world outside of yourself into your own practice is the prototype of taming in the sense that the self perceives. It is not an escape, but on the contrary, it is a reflection of endless hunger and the desire to discover what is beyond in the secular sense. In a more specific sense, Robinson is "a vigilant and reasonable merchant, an entrepreneur rather than an adventurer. The fact that he is a prudent person precedes the desire to become a hero, and this determines all the actions." (Daiches, 1989:600) According to some critics, he is a puritan and individual prototype of today's western capitalist process. (Childs 2001, 18) The principle of puritan understanding that advises human to know himself, the free individual understanding of Protestantism take Robinson even further and turn it into the praise of human who always wants to reach further. (Göktürk, 1997:90) In fact, this type also existed in English literature before Robinson Crusoe, and Robinson is a part of this tradition called Robinsonad.

² The first translation of Robinson Crusoe into Turkish was made from Arabic by the historian Ahmet Lütfi Efendi in 1864. (Tanpınar, 1985:285); Mustafa Nihat ÖZÖN also determined the same date for the first edition and draws attention to the emphasis that "a work translated into all world languages" in the foreword of the book; and also mentions other translations until 1928. (1985:125-126.)

The Case of Robinson Crusoe

The first Robinson or more precisely the first Robenson text as in common usage in Turkish that we will be mentioned in this article, is Abdülhak Hamid's poem entitled **Robenson** included in his book **Divaneliklerim Yahut Belde (1885) / My Madness or The Town** in which he mainly tells the views of nature based on Paris impressions.

It is possible to say that the Tanzimat literature is a break from classical Turkish literature depending on tradition and a kind of effort to open itself to global effects. Just like Robinson's island ... An island, however, that tries to come close to the mainland in the west and that cannot completely break off the mainland depending on tradition no matter how much he makes an effort for it. Perhaps an important point of this break is Abdülhak Hamid' poem. Abdülhak Hamid was a poet who best reflected the global influence created by romanticism in a philosophical depth with his works in Turkish literature.

Hamid is actually an island in Turkish literature during the Tanzimat period with **Sahra/The Desert, Belde/The Town** that recomend moving away from the city and returning to nature in an environment where the city consciousness in Turkish culture was not yet realized in a modern sense, and his other works. The fact that he discussed the nature within the frame of a human-centered perspective in the form that is not present in the classical Turkish literature is an important novelty. However, the impression that the city and village life did not arise from inside the Turkish natural life that he tells in many of his poems such as **Sahra/The Desert** and **Belde/The Town** always makes itself felt. Therefore, it is possible to say that the desire to break away from the mainland depending on tradition, which started with the Tanzimat, came true in Hamit and turned into a complete island.

Hamid's poem Robenson that we have mentioned expresses the impressions of "a promenade that takes its name from the novel's famous hero Robinson in Paris which is today an important picnic area by the Seine river", as reflected in Hamid's poem.

"ROBENSON

Look at how nice is that moon in woodland

Not a moon, as if it is a small star

It continuously appears and disappears.

Sometimes, as the leaves dance,

It looks as small as a small piece of star;

It flies close to you but seems far;

Suddenly it changes, turns into crescent,

It goes out when a fast wind blows;

Then a big moon appears in the sky!

Suddenly it looks like a lover hiding her face,

It is unbelievable that it keeps moving without stopping.

Watch out this secretly flying bird,
I wonder why it cries?
Does it get happiness from the forest,
I wonder if it is happy or unhappy?
It continuously sings in the forest,
Its voice is continuously reflected in the river;
This is clearly understood from this sorrowful echo,
Of course, it is crying while singing
Its voice is flickering because of it.
It cries out because of this
It looks like the splash of water!" (Tarhan 1991: 130)

As it is understood from this poem the first part of which is mentioned above, Hamid's Robenson is not directly attached to Daniel Defoe's Robenson. This is actually a reflection of a search for an island in Hamid's poem. This place is undoubtfully reflected in Paris life to emphasize the peaceful air and naturality of Robenson Island. Hamid also thinks this place as a kind of island for moving away from community life and the crowds and meeting with the lover. In this poem, Robenson is not a character hiding behind his name and a way of life accordingly; it is the identification of the views of the place with Robenson Island. Therefore, an island without Robinson invites everyone who set foot here to become a Robinson.

Hamid narrates the views of the moonscape that is seen through the trees that change with the leaves driven by blowing wind in the first part of the five-part poem, and he narrates a bird's call and fly, and the nest made there by it in the parts 2, 3 and 4. While Hamid states that this place is a nest for all birds in the fourth part, in a sense, he implies that he has found a home and island for himself when the emphasis he lays on the connection between bird and poet in the upper parts is taken into account.

Indeed, in the 5th and last part, after indicating that this place is a home but an angel's home, he turns to the lover next to him and says you are an angel who has fallen into silence and offers her to escape from there together.

All of these show us that Hamid's **Robenson** is an island where a lost lover is found. However, the fact that this place has such a feature is due to its space-related characteristics. The transformation of a bird into an angel lover is possible within this space; however, we understand that the poet loved this island of Robenson since he found the lover there because the fact that he offered the lover to escape from there when he met with her is a desire to transition to the real world, to Paris's crowded life.

Although Hamid's Robenson is not directly connected to the mainland Robenson, it has common features with it in terms of having loneliness and naturality and being a home. An island without Robenson invites the poet to become Robenson, and the meeting with the lost lover is followed by

the intention to get out of there.

Hamid's Robenson Island was grounded with a romantic theory. This island, which does not have a utopia, does not try to open itself a world of new possibilities, is not a design, but includes a description, gives us the image of the "alienation" of "the other", self-alienation.

While Defoe's Robenson mainly includes a universal social dimension, a depth that covers the whole world out of the individual, and a kind of new and mental world knowledge, Hamid's Robenson presents a perception of Robenson that was personalized, was limited by individual and feelings, could not go beyond himself, and lost in his island.

The second **Robenson** that we will discuss is **Sait Faik**'s short story that he first published in Varlık magazine in 1934.

Robenson

.....

The world is endlessly full. In the world, many people whose glances resemble each other have a bath by the sea, slide in ice over the mountains and make love under the weeping willows and poplars of the plains.

Your eyes are far closer to me than my eyes, your hands are as angry as my hands, your yellow-haired nape, your relieved bare feet trapped in boats... your color is yellow, red, brunette, black, whatever it is, as if I understand your language, I catch your odour.

This green, yellow, navy blue flag is your flag. The flag of the neighboring tribe is the same, but there are nine stars on it.

Are you choking for that? Will you kill this child, with whom you had a meal in his home before fighting and through whom you feel that you are living when his head touches you, for these nine stars?

All right, I love people, not flags. So, my life will pass on the ferries looking at the stars flowing over the round world.

.....

For days, I waited for a ferry as the length of the old harbor. As soon as possible, a small ferry and a job.

I ran into Dad Vilyams who wore his purple broadcloth caps in "The Biggest Lobster" drinking house, which is the destination of many volunteer mariners, from sailors who do not know how to sail to seafarers who survived the mouth of sharks. He offered me a job:

We will go to Amazon coasts with a British registered cargo ship if necessary. We will transport wheat, corn, pigs from city to city, from village to village.

Five British pounds per month.

Goodbye great port, I will come to see you for a month in the next winter.

- Goodbye Yoana.
- Robenson, the sea air is cool, it would be better if you would wear your navy blue undershirt
- Oh dear, I would wear, give me your lips.

The surface of the round world is full of fjords, ravines and harbor. Seas are broader than lands.

- Goodbye Sait, Hello to Kosti!
- Have a good trip Roben!" (Abasıyanık 2004: 80-81)

Here, Robenson refers to a space not a hero, like Hamid's Robenson. The actual strong connection with Defoe's Robenson is the desire of Roben, the hero of the story, to put out to sea as soon as possible and his joy of being able to do it with a job offer. In this "case story" reminding of the initial parts in which Robenson's passions for putting out to sea, seeing new places and people are told at the beginning of Defoe's novel, Sait Faik shapes a kind of desire to run away and go in Robenson again, but by including himself in the story.

In this short story that reflects Sait Faik's observations over the years in Switzerland (Çelik 2002: 249). Robenson says "Goodbye Sait" when he would set out. Sait's answer was only "Have a good trip". Here, Sait is the person who sends Robenson to seas, from adventure to adventure. In this story, there is a Robenson identified by a kind of desire to run away, to escape from meaningless bloodsheds on earth, reasonless wars and insensitive people. However, Sait cannot go away by himself like Robenson. Here, Sait seems to represent somewhat what has fallen behind, senseless wars, what has stuck in insensitive people. Naturally, Robenson is the aspect of Sait who wants to go away.

In this story in which strong philanthropy and a peaceful and free spirit that wants to spread to all kinds of people and places of the world are reflected, Sait Faik uses Robenson as a symbol that represents all of these.

Although Sait Faik includes himself in the story, Robenson is mainly in the center. In particular, Robenson looks at the whole world and people from a peaceful framework although he is a person who wants to walk around the seas, seaside towns without being dependent on any place. Undoubtedly, the fact that this was written in a process towards World War II is significant. The great difficulty of human loneliness in an island, and a bitter experience of being separated from people hearing and thinking like him, although their language and color are different, for years. In this respect, Sait Faik's Robenson appeals to the common consciousness of all mankind and the universal knowledge of being a human in this world.

The third Robenson on the island of literature belongs to Orhan Veli. In his poem entitled Robenson that was published in Varlık magazine in 1937, Orhan Veli says:

Robenson

My grandmother is the most beloved one
My childhood friends,
From the deserted island, poor Robenson
We thought about finding ways to rescue.
And we cried together for days
Of helpless Gülliver
In the land of the giants
For his suffering. (Kanık, 1991)

Although the first striking thing here is a longing for childhood and this is a kind of escape, a hidden reflection of identification, of considering himself as a Robenson in the deserted island or as a Gulliver in the land of the giants is sensed. The fact that the poet remembers escaping to a fairy tale land together with grandmother Hanım during the years of maturity in which he experienced the hard reality of the world automatically expresses a desire to escape. Therefore, it is possible to put forward an idea that the poet considered himself as a Gülliver in the land of the giants in the society he lived in and as a Robenson isolated in the deserted island during maturity age. Here, Defoe's Robenson exists in Orhan Veli's Robenson island with its helplessness and loneliness in person.

The fourth Robenson is the poem published by Cahit Sitki in Varlik magazine in 1940:

Robenson

Robinson, my clever Robinson you don't know how I envy you. If you could only show me your island, there I would find peace of mind.

I'll be the ship, you be the captain.

We can unfurl the sail one morning.

The sea becomes our shadow in the sun.

The journey. And suddenly we're at our island.

I wish you could be my interpreter, introduce me to the fish, to wild birds and flowers, say to them about me: `He's one of us.'

I know how to climb trees.

I can tell a fruit that's ripe.
I can also manage breaking stones,
making fires, cooking food.

Robinson, understanding Robinson, if your island hasn't sunk yet take me there
Before the seaways close (Tarancı, 1940)

Cahit Sıtkı's Robenson is described as an enviable hero, unlike Orhan Veli's Robenson. Nevertheless, while it is felt like an escape as it is in Orhan Veli, this is shaped in the form of an escape to Robenson Island; "an escape from the society, crowd and degeneration to his own essence, loneliness and purity (Korkmaz 2002: 174). In this poem, the poet asks Robenson to take him to his island. The fact that the poet's desire to "rest on his own" and feel at peace lies behind it indicates that he is in the tendency to escape from the atmosphere he lives.

Robenson is emphasized as a clever man at the beginning of the poem, and poet says he wants to rest on his own at the end of this verse. Here the poet indicates that Robenson, who lives on an island, has done a reasonable job because the problem of the poet who knows to climb the tree, who knows the formation of the fruit, who can break the stone and cook is related to "mind" in the social environment he lives in. The poet, who thinks he does not live in a reasonable world, wants to escape from all his mental and social problems, and the way to get out of this is to live on an island far from the whole human community like Robenson because the elements with which connection is established in the following verses are fish, birds, flowers and trees. In fact, this is an escape plan from a mindset, a system and society. The poet wants to be a ship and deliver himself to Robenson completely.

In the last verse, Robenson is "sympathetic". This tells us that there are no "sympathetic" people around the poet. Unavoidably, the poet wants to go to Robenson island as soon as possible. However, there is also the possibility that his island might submerge. This also reminds us of the possibility that a disaster that has surrounded and will surround the whole world would destroy the deserted islands after comprising people.

It is true that Defoe's Robenson is smart, but this intelligence or rationality is the empirical, pragmatic mind of Anglo-Saxon individualism. Although Robenson Island contains a far romantic country, an exotic, mysterious world, it is a text that is mainly dominated by the principles such as domestication, appropriation, training, transformation and self-appropriation.

A text that is interesting in terms of showing that Robinson Crusoe also continues to have an effect as a global figure in Turkish literature at the present time is the poem entitled **Robenson Crusoe** written by Mahmut Bahar in 2015:

ROBENSON CRUSOE

without your eyes on the shoulder of any fairer sex
while being on the watch of loneliness for twenty-four hours
do the fireballs fall to your heart
does sweaty and blonde summer come to your island

the days of hunger and idleness
how much could you tickle to the patience slope
has the click of four operations done the job
how many words have you taught to your parrot from 'manual on how to use human'

are waiting for the men whose breath is irritable and skins are rut (lustful) to whom he reveals that he is angry on which branches you hang your joy while the letters of swearing are dispersed in its southwester

you have forgotten something, have you thought that you have been forgotten if the god allowed for two days who would you take and return, to your island is the most loving one or the person you like the most

throw a bottle in the sea write the latitude and longitude of loneliness say that loneliness dissolves the body the spirit of salt will not dissolve

we have not been able to become earthman you, be an islander (Bahar 2014-2015:30)

In this poem, the poet touches on the universal feelings of a human at the centre of Robenson. The poem progressing within the frame of the feelings of loneliness, love, hunger, anger, happiness, to love and to being loved emphasizes loneliness in the universal sense and then ends by referring to the fact that human is a being who possesses the spirit. In the poem, social concepts, as well as the physical and spiritual hunger, are implicitly mentioned. While Robenson is considered as a symbol of the loneliness of an individual, on the one hand, he is an object of criticism in the social plan. The expression of "manual on how to use human" is the criticism of perspective on "the other" within the western-centered human perception in this sense. However, this criticism pales beside the criticism that people have not been able to make the world a livable place in the last two verses. Although Robenson is physically dissolved due to loneliness, his soul will continue to exist as a human; however, earthmen are about to lose their souls. In the last two verses, the poet puts a world

full of human existence without losing their soul against a lonely human existence without losing their human emotions on an island.

It is difficult to say that these five Robenson texts in Turkish literature in the modernization process are in harmony with each other in the sense of regenerating a global image. Hamid's Robenson is in search of an ideal romantic place on this island and wants to take his lover and return to Paris life, Sait Faik's Robenson wants to go away and put out to sea, Orhan Veli's Robenson is waiting to be rescued by a child, Cahit Sıtkı's Robenson is conversely presented with the assumption of living a calm life, and Mahmut Bahar's Robenson transforms into the object of being able to remain as a human even on an island despite being the image of loneliness. How much these five Robensons are related to Robenson and how similar they are to him are debatable. It is possible to say that a sense of escape also combines them in the background. However, sometimes aspects of this escape and sometimes the intention in this escape contradict each other.

When these five Robensons are read as five islands of a mainland, we see that Hamid reflects the spatial characteristics of this mainland, Sait Faik reflects the free spirit of this mainland, Orhan Veli reflects his desire to escape from this mainland, Cahit Sıtkı reflects his desire to escape to this mainland, and Mahmut Bahar reflects this mainland as a place to stay as a human being although it is surrounded by a loneliness and desolation.

However, the mainland Robenson includes an extraordinary view on human's social nature, the rich imagination of the individual in using his human skills, and accordingly the individual's creation of his own myth. It mentions "the British human type who believes that only his own will would take him to victory when he faces difficulties, but, not only British individualism but also an apology of human will be based on energy and hope; the myth of a person who tries to survive in a painless universe, struggles with impossible situations, investigates all the possibilities of his own power" (Özön 1985: 22).

None of these five Robensons in Turkish literatures has a human perception in this sense and human characteristics that bring his power and skill to the forefront in the sense of "a being with a will". As an island text, it is possible to say that they have a strong but deeply weak connection with the mainland in the west above water. However, apart from all these, it is obvious that it has taken root since it first entered Turkish literature in the form of a global image.

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