

AUTHORSHIP IN THE CULTURE INDUSTRY:

AZRA KOHEN’S SERIES OF NOVELS *Fİ*, *Çİ*, AND *Pİ*

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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## ABSTRACT

Authorship in the Culture Industry: Azra Kohen's Series of Novels *Fi*, *Çi*, and *Pi*

This study is an attempt to place the contemporary author somewhere between literature and the media culture of our day. On the best-seller shelves since 2014 when it was first published, Azra Kohen's trilogy *Fi*, *Çi*, *Pi* has been frequently subjected to discussions in Turkish literature. As a result, the writer has become a popular figure who has been invited to television shows, universities, newspaper interviews since then. The story narrated in the trilogy also promised such rating for a production company that three years after its first publication, it was adapted to screen as internet series. This master thesis analyses Kohen's contradictory attitude as a writer regarding the appearances in media and the series adaptation: while claiming that her only concern is to change the world, the writer comments on her authorship as frequently as possible. This ambivalent perception of (non) authorship is analysed in the light of literary, cultural and critical theories applied to the trilogy and the appearances in the media. In addition to a glance at the characters, the issues of corruption, fame and beneficial relationships in business and media platforms are comparatively analysed both in the trilogy and its screen adaptation. The reasons of the changes in the process of adaptation are discussed in the light of cultural theory. The result of this study shows that Kohen's idealistic intentions are challenged by capitalistic motives throughout the process.

## ÖZET

Kültür Endüstrisinde Yazarlık: Azra Kohen'in Roman Serisi *Fi*, *Çi* ve *Pi*

Bu çalışma, çağdaş yazarı edebiyat ve günümüz medya kültürü arasında bir noktaya konumlandırma girişimidir. İlk basıldığı 2014 yılından beri çok satanlar arasında yer alan Azra Kohen'in *Fi*, *Çi*, *Pi* üçlemesi Türk edebiyatı kapsamında sık sık tartışmalara konu olmuştur. Bu duruma bağlı olarak, yazar bugün de hala televizyon şovları, üniversiteler, gazete röportajlarına davet edildiğinden popüler bir figür haline gelmiştir. Üçlemede anlatılan hikaye, bir yapım şirketine izlenme ihtimali de vadettiğinden, basımının üç yıl ardından internet dizisi şeklinde ekran adaptasyonu yapılmıştır. Bu yüksek lisans tezi Kohen'in medyada yer alışını ve dizi adaptasyonunu göz önünde bulundurarak çelişen yazarlık kavramını analiz etmektedir: tek kaygısının dünyayı değiştirmek olduğunu söylerken, yazar, yazarlığı üzerine oldukça sık yorum yapmaktadır. Bu çelişkili yazarlık algısı, üçleme ve Kohen'in medyadaki görünürlüğü üzerinden okunarak, edebiyat, kültür ve eleştirel teoriler yardımı ile yorumlanmıştır. Karakterlere bakışın yanında, şöhret, medyadaki bozulma, medya ve iş dünyasındaki çıkar ilişkileri, üçleme ve diziyle karşılaştırmalı bir şekilde analiz edilmiştir. Adaptasyon sürecinde değişiklikler yapıldığı göz önünde bulundurularak, olası nedenler kültürel teoriler ışığında tartışılmıştır. Tüm bu okumaların ve yorumlamaların sonucunda insanlığı gözetken idealist niyetlerle başlasa da sürecin sonunda Kohen'in yazarlığının çelişkili biçimde kapitalist hale geldiği ortaya çıkmıştır.

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To my late father.

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE BEST-SELLING NOVELS,  
THE SCREEN ADAPTATION AND THE AUTHOR

The television, the show business, press, magazines, flashlight... A world where beauty is either to be destroyed or possessed, where it is both a blessing and a curse. A plastic world built from beneficial relationships. A rotten, drugged, dark, yet glamorous world. The trilogy *Fi, Çi, Pi* represents a panoramic view of our day's media culture and the relationships that are built within. Azra Kohen depicts the media world full of dualities, and exposes what goes on behind the curtain as she narrates what her characters do in the darkness in order to be under the spotlight. The opposition between this fame and darkness can be told to work as a thematical metaphor for the whole story as it is full of such dualities. There is a frequent mention of a 'price' that needs to be paid in order to acquire fame and wealth. The more a character shines on the screen, the darker and more corrupted they become behind the camera. All of the main characters are in the fields of media or arts: For instance, Duru the ballerina, Deniz the musician, Özge the journalist, Sadık the media boss... The reader witnesses the change of each character from one edge to the other through their process of becoming darker and corrupted, or to put more correctly, they uncover the layers over the true origins of each character. At the end of the trilogy the most beautiful and pure female character loses her beauty and naivety, or as another example, a successful psychologist and television figure turns out to be a mentally ill person and ends up in an asylum. They all take a journey between two extremes of a duality. Or to put it more correctly, they all turn into their unmasked versions, or go back to their true origins.

Although by all these character stories, the writer takes a critical position towards capitalism and popular culture as its product, it is an undeniable fact that she also became a part of this system with the best-selling trilogy and its screen adaptation. This contradiction constitutes the essence of this study: criticism of capitalism through capitalistic tools and the dual identity a writer gains through the process.

As the books suggest, the aforementioned darkness is a result of the capitalistic concerns of our day that bring many other problems to surface such as popular culture (in a pejorative sense) and modern life, based on a deceiving system of media, damaged human relationships, a mediocre education system, and as a consequence, numb and incapable individuals. Without a doubt, this criticism comes along with a solution of the problem: “You will begin” as Kohen (2017b, blurb) promises at the end of the trilogy. Her claim is that the reader, after having read the story will awake and “begin” to discover their own origins by getting rid of the unnecessary or deceiving concerns that are imposed on them by popular culture and modern life. The value of individuality is underlined alongside a narration of a series of harms caused by capitalism, such as women’s perception of beauty, the pollution caused by the industry or the agenda setting of the media bosses the audiences are exposed to. The trilogy also starts with a warning instead of a prologue “This book is not written for everyone” (Kohen, 2013). From the very beginning, conveying the feeling that they are unique, Kohen reminds to her reader about their individuality. During the story, the character Deniz also frequently implies that the corruption is a product of our lack of individuality. Özge admires all things that are original or authentic and finds modern life to be full of fake personalities. As it is possible to increase the number of these instances, the narration, briefly, is Kohen’s way of

warning about the aspects of modern life that causes loss of individuality. All the aforementioned darkness and corruptions of modern life are narrated as causes of the lack of originality that also links to Kohen's sense of being an (non) individual. The writer claims our curiosity is poisoned by daily life, so called socializing, and trashy art and therefore, while trying to become the person that is modelled after modern life and capitalism, we end up losing our originality and individuality. Just as the narrative uncovers the false identities of the characters, the reader has to uncover the layers on their own characters as well in the quest of originality. The aim is to become aware of all the capitalistic concerns that shape them falsely and try to reach true-self.

At this point, another contradiction comes to surface. Although it seems as the writer gives the power to do so to her reader, the fact that she keeps her authorship on the foreground contradicts with her message. At the end, the reader who gets rid of the damage caused by capitalism, reaches to Kohen and her way of seeing life. Even though the trilogy has nothing to do with an autobiography, Kohen overly reflects her biographical features to the narration. She divides her academic knowledge into each one of her characters and passes on the information to the reader. Therefore, the issue of originality becomes an argumentative one. While promising them a "beginning" Kohen leaves very little space to the readers. In addition, the frequent speeches she gives on her authorship, causes a contradictory attitude when her claims such as "I am not a writer... I am not interested in the literary world's non sense" (Arman, 2015) are taken into consideration.

Even though there is a compatible and structured criticism within the content of the books, there is a certain contradiction or duality when all the interviews of the writer, the book sales, the series adaptation and the language of the

books are taken into consideration. The trilogy becomes a commercial project with the help of the social media, the screen adaptation and mainstream media and the big picture confuses the reader and the spectator. Although she speaks badly of capitalism, Kohen keeps using its tools for the sake of her book sales and reputation. Does not she become one of the capitalistic damages by doing so? This contradiction or duality lies in the very heart of this study.

Finding television numbing, Kohen gained popularity as a result of the talk shows she was invited, of social media, and of the newspaper interviews. Frequently criticising the followers of television series throughout the trilogy, Kohen gave permission to a screen adaptation of her books. What began as a humble journey with Kohen's claims such as "Who I am does not matter" turned into an almost godly way of writing and commenting on authorship. This study aims to correlate all these contradictory moves to the link between authorship and capitalism. It tries to find out the possible necessities of capitalism that imposed such contradictory aspects to the trilogy and the series.

Kohen offers a way out of capitalism and the numbing affect of modern life in a few steps: first, the readers read the trilogy, they see the corruption, they awaken and change their perception of 'origin' and instead they find their own, they "begin" by analysing their experiences. The purpose is to make them realize all the false identities that were imposed on them by the modern way of living. Being beautiful, famous or successful are taken down as they are nothing but deceiving adjectives used for the people who did not truly deserve them. In addition, the help does not come from a boring source but an entertaining one as it is fictionalized with a plot line and interesting characters. However, the fact that the trilogy is a work of fiction, turns self-help into self-trap. Because the message is embedded between the lines of

a twisted love story, the trilogy runs the risk of poisoning the readers' curiosities just as Kohen was complaining all along.

As frequently offered by capitalist system, individualism is similarly the core idea in the trilogy: Read the book and become *you*. Learn a lesson from all the mistakes done by the poisoned, dark characters of the story and imply it to your own life in order to stay out and aware of the system you are living in. The promise of individualism is also supported by the online screen adaptation as well: as the series did not air on television, the spectator watched it whenever they wanted, how long they wanted, without any commercial breaks. Regarding its popularity in the media, the series' rating and the trilogy's sales, the study aims to situate Azra Kohen and the trilogy in the triangle of authorship, modern media and late capitalism. All in all, Kohen became a considerable part of the contemporary popular culture in Turkey and the rapid popularity makes this study necessary.

Blamed to be low or *numbing* by some academics or critics and especially Kohen throughout years, popular culture and the content created within is actually quite important for the field of cultural studies as it says a great deal about the majority of a society.

Hundreds of millions of people are consuming films, television programs, computer games ... trashy magazines, pop music... romances... as they do so, they are making judgments about whether they are good or bad ... The everyday consumption of popular culture involves the use of popular aesthetic systems. And yet – amazingly – the intellectuals whose job is to understand and comment on the cultures in which they live continue to know very little about these systems. (McKee, 2007, p. 2)

Defined by Adorno (2001) as leisure time, the hours spent in front of a screen is “roughly seven hours a day... and the soap opera stars receive thousands of letters a week in which the adoring faithful confess secrets of the heart...” (Lapham, 1994, p. xx). This is the exact reason why this study is a useful one for the field of cultural

studies: Especially regarding the facts that the books became a best-seller in book store chains and was adapted into an online series, Kohen's trilogy makes good use of the aforementioned capitalistic system and this use is analysed on the basis of the content, form and the adaptation process of the books. The detailed reading of this use contains the observation of numerous actions that may seem unintentional on the surface but assumed to be rediscovered as planned ones through analysis.

The working assumption of this study is that Kohen makes a criticism of capitalism through capitalism and this duality reflects into her authorship and the content of the trilogy. Although the narration and the characterization are designed as a criticism of the current economical system when taken into consideration Kohen's position throughout the process, there is an inevitable and ambivalent situation between Azra Kohen's literary engagement and her claims about authorship. The study focuses on the concept of authorship in an amalgamation of language and popular culture. Dividing the analysis into three parts, the study will focus on mainly this contradiction stopping by the terms of culture industry and authorship (as it became a part of the industry). The following three chapters work to place Kohen between the screen and literature within the capitalistic way of living and explore her authorship according to literary theories which will ease the understanding of her attitude that is contradicting with the content of the trilogy.

The chapter following the introduction, sets focus on the culture industry as a term coined by Theodor Adorno in 1979 to designate the process and products of mass culture. The series adaptation of Kohen's trilogy which also became a product of culture industry, draws attention to the inauthentic, paralysing and manipulative aspects of mass culture. There are important points to underline when it comes to the adapted work: the interference and interactions of the writer with the process of

adaptation, the implication of individuality it makes, the difference it gained as an online series, and the changes made while adapting and their meaning.

Undoubtedly, Kohen has important messages to transfer to the reader. However, hiding these messages between the lines of a love triangle raises questions about her possible commercial worries. The commodification of the novel is therefore criticized in line with Marxist-inspired Frankfurt School, particularly under the aforementioned concept of Adorno. In this respect, the oscillations between the trilogy and the screen adaptation work to immerse the audience for capitalistic reasons. According to Adorno's view of the process, while watching the series or reading the books, the consumer who hopes things can change, has to go back to work the next day in order to keep the industry alive. Kohen sheds a light on the change with the characters Deniz and Özge but is there change at the end?

The interactions, or to put more correctly, the interference of the author with the screen adaptation, or even the permission itself given to the production company suggests that she contradicts with the message she intends to the reader: "to change the world" (Arman, 2015). As Adorno (1979) claims, mass culture creates a vicious circle out of which as escape or active consumption for the audience in their leisure time are impossible, or deliberately made impossible, Kohen's emphasis on the conception of "the world as it could be" (Storey, 2009, p. 67) does not go hand in hand with the passive consumption process in which the audience is put.

Another point of view incorporated in the chapter belongs to media theoretician Herbert Marshall McLuhan (1964) as he perceives the medium to be just as important as the content. As the medium choice also emphasizes the concept of individuality that is a crucial part of capitalism to the point of implementing selfishness, the series conveys the feeling of freedom: it can be watched or consumed

whenever, wherever and however the audience pleases. While escaping from commercial breaks, the audience is actually more and more exposed to them as the products are placed within the content of the episodes. Therefore, the motif of illusion is not only present in the story but also in the form.

Another concern of this chapter is about the changes made in the story during the process of adaptation: What was omitted? What was different? How did Kohen react to these alterations? It is unquestionable that Kohen accepted possible changes in her work by giving permission to a screen adaptation, therefore she signed the manifesto of the illusion that mass culture creates on purpose for its own survival. Regarding this, where does Kohen stand in this illusion considering the fact that she cancelled the series with the excuse that the story changed exaggaratingly?

As the contradicting capitalistic and non capitalistic dual identity suggest the writer to be both humble and confident at the same time about her authorship, in the next two chapters this contradiction is elaborated with the help of two literary theoreticians: Roland Barthes and Mikhail Bakhtin.

The third chapter bases the ideas in Barthes' *The Death of the Author* (1967) as Kohen's claims such as "Who I am is not important" or "I am not a writer" (Arman, 2015) matches the concept of the author represented in the ground breaking article. A few actions are analysed under the light of the article: the use of a pen name, the humbly responded interview questions and the promise of "beginning" made to the reader. However, the authoritarian tone, the omniscient narration and the frequent imagery of seeds require analysing Kohen's actions from two different perspectives that are in Barthes' (1967) article: Kohen as the dead author and Kohen as the Author-God regarding her authorial stance.



Having remained just an idea until the 1960s, semiology found an avid supporter with Barthes who underlined the language as a semiological system and the primary reality upon which semiologists have to rely. As a branch of linguistics, Barthes stressed semiology in the sense that the priority is given to the act of signifying rather than what is signified. In other words, the endless production of interpretations by language prioritizes the system that provokes signs and meanings. As Chapter Three explores, this also marks the death of the author and authorship as an irrelevant position. Because Kohen insistently reminds that she wants to create awareness and she claims that she has no importance as Azra Kohen, the writer, her attitude is an example for Barthes' death author. "I want my book to be the focus, not me." (Börekçi, 2015, para. 3). The author of the trilogy therefore is supported in her death by Barthes' birth of the reader. As said above, she gives the authority to the reader in the quest of meaning, or origin. Azra Kohen's ideas on her own identity as a non-author are reinforced by the removal of the origin, or of the author in the form and that of characters in the content of the trilogy. Signed with a pen name, the trilogy does not contain any parents which is also Kohen's way of removing the origin and forcing the reader discover or create their own. We come across to the concept of origin again in Barthes' (1967) article: he underlines its impossibility as a person is affected by many experiences, notions, ideologies or so and reflects them into their writing. In this sense, Kohen's emphasis on her own unimportance supports the ideas in the article. Barthes' opinions are seen as the prime help in order to resolve the issue of origin.

The second part of the chapter, opposed to the first one, mainly discusses Kohen's authoritarian and godly attitude towards the reader by referring to her aim of writing for Kohen, the ambiguity of genre and the frequently present imagery of

seeds in the trilogy. What happens after the removal of the origin? As none of the characters have their parents in their life, are they now taking their origins from the author? The tone, the imagery of seeds and the issue of origin, play a crucial role in the godly manor Kohen gained during the project, they are all linked to the nature of her authorship.

As said, Kohen writes in an omniscient tone. She reads every thought, is present in any place and even foresees the future and does not avoid making the reader feel this. The tone might belong to the narrator however, here the biographical criticism makes it once again impossible to unsee Kohen as the dead author. She adds music suggestions to the sub-chapters, calls them ‘scenes’ and obviously wants the reader to read that certain part in the company of certain specified songs. In other words, she is too involved in the processes of reading and understanding to be dead or we may even say she imposes a certain authority in the process of reading and understanding her trilogy.

To reveal this contradictory nature of Kohen’s authorship, Chapter Three revisits other interviews in which she states that she “wrote to change the world” (Arman, 2015, para. 5). By way of reply to this statement, the chapter explores the dual aspects of Kohen’s statements in the media. Kohen’s authoritarian tone and self-affirmation that she sets out a journey of writing to change the world are supported by continuous interferences in the lives of the characters as a wise author, just as her pen name “Akilah” suggests; by the imagery of seeds to underline the process of becoming by using the potential in a seed to become a tree in the end; and by her participation in the crew’s work in the screen adaptation of the novel which is already written in a script-like style.

While the third chapter discusses authorial stance in Barthesian sense, the fourth chapter elaborates the discussion of authorship from a Bakhtinian angle. Considering again the humbly made statements such as “I am not a writer” or “I am not interested in the literary world...” (Arman 2015), the ambiguity of genre may be seen as a result of Kohen’s unpracticed authorship as the trilogy is her first work. However, reading the books in the light of Bakhtin’s (1975) novel theory, take them from being books (as mediums for Kohen’s messages) to being intentionally written novels by mixing genres, different utterances and styles. In the process of reading, it is challenging to put an end to the discussion of “What is the genre of this trilogy?” as the trilogy carries traces from many different genres.

Existing theories of novels until the early 1920s would not help locate Kohen’s genre inclusiveness, i.e. “the incorporation of various genres, both artistic (inserted short stories, lyrical songs, poems, dramatic scenes, etc.) and extra-artistic (everyday, rhetorical, scholarly, religious genres and others)” (Dentith, 1995, pp. 214-5). Thus, it raises such questions: are they self-help books as advertised in the media? Looking at her style, dominantly visual and full of music suggestions, the trilogy also looks like a screenplay, especially considering that it was filmed later on. Then would it be solely a screenplay? However, expanding the scope of novelistic prose to include all media and genres allows Bakhtin’s interpretation of novel to endorse Kohen’s literary practice in the trilogy. Bakhtin’s word for the linguistic variety is heteroglossia, i.e. multi-speechedness, which is fully exploited in the genre of novel. In this respect, the trilogy turns out to be a Bakhtinian novel, and Kohen the author of this novel. It is also important to go back to the contradictory nature of the trilogy as Kohen who emphasizes of the origin, causes a challenging to define the genre as a precisely written one.

Overall, this study elaborates a debate on the historically well-known issues of authorship and screen adaptations by referring to the culture industry and popular culture as one of its products. The importance lies in the fact that psychology sells: the increase in the self-help books over the world hides the naked truth that psychology or psychological diseases became a trend of our day, the late capitalism. Although cancer or many other serious diseases have never been something to brag about for anyone, nowadays people all have anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and very frequently depression. Reading books, the trendy notion of well-being, doing sports, travelling... All became parts of an industry that makes consumers spend money to feel good about their selfishness. Self-help books have an important role in the industry as they are cheap and easily reachable compared to the others. It is a common experience to go to a bookstore and see numerous books on feeling good, being reckless or ways of reaching your dreams.

Research findings on do-it-yourself treatment books demonstrate major limitations in their current usefulness. Yet psychologists continue to develop and market these programs with exaggerated claims... commercialization of psychotherapy raises serious questions that warrant attention. (Rosen, 1987, p. 46)

Similar to many other countries we can talk about a proliferation of these books in Turkey. This is why it is important to see Kohen's trilogy from this angle: three books to purchase in order to find your origin. Followed by the screen adaptation, the trilogy became a commercial project more than it is a message to awaken the numb members of capitalistic modern life. Briefly, this study aims to uncover this duality that lies between the lines of the trilogy and the screen adaptation. While doing so, it reveals the contradictory nature of the author as a humble, hybrid, bold or even godly writer, all in the same time. The goal is directed towards locating Azra Kohen in the

system of language and that of popular culture via the screen adaptation of the trilogy.

Having defined the aims and theoretical references of the study, it is necessary to declare in a few words what this study is not. This is not a criticism of Azra Kohen's writing skills or her personality; therefor the intention here is not to judge the literary quality of her work, the trilogy of *Fi*, *Çi*, *Pi*. The object of this study is her authorship and how it invokes the necessity of close reading of the literary texts for examination of the encounter between popular culture and critical theory. The aim is to analyse the writer's position regarding the fact that the trilogy has become a commercial success given the interviews with the author and the screen adaptation of the trilogy.

After making an introductory representation of the study, one thing also becomes necessary: to give a brief summary and describe the atmosphere in which the story takes place for the potential readers of this study who have not read the trilogy. Before going into the main discussion, it is important to give an idea about the story as there are parts taken from it during the following chapters. The characters and the conflicts of each books of the trilogy are briefly summarized in the upcoming part.

An overall glance at the whole story would reveal that there are patterns observed in the trilogy that are worth mentioning. First of all, each of the three books carries a statement on their front covers. The first book, *Fi* (2015) warns the reader "Only the unbelievable sides of this story are real"; the second, *Çi* (2017a) signals "A good story only begins when it ends"; and finally the third book, *Pi* (2017b) foresees "This story will end here, and you will begin". Secondly, each of the three books seem to base their theme on a female character of the story: the ballerina Duru

is described with her perfectly proportioned beauty, her pureness, and the desire she evokes in men, with her *Fi*. Parallel to that, the first book mostly narrates Can Manay's obsession with Duru. As the book talks a great deal about Can's obsession, the young woman's perfection is described frequently through the story:

As a statue, on her single leg, standing in an upright position on a wood block, the girl slowly and calmly raised her other leg with an angle of 180 degrees without shaking... the perfect leg showed up... Phi... with her godly body, clear skin, and flying blond hair, she was unreal. (Kohen, 2015, p.15, own translation, see Appendix A,1)

In the second book, the focus moves towards the characters Özge and Sadık who struggle hard to ignore their feelings for each other. When Sadık sees Özge, he thinks of *Çi* and identifies Özge with the term. The term chi, which means life energy and mostly used as a yoga term, is related in the story with Özge's ambition and hardwork for a better world and her environmental worries.

How glowing her bronze skin was. How the life pumping inside the vein on her neck was flowing through her eyes... This desiring mood was the source of beauty, or even of the fire inside her. In a body where vita found life, what could suit more to Chi than a desire that is aimed towards a purpose! (Kohen, 2017a, p. 42, own translation, see Appendix B, 1)

Lastly, in the third book, as the number Pi is an important term in mathematics; it matches with the symbol of intelligence, i.e. Bilge in the story. In other words, assigning each book a female character, the narration flows through women.

The trilogy starts with *Fi*, which means phi, or the golden ratio. The title speaks to its content as the latter has a lot to do with the concepts of beauty and proportion, for example there are lots of physical descriptions of the characters. The first book describes the historical and geographical setting together with the personality and physical aspects of the characters. Taking into account the tone of the narrative, the first piece bears resemblance to a screenplay: If the trilogy were a mini series of three episodes, *Fi* would be the pilot episode where all the characters are

introduced to the audience and end with a shocking twist, inviting the audience to watch the second episode. This similarity underlines the cinematographic style of writing that Kohen brings into the story.

It all starts with a therapist and university professor, Can Manay's need for a secluded house as he is a famous womanizer and female guests often come over, which needs to be kept as a secret, especially from the media. This famous television personality is actually a therapist who has become known with his daring format: therapy sessions with Turkey's celebrities on screen. The psychologist searches for a new house, which triggers the story. During his search, the moment he sees a young ballerina, Duru, through the window, he becomes extremely obsessed with her that he buys the house although it does not meet his needs. It's Duru's golden ratio that drags him to the next-door.

Muscular just as much it should be, solid, long, feminine, perfect... Phi. With the sheer white dress that slightly shows what's inside, her divine body, her clear skin and her flying blonde hair, the girl was almost unreal... With her bare feet, porcelain skin and perfect proportion, she bewitched Can. (Kohen, 2015, p. 15-6, own translation, See Appendix A, 2)

However, there is an obstacle: Duru's long-time boyfriend and music teacher from the Art Academy, Deniz. They live together and come to represent a passionate couple that happens to be in love. A pattern starts with Can Manay's move to the next-door: *Fi* becomes the story of a love triangle. The couple goes through fights and conflicts as they have different senses and goals while making art: Duru wants to become a famous dancer, be always under the spotlight, and make a great deal of money, whereas Deniz does not even share his music with anyone and sounds more of an idealist. He takes on a second role in the relationship and treats Duru as if he is her mentor who keeps teaching her outside of the academy, too.

The petty disagreements between Duru and Deniz make it easy for Can to sneak in their life. The famous therapist is naturally a good observant but also he has the advantage of all the screens and cameras he installs into a secret room in his house. He is in the position of an observant while he spends time with the couple, but peeps into their home when he is back home.

The absurdity of buying a big house and going into all the spending and trouble lies in Can Manay's obsessions. Can is a collector who feels the urge to collect all things that have the golden ratio. While buying the house next to the one where Duru and Deniz live, he actually knows nothing about Duru except that she is a well-proportioned, beautiful and pure-looking young woman. Apparently this is sufficient for the young man to fall in love with a woman.

He decorated his house for the same reason he bought the bathtub. Phi ratio. The proportion of the tubs feet to its tank, its height to its length gave the number Phi, just like all the other things that looked beautiful... Can Manay had no weakness other than beauty. Searching the reasons for this weakness, he bumped into Phi ratio, found out it was found in all the things that are said to be beautiful in the universe and he got obsessed with it. Finally, after 10 years he had a lifestyle where he applied Phi all over. (Kohen, 2015, p. 21, own translation, See Appendix A, 3)

Can benefits from one of the advices that Deniz gives to Duru: he wants her to be a part of the team on stage, not try to shine on her own. However, Duru is the main dancer, the prima ballerina and, as a result, wants to attract attention and even to be worshipped. While Deniz denies making alterations on her costume that would make her easily draw the attention of the audience, Can sends her a red feather and she pins it on her hair. She ends up wearing the same white costume as the rest of the dance team but with a small difference: the fiery red, radiant feather. Duru who is always described with her light skin colour and the powdery pink or white clothes she wears, begins to change the moment she pins the contrasting red feather to her head.



From that moment on, we read how Can manipulates Duru in order to have her. Although he cannot tolerate any other man looking at Duru, he becomes the man who gives her a chance to shine on stage. He uses all his connections, money and power to sneak into the couple's life and to impress Duru. In the eyes of Duru, Deniz becomes the neglectful drug addict, while Can is an opposing figure as the famous, successful and rich television personality who can provide her with anything she desires.

On the other hand, Can deals with other problems in his life. Özge Egeli, an ambitious journalist, discovers an old document that proves Can Manay's three-year stay in an asylum. She finds out that Can Manay is a fraud that keeps his true identity a secret. Although she can uncover the truth, Özge, as a simple female journalist, does not have the power to confront a high-status man such as Can Manay and loses her job. The moment she thinks her life is ruined she receives an offer to go after Can from one of the most powerful businessmen in the country, Sadık Murat Kolhan. The two together represent a binary opposition as one of them is a traditionally raised, patriarchal man while the other is a free-spirited, justice-seeking woman who is said to only date with women because she hates men like Sadık.

Although Sadık seems to be a dangerous enemy, Can has some advantage over him too: he was Sadık's wife's therapist before she killed herself in his office. After his wife's death, it was Sadık who made him the famous television personality he is today as Can keeps a hold of Sadık's wife's records of therapy, which may air his dirty linen in public. Through this time Can receives the greatest support from his mentor Eti who is also a therapist and from his new assistant Bilge who used to take his classes at the university.

Towards the end of the first book, Duru follows all the baits Can left for her. When she loses her position as the main dancer because she has problems with the other dancers and Deniz does not care about it, she ends up at Can's doorstep. As one couple breaks up, there are others coming together. Keeping Deniz in heart yet disappointed by his negligence, Duru sleeps with Can, as he is the one who idolizes and therefore can do anything for her.

The second novel, *Çi* which is translated often as chi or qi that means life energy or vital force, starts with a depiction of a perfect relationship: Can and Duru. This relationship contains lots of passion, sex and recklessness towards anything else. The couple is everywhere: on the pages of magazines, newspapers and on TV... After looking for her in a panic, Deniz sees Duru in Can's arms for the first time on a television screen. Having his heart deeply broken, Deniz secludes himself in a small Aegean village. He spends his time working in the fields and only talking to children. He loses his passion for music.

*Çi* narrates more of a process than happenings and events. Deniz and Duru find the chance to reflect upon themselves and look at what they have done wrong in their relationship. Can's idolatry and constant need for sex become a strain for Duru. As she discovers all the cameras Can had installed in a secret room, she becomes furious not with Can but with herself for having ruined the special bond she had with Deniz and burns down Can's house as a result of a nervous breakdown. Now that she has lost her consciousness and therefore gets hospitalized, Can finds the chance to make her believe the lie that the police has been looking for her and that the hospital will not let her go. Her imprisonment comes to a point that Can takes advantage of the unconsciousness caused by the drugs and frequently rapes her. As a clever

woman, Duru comes to realize what he has been doing to her and starts looking for ways to escape from the hospital.

In addition to all this drama, the city becomes chaotic as well. Disturbed by all the injustice they have been putting up with and the manipulations by the media, the young people of the city take to the streets and protest for days. Once a student of Deniz, Göksel joins the police force and beats people to death on the streets. Also a violin student, Ada makes a deal with a commercial agency and writes jingles for them. She gains money but also gets addicted to cocaine knowing that this will break Deniz's heart.

Just like at the end of the first novel, all is changed: Özge decides to become a congresswoman with the help of Sadık. She now chooses the dark side to try a new path to reach her goal. Duru escapes and decides to know herself without the shackles of any men. Deniz decides to go back to the city life. Can starts to collapse as the TV show ends and he loses clients at the clinic. He does not have Eti as a supportive mentor anymore because she is seriously ill and waiting for her life to come to an end.

The second book ends with a confrontation and a shocking twist: Duru finds Deniz without asking anybody and they open up to each other. Can follows her but when he arrives at Deniz's, she has already left for London. In the last chapter titled "A year and six months later" (Kohen, 2017a, p. 316), we find out that Can has a relationship with Bilge. He has pulled himself together thanks to her. However, in London where he has gone for a conference, he sees a musical banner with Duru's picture on it and tells the cab driver: "Please take me to the West End Theatre." (Kohen, 2017a, p. 318).

The third and last book of the trilogy, *Pi*, starts with a calm atmosphere where Can and Bilge are a married couple now. The reader observes every character's condition one by one: Eti who was sick almost to death is healed and becomes interested in religion. Deniz is more involved in the lives of his students and starts building an extraordinary art centre called *Sokak*. Özge is in the congress and sees all the dirt hidden from people each day. Ada is in a miserable situation with her extreme use of cocaine and indifferently production jingles for her boyfriend's advertisement company. Göksel is still working for the police but he also helps Deniz at his art center, Sokak.

The third book is the longest one that involves most of the environment- and health-related issues as well as self-care techniques within. All this information is squeezed into a few actions. The most shocking aspect is that the reader finally finds out who Can really is. It turns out that Eti had a baby boy years ago from her father's rape. She named the child Can. Having had problems and lack of love, Can was in the asylum where Eti worked as a doctor. One of the other patients who had killed a girl, Umut has respect and love for Eti and pushes Can down the roof as a result of her manipulations and afterwards Eti switches their identities. Even more surprising is that Eti had a child with Can (actually Umut) later on and named him Atacan.

During this flashback, Can starts to build an art centre just as Deniz, just like the one they were planning in the first book. He builds this centre for Duru where he even has statues made for her. As he already watched approximately forty shows of her in London, as the master of observation and manipulation, he notices that Duru does not get the attention and admiration she seeks. Her sparkle is not that bright amongst all the other dancers and actors in London. Taking advantage of this lack of worship, Can starts building the center to bring Duru back. Undoubtedly, he manages

to do so. They get back together for one night but one sentence brings out the crazy in Can: “It is not like this with anyone.” (Kohen, 2017b, p. 600, own translation, see Appendix C, 2). He is suddenly disgusted by Duru’s ambition of showing herself. He realizes that he is not the one she loves but what she really wants is to be worshipped. He thinks of Bilge who found all the recital tickets and then left him, he feels guilty.

Of course, the return of his obsession is noticed by Bilge. The clever young woman goes to Eti to ask for some help. A coincidence proves to be helpful that Bilge meets Özge in a reception. These three women get together against Can, uncover his identity and lock him in an asylum. In the meantime, he beats Duru and breaks her ankle. This signals the end of her career as a ballerina whose beauty and so-called perfection fade away.

Madly in love with Özge, Sadık exposes all the documents for his illegal business in order to be worthy of her. However, Özge is already in love with Deniz whom she has met by chance. Thanks to Özge, Deniz stops complaining about things and takes action. Having found out that she is pregnant, Bilge moves to Ali’s farm to create a peaceful environment for her daughter and her brother Doğru.

The book ends with Özge and Can’s confrontation. Visiting him at the special center he is being kept in, Özge finally gets back at him for all the injustice he has caused. The ambition she has gained from her urge to uncover Can’s true identity has helped Özge become a political figure adored by everyone, especially young people. Emphasizing the notion of us, she immediately starts to fix all that is wrong and the author ends the trilogy with a hopeful speech.

As seen, one of the repetitive themes in the triogy is the duality that exists in the characters’ individualities: they go through different journeys during the three

books. They evolve or degrade while chasing their desires. Famous television therapist Can Manay becomes an insane person and ends up in an asylum. Duru, the symbol of beauty, purity and the golden ratio, after getting beaten by Can, loses her beauty, breaks her ankle and the ballerina becomes de-figured and deprived from the one thing she truly loves: to dance. Özge, who in the first book has an image of a messy, pitiful person, ends up being a member of parliament. As the character of intelligence and functionality, Bilge discovers her femininity and changes her sunglasses and buttoned up shirts to fancy dresses. In the beginning, Deniz is a reckless drug addict but his experiences make him quit drugs and dedicate himself to his music and students. Sadık Murat Kolhan, the man of dirty deeds cleans his conscience thanks to the love he has for Özge and reveals all the documents of his illegal businesses. Finally, Eti, Can's mentor who was described as an ill woman gains back her health miraculously and becomes an athletic and healthy person.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE TRILOGY AND ITS SCREEN ADAPTATION

### AS PRODUCTS OF THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

This chapter studies the most apparent contradiction within the *Fi* project: the writer's use of capitalistic tools to promote a work that criticizes them. Those tools are used starting from the content of the trilogy to the screen adaptation that turned the trilogy into a commercial project. As Kohen let her work be adapted into series, which is one of the dominant elements of popular culture in Turkey, Kohen surely gained (more) popularity as its writer. However, during the second season, she was not content with the fact that the adapted work wiped out the message of the trilogy. The rating worries have obviously surpassed her literary, environmentalist or non-capitalistic concerns in importance regarding the *Fi* world. Even though she was quite critical about the television series, blaming them of numbing the audience, the author let her trilogy turn into one, apparently without foreseeing the potential changes. This risky decision towards an approval of screen adaptation has reasons that can be deciphered in this very chapter. The discussion on the screen adaptation will be made in two steps: first by the emplacement of Kohen as the writer of the source material into the circle defined by Adorno in *Culture Industry* (2001), secondly, by a detailed reading of the changes that were made in the screen adaptation. What is changed? What could be the possible reason for these changes? How do these changes relate to the commercial concerns? These questions are aimed to be answered in light of one important point: the series aired on an internet platform instead of television broadcasting. This distinction is important regarding the fact that internet streaming platforms are promising a more individualistic

experience of watching series compared to television broadcasting. Being one of the key terms of the trilogy, the term individualism is also one of the essential terms of capitalism. That is why it is also important for this study for two reasons: first, it is mainly one of the promises made by capitalism for the consumers, secondly, it is one of Kohen's criticisms about modern life: lack of individuality, therefore authenticity.

## 2.1 Series as products of culture industry

It is important to first determine the meaning of series in culture industry, especially in Turkey as they attract considerable attention. Unquestionably, both television and online series, even the ones with a target audience, address large masses. Thousands of people follow them, and even arrange their daily routine accordingly. There are teasers produced to give clues about the forthcoming episodes and they mostly end with a shocking twist in order to evoke curiosity about upcoming the content. So goes the circle for weeks.

On the first pages of the first book *Fi*, Can is on the road with his driver Ali, and they are having a conversation. They chat about the admirers standing outside the car, staring at the famous Can Manay. Can thinks that they worship the wrong person and thereby value the wrong things. "If I would have cured cancer...or have done something real... they would barely know my name" (Kohen, 2015, p. 10, own translation). On the other hand, Ali does not think that is the case. He answers his boss:

If Gods were to land on earth, the television would be the only place they would choose to live. Close enough to be watched, far enough to be reached. Fame is the first thing that gives a God life, faith is the second closest. You have got both. Even though you are human. (Kohen, 2015, p.10, own translation, see Appendix A, 4)



As it is also reflected on the narration of the trilogy, Kohen seems to be aware of the influence that a screen adaptation has the potential to bring visual aspects and fame to her trilogy. Perhaps the screen adaptation is her way of going into the dark side in order to reach her goal: it works as her way of inserting ideas on people's screens, houses and eventually, minds. The following question comes to mind: is this the reason why she confirmed her trilogy to be adapted on screen? To become closer to a godly figure and gain the faith of the reader and the audience as gods would prefer to live in television? But the television series are also accused of being numbing and one of the unnecessary things that are produced by the industry in order to "poison our holy curiosity" (Kohen, 2015, prologue, own translation, see Appendix A, 5).

Regardless of this contradiction, *Fi* series rapidly gained popularity but, unfortunately, Kohen could not foresee that the identity she has attained as a well known writer referred back to Can Manay's criticism of fame: as she complained about it, the reader and the audience misunderstood her implications. Just like Can Manay's admirers' ignorance of the successful people who have "done something real", Kohen's ideas in her work were overshadowed: first, by the story she wrote; secondly, by the series adaptation. In a talk she gave, the writer criticized the readers who were more interested in the love story than the messages she aimed to transfer.

However, the writer did not quite destroy her principles as the series aired online instead of mainstream television broadcast and this causes a remarkable difference. The fact that the adaptation was made into internet series is important as the audience change accordingly to the medium. That is why an overall look to television broadcasting and internet streaming platforms in Turkey has to be made. Internet as the choice of medium, referred to Kohen's messages that were included in the content of the trilogy.

As the audience is widely homogeneous and the television broadcasting considers this homogeneity while producing content, the internet platforms have recently become a new home for series as they promise more freedom and a customized viewing experience. Since 2016, with the entrance of Netflix in Turkey, there has been an inevitable shift of audience from television to internet series. Online series offered the option of watching any time instead of prime time. Television series with a remarkable rating lost an amount of spectators that cannot be overlooked to the internet. The same year two Turkish online streaming platforms were created: BluTv and PuhuTv on which *Fi* series aired (Çağıl, Kara, 2019, p. 10). *Fi* was the platform's first production and it achieved such success that cannot be overlooked. The series were adapted to screen by the director Mert Baykal and scriptwriter Nükheth Bıçakçı and became quite popular in with the advantage of the freedom gained from being an online series. First of all, unlike television broadcasting, online series are not controlled by the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK). The actor playing Sadık Murat Kolhan in the series, talked about the issue in an interview:

...there is the difference of content. You have the chance to get in front of the spectator with a distinct theme... It was more advantageous to be in a medium where there is less censorship, where things from the very core of life are shown more and where there is the freedom of being uncontrolled... (İçöz, 2018, own translation, see Appendix D, 1)

Compared to television dramas, *Fi* looks closer to real life regarding the content and form of dialogues, the choice of music, the easy use of slang, the intimate scenes and the criticism of mainstream media. The series could not air on Turkish television, and if it did, it would have probably been imposed a fine for each episode and an additional penalty of broadcast ban.

At this point, it is also important to make another distinction between online series and television series when it comes to productions like *Fi*: with the emergence of online series, the authority of traditional television has come to an end. On television, the broadcaster is in the position of a decision-maker and the audience are expected to follow the results of any decision they make. On the other hand, unlike television series, the audience of the internet series can freely choose to watch an episode or whole series regardless of the time, place and quantity. Besides the audience's habits, the internet series caused a great change for the filmmakers as well: the length that extends to almost 180 minutes (excluding the commercial breaks) is reduced to 60-75 minutes at most online. The same quality is ensured without any commercial breaks, or very short ones compared to the ones in television broadcasting because embedded marketing or product placement is observed in internet series (Çağıl, Kara, 2019, p. 11).

As one of the first examples of this type of series (the second being BluTv's *Masum*) *Fi* and its actors have appeared on newspapers, social media and magazines for a while. The project became popular so fast both for its content and its innovating style. The content and visual elements included so many things that could not air on television and that was, for sure, one of the reasons of its popularity. It raised *curiosity* that is also one of the thematic notions of the trilogy. As for the innovation, the crew had better conditions of working compared to television series.

However, these did not satisfy the writer of the source material because of the alterations made on the screen adaptation. Although she was pleased with the adaptation of the first book, Kohen wanted the series to be cancelled at the end of the second season as she thought the characters got ahead of the content. Even though she cancelled the series one season early, Kohen could not prevent the production to

be sold to a Turkish television channel, Show Tv. Interestingly, the series did not attract as much attention on television as they did online because there were gaps between some events as the censorship required. This can be seen as proof of the assumption that the target audience changes between the online platforms and television broadcasts. *Fi* included some scenes and themes that could not be shown on television and as a result of such censorship, the project probably got even more corrupted in Kohen's opinion.

All of these differences between television broadcast and online streaming platforms signal an important recognition that has to be made: the promise of individuality made by capitalism. As they do not depend on a specific airing time, online series provides a variety of options for the audience to arrange their pleasure time and engender freedom in the sense that they include more slangs, graphic scenes and frequently censored themes. This independence is one of the aforementioned promises of capitalism: individually choose what you prefer (but within the limits of what is represented).

Individuality or the lack of it is one of the main messages transferred in the trilogy by Kohen. As the series also promise individuality in the process of viewing, the form matched the content in this sense. Before starting her story, Kohen (2015) warns: "This book is not written for everyone". The reader feels unique, individual and different from the rest right from the beginning. The sentence "It is written for those who are aware..." (Kohen, 2015, prologue) suggests that the individual reading this book has already a different or even better view of the world. The identity of each reader is empowered right at the beginning of the reading process.

Regarding all that is said above on the issue of medium, it is important to mention Marshall McLuhan's (1964) thoughts on the relationship between the

medium and the content. Contrary to the general assumption, the content changes according to the medium and that is why *Understanding Media* (1964) was groundbreaking as it looked at the issue from a different perspective. For this study, the aforementioned change happens as a twofold process: first the content is affected as it changed medium by going from a literary work to being a visual one. Secondly, the visual adaptation aired online instead of television. This change of medium immediately connects to the idea of “Medium is the message” (McLuhan, 1994, p. 13) as just like the trilogy underlines, the internet streaming platforms are different for their promise of individuality. While preferring what is more individual, the spectator, or the consumer enters more and more into the illusion of individuality created by capitalism. McLuhan elaborates the idea on the issue:

The effect of the medium is made strong and intense just because it is given another medium as “content”. The content of a movie is a novel or a play or an opera. The effect of the movie form is not related to its program content. The “content” of writing or print is speech, but the reader is almost entirely unaware either of print or speech. (McLuhan, 1994, p. 18)

As told in the above quotation, the spectator of the series can be said to have no interest or to put it more correctly, can never understand truly and fully the primary source, the trilogy. This turns Kohen’s concerns about the misunderstanding of the series as the content differs from the one in the trilogy.

Regardless of the freedom given to the spectator by the internet platforms, an individual experience or understanding becomes impossible once the content is aired. McLuhan also touches upon the problem in the first chapter of *Understanding Media* (1994). In the introduction written by Lapham, the impossibility of individuality is emphasized:

The individual voice and singular point of view disappears into the chorus of a corporate and collective consciousness, which in McLuhan’s phrase doesn’t “postulate consciousness of anything in particular”. (Lapham, 1994, p. xxi)

Also criticized by Adorno (2001) as it requires idealization to address masses, the individual voice becomes unheard. As the success of the series depends on the rating, the preferences of the individual are of course not on the foreground. The technological diktat changes the content, not the individual concerns: “Content follows form, and the insurgent technologies give rise to new structures of feeling and thought” (Lapham, 1994, p. xii). The perceptions of so-called individuals are rearranged according to the requirements of the cyberspace in the case of online series.

## 2.2 Where does *Fi* stand as a commercial project in culture industry?

Just like the evolution of the characters in the story, Kohen’s whole existence between media and literary world becomes some sort of a dilemma as the content does not match her real-life attitudes. She denigrates television but accepts to be a guest of television talk shows. Even though she insists that she is not a “writer” she excessively talks about the subject and the promotion of her books causes confusion.

To make this clear with an example outside the trilogy, the fact that Che Guevara became a fashion figure especially in USA resembles Kohen’s situation: Would the trilogy be sold thousands if it was published by an unknown publishing house and sold in little bookstores instead of corporate stores? Kohen used everything that she criticizes in order to deliver her story and her thoughts to more people. This use of certain tools placed Kohen in the duality of capitalistic system. The duality began even before the screen adaptation, with the fictionalized of disguised self-help.

While the proliferation of self-help genre continued, Kohen created difference by embedding self-help tips into an exciting love triangle story. The

characters when through countless conflicts and serious problems, the trilogy suggested, “This story will end here and you will begin” (Kohen, 2017b, own translation, see Appendix C, 1).

Although the fictionalized self-help was a different method of writing, the books still included bold statements as the aforementioned.

The most dramatic demonstration that commercial factors, rather than professional standards, dominate the marketing of self-help books is found in the claims that accompany these products... (Rosen, 1987, p. 48)

Even though the intention was directed towards healing, self-help books also carry a commercial side, as they are commodities that are introduced into the industry. The striking claims are the best promotion, that help sell the books. As Rosen (1987) criticizes, “In as little as six to eight weeks, without the expense of professional counselling... in the privacy of your home, you can learn to master those situations” (p. 48) that requires help. While offering help, self-help books become a shortcut to better feeling that cost way more cheap than therapy. Added an exciting story, the trilogy becomes a logical purchase.

Kohen’s reputation was supported with the series adaptation afterwards. During the trilogy the writer was critical about the series as they were valued wrongly. However, the industry required the trilogy to turn into one. There is no better source to understand this contradiction than Adorno’s (2001) work: in *Culture Industry*, Theodor Adorno (2001) analyses the concept of television and its effect on the audience. Although we cannot classify Kohen’s trilogy as an artistic product –as neither can she- Adorno’s (2001) words help us understand the duality Kohen’s work goes through:

Many of the cultural products bearing the anti-commercial trademark ‘art for art’s sake’ show traces of commercialism in their appeal to the sensational or in the conspicuous display of material wealth and sensuous stimuli at the expense of meaningfulness of the work (Adorno, 2001, p. 159)

After reading the ideas of Adorno (2001) on the issue, Kohen's writing seems to give her a dose of her own medicine. This does not mean that the books are badly written but it means that probably the best way to sell a book that criticizes modern life is through its capitalistic tools. To go even further, a screen adaptation becomes necessary. The writer exploits her own work in two ways: first by hiding her messages within an exciting love triangle and second by the series adaptation. Would the books sell this much if it were directly speaking to the reader as a book that gives self-help advices? Have not the book sales increased after the series?

Once the trilogy was adapted, the books and the series worked interactively. Invited to Doğa Rutkay's talk show on television, Kohen confirms the news that the screen adaptation has raised the sales of the books. For the ones who knew her through the adaptation, she prefers to be known by her original work: the books. She invites the audience to read about the original version of the story. These kinds of concerns about book sales direct us towards a theory that analyses such works as products of cultural industry. The ways the industry works are explained by Adorno (2001), referring to especially through music, fictitious work in media, and television.

Coined by Adorno (2001), *culture industry* designates products and processes of mass culture. The writer called the time that is spent on these products *pleasure time* in the *Culture Industry – Enlightenment as Mass Deception*. Such products are evaluated as standardized, authoritarian and confining. In order to endorse such qualities, these commodities are designed by the laws of homogeneity and predictability:



As soon as the films begins, it is quite clear how it will end, and who will be rewarded, punished or forgotten. In light music, once trained ear has heard the first notes of the hit song, it can guess what is coming and feel flattered when it does come... The result is a constant reproduction of the same thing (Storey, 2009, p. 62)

Adorno, here, raises the issue of form that is observed as a uniform and identicalized system where the social authority is guaranteed by deception of masses who cannot realize that they are being deceived. We can take *Fi*'s story as an example of this identicalized system: a young woman thorn between her love for a man of failure and the rich successful older man. The economical differences that endanger love relationships are one of the frequently narrated stories in Turkish televisions.

The marketability has become a total demand, which changes the genuine structure of cultural commodities: They lose their use value and their exchange value defines their quality, which changes their intent and function because of commodity character of art. As commodified mass culture spreads the illusion of conformity which prevents the passive beholders and observers from thinking beyond the confines of the present even though it may suggest that the addressees have to imagine the world as it could be, not the world as it is because such standardized forms generate repetitive passive consumption. According to Adorno (2001), the capitalistic work system is so dull that at the end of the day, workers need a leisure time. However, they have little energy left. What is left for their consumption is this confined product that is only passively and repetitively consumed. The need of a stimulant is falsely fulfilled by the cultural commodities as there is no room left for imagination and recognition of the circular consumption. The inherent avoidance of effort does not offer a genuine engagement with the world as it could be. As Adorno claims, though through the example of music:

Its [work] stimulations are met with the inability to vest effort in the ever identical. This means boredom again. It is a circle which makes escape impossible. The impossibility of escape causes the widespread attitude of inattention toward popular music. The moment of recognition is that of effortless sensation. The sudden attention attached to this moment burns itself out instantly and relegates the listener to a realm of inattention and distraction (Storey, 2009, p. 67)

This process of creating inattentive consumers is the relationship between the working life and the culture industry: “The function of the culture industry is therefore, ultimately, to organize leisure time in the same way as industrialization has organized work time” (Storey, 2009, p. 65). In the process, the senses become numb. The idea of escape is created as an illusion by the culture industry but it is also “predesigned to lead back to the starting point” (p. 65). This is how endless boredom is created. The moment the consumer recognizes the impossibility of escape, she or he goes back to the inattentive consumption of culture industry’s products. The need for distraction, or an escape, ends back with turning to that repetitive product again: turning face to cultural industry’s products require inattention and distraction but the two also exist in its consumption which creates its aftermath in the same way.

The aforementioned process is present almost exactly in the same way in *Fi* project: the idea or hope of escape is conveyed through the characters Deniz and Özge. However, they end up trapped in the same system again, especially in the screen adaptation. In the trilogy, even though it is the tiniest change, Özge manages to create awareness inside the youth’s brains that were poisoned by the media. With the ambition she has for destroying the political corruption in the country she becomes a member of the parliament. However, this achievement was an impossible task and she needed to take place next to the politicians she criticized. Özge’s political adventure can be shown as an example of the impossible idea of escape alone.

Even though she complains of this exact dullness and the fact that these kind of distractions end with the audience becoming numb, Kohen gave permission to the adaptation. The stimuli in Adorno's theory become the love triangle, and the idea of escape is given through the criticism of capitalism. However, Kohen criticized the situation through the books at the very beginning:

They become stupid to the point of not feeling anything, they surrender their bodies to televisions. They live in series, they come to life in films, they fall in love with actors, they take any person that is on the screen seriously and they fall asleep at the moment they try to read a book. They take shelter in drugs not to feel anymore... BUT we are here to feel, in order to feel and to understand, we should even be ready to feel pain if we have to. (Kohen, 2017b, p. 109, own translation, see Appendix C, 3)

Having produced such a pessimistic analysis of the effectivity of the culture industry, The Frankfurt School focuses on how a cultural product determines its consumption and therefore meaning. Capitalist corporations guarantee prevailing social order and structures of power, which brings us to the screen adaptation of Kohen's trilogy where we can see clearly the entrance of the audience in the repetitive passive consumption with inattention and distraction.

Kohen makes a criticism of the capitalistic work and education system through her characters Deniz and Özge. For both the reader and the audience, the two become a hope that the system might change. The idea of a change is somehow placed in the story. The contradictory part is that this criticism become a love, sex and desire ornamented repetitive product. Is it possible for the person who is watching the Fi series to focus on anything else than Can's psychopathic quest for Duru's love? With other agents such as social media or product placements, Can's way of drinking water fast, Duru's boots, Deniz's outfits attracted just as much attention as the content of the series. Undoubtedly, Kohen did not have the power or chance to prevent this from happening. However, this does not put her in a fully

neutral position in the process of commercialization of the whole project (the trilogy and the series as a unity).

Actually, in that aforementioned process, there is no accusation to bring to anyone involved in the adaptation as there are of course commercial worries while adapting such a work. At this point, an adaptation theoretician's insights play an important role. Seger (1992) claims:

For many writers, *commercial* is a dirty word. It implies compromising, losing the integrity of one's project, adding a car chase and a sex scene as a lowest common denominator to draw audiences... But it's important to remember that entertainment is show plus business, and producers need to be reasonably sure that they can make a profit on their investment.

When taken into account that car chases and sex scenes were already included in the source material, Kohen's request to cancel the series is a contradicting move. It is already stated that the sales of the books were increased with the screen adaptation.

When questioned about that increase, Kohen replied that it was the intention all along. Then again she becomes a miniature of the aforementioned aftermath: in itself, the series are watched out of inattention and distraction but also end with them, just until the next week, the same happens again.

Regarding the constant emphasis on the corruption of the holy human curiosity, the fact that Kohen creates it herself in the trilogy also lets it be visualized by the adaptation. Even though she wanted the reader to focus on the important issues included in her books, she, herself complained about the fact that the readers preferred to read it as a love triangle. Briefly, she corrupted the reader's curiosity in two ways:

Now it is time for a confession! I have set traps for you. I have named them *Fi* and *Çi*. With the hunger Can Manay felt for Duru, I set you on the road. With Deniz I tried to tell you that nothing is as it seems... For you to follow me, I decorated our road with stories. I embedded meanings to almost every line because what I actually wanted to tell was in *Pi*. I was desperate. I could not have given up. I was definitely obliged to show you the vision. I have given so much effort to meet you here finally. (Kohen, 2017b, blurb)

First, as she confesses, she embeds the meanings in stories. The commerciality is here bodily as the first and the second books. The fact that she admits to have written the first two books as a trap shifts the focus from the meanings she would like to transfer to the worries about the book sales. Not to mention her visionary image implied in the way that she has foreseen the third book happening. The first two books were that promising.

Second corruption caused by her is the series. Her bad wording of television series confuses at this point: Why take advantage of something she seems extremely against of? Are internet series so different from television series that Kohen finds it harmless for the holy curiosity? The same goes for her attitude towards media as well: in the trilogy, youth manifest in front of television, newspaper or media buildings as they have no trust left for those. However, Kohen keeps a popular image of hers by staying in the pages of magazines, papers and on the screens, even if her intention is to spread the word.

Going back to Adorno, a metaphorical explanation matches the situation. If the two lived at the same era, Kohen would be a metaphorical representation of a drug dealer according to Adorno. Moreover, she deprives the clients of more drugs by cancelling the series:

Adorno makes it sound like the hopeless ritual of a heroin addict (as taken from the detective genre he detested so much). Denied 'novelty' in their work time, and too exhausted for it in their leisure time, 'they crave a stimulant' – popular music satisfies the craving. (Storey, 2009, p. 67)

In this equation, Adorno's musician is Kohen, the drug dealer, the detective genre Adorno detested resembles Kohen's dislike for the numbing series and popular music is the screen adaptation.

Considering all that is said on the difference between the television series, and internet series, it is logical to say Kohen's message did not find its receiver as she described the television audience very likely to be those who became numb. Once again, she was picky about the target audience but neglected her real concern: the followers of an internet series are most likely to have a different consciousness of cultural consuming. Resembling very much to the prologue she wrote at the very first page of the trilogy, "this book is not written for everyone" (Kohen, 2015, prologue), the series also did not find its target, but it made a considerable commercial success. As a result, the promise of individuality turned into its opposite as the corporate way of production suggested.

As in all work of fiction, the characters suffer from certain things, are in quest objects or feelings and go through conflicts that change their perception of life and their path. In Kohen's narration, the criticism of capitalism is made through the same kind of fictitious characters. Characterization takes the form of a criticism of capitalism from different angles. Here a distinction should be made: there is no contradiction in the content that is opposite to Adorno's (2001) Marxist influenced way of criticizing capitalistic system. Kohen seems to be aware of the corruptions caused by the system just as Adorno. The only contradiction lies here in her way of promoting the books.

As if supporting Marxist theory, or Adorno's concept of culture industry, all the characters represent a certain aspect or a certain critical angle of capitalism. The most obvious enemy of capitalistic living seems to be Deniz, the music teacher.

Through Deniz's monologues Kohen complains about the education system, the lack of originality and individuality and the endless consumerism. Deniz is narrated as a musical genie, however he never shares his music in public or signs a deal with a production company in order to make an album. He even rejects the beloved singer Şadiye Reha's offer for a collaboration even though the pay would be a considerable amount. As an idealist music teacher, he despises the kind of popular music Şadiye produces:

There are some pieces, produced anywhere, listened by everyone. While the lyrics utter "you shattered my heart" people dance with their hands in the air. (Looking at Şadiye) The kind of music you make. We are not talking about such thing. We are talking about a thing that does not contain anything but the feelings in it, something very dense and pure... (Kohen, 2015, pp. 227, 228, own translation, see Appendix A, 6)

The words above, said by Deniz are interestingly similar to Adorno's ideas about popular music and its passive listening process by the consumers. According to Adorno, "serious music... plays to the pleasure of the imagination" whereas popular music "is always passive, and endlessly repetitive, confirming the world as it is" (Storey, 2009, p. 67). Popular music is consummated while *serious* music is listened to. Through the trilogy Deniz's pieces are always paired with the feeling they evoke. Just like Deniz complains about the songs with lyrics that suffer and a composition that makes people dance, Adorno divides the behaviour of the popular music listeners to two: "the rhythmically obedient type and the emotional type" (Storey, 2009, p. 67). As Storey (2009) clarifies, "the first type dances in distraction to the rhtym of his or her own exploitation ... the second type wallows in sentimental misery, oblivious to the real conditions of existence" (p. 67).

Even though the study categorizes Deniz to be a non-capitalistic character, in order to achieve his goals, Deniz takes advantage from Can Manay's power and connections. Even though he would like to build an art center where people can

unpayingly profit from quality art, Deniz does not possess the capital for the construction or purchasing the musical instruments.

Another example through musical characters can be given with Ada, the young musician. Ada, in the second book, becomes a cocaine addict even though she is a very bright and promising musician, her depressed nature and the rejection she received from her teacher Deniz drags her to drug addiction. An interesting similarity can be made between Ada's musical production and Marx's law of value. Ada is tricked into selling her music to a commercial company by Tugay, a cunning business owner who sensed Ada's longing for affection. Ada ends up selling her songs for their use value while Tugay sold them to companies as jingles for extreme exchange values. While providing her cocaine, or alienating her in Marxist terms, Tugay forces Ada to compose jingles.

“They are paying twenty per night, you will be on stage for three nights. Sixty is really good.” ... Ada sucked in two lines of cocaine that she spilled on the counter... turned to Tugay “I want three hundred!”. She knew she was conned. She found out they were paying her eight per cent... (Kohen, 2017b, p. 495, own translation, see Appendix C, 4)

Ada is alienated to her own music as she no longer owns it. There is no way she could gain the amount that her jingles are sold for. As she has to keep producing in order to survive and find cocaine, Ada makes a perfect example of capitalist system of production and consumption.

What happens in capitalism is that labourers are put in the position whereby they must sell not their labour but their labour-power... because they do not own the means of production and, indeed, have no other way to earn a subsistence living... paid a fixed amount for their labour, just enough for them to subsist and produce more... (Felluga, 2015, p. 303)

The above explanation of the mechanism of the system is narrated through Ada's production of jingles in Kohen's story. As the labourer, Ada has to sell her music, her labour-power as this system is designed in order to keep providing Tugay the



surplus value. The unfortunate end of Ada's story is that she dies due to an overdose. This death reminds of Adorno's idea of escape and the fact that it is impossible.

Özge, the ambitious justice fighter represents the political aspect of the capitalist system. In order to change the current system, she finds the solution to become a parliament member in the trilogy. However, just like Deniz's need for a capital provided by a powerful figure in order to build his art center, Özge also need Sadık's, a wealthy businessman's help and connections to enter into politics. The duality again shows itself, just like capitalistic promotions of a non-capitalistic content, Özge takes advantage of the capitalism itself, the change can only come from within the system.

Contrarily to the non-capitalistic characters, Kohen also depicts a few representations of capitalism such as Duru, Can Manay or Sadık. Even though she is an artist, Duru's understanding of art does not go further from fame and wealth. That is why her relationship with Deniz starts to collapse. As she would like to become a famous dancer known for her beauty and dancing skills, Duru needs the collaboration of a powerful television figure: Can Manay. She prefers the easy way out to working in order to provide a living for her boyfriend Deniz. However, the fame she dreamt of is not so easily acquirable with Can either as he is obsessively jealous.

Duru seeks individuality, power, a living gained from dancing, but instead she became a prisoner guarded by Can. Can's duality is not limited to his relationship with Duru. The biggest contradiction the character contributes to the story is the ambivalent distinction he makes between public and private. Can uses capitalism and the so-called celebrities it produces in order to gain more and more rating. However, the ethical aspect of his career is open to discussion: the therapist

destroys the boundaries surrounding therapy by performing it in front of million viewers, on television. Although his profit is considerable, it is not obvious who takes advantage of whom in the process: has Can become a tool of capitalism or does capitalism serve as a tool for Can's success?

The more the examples are numerous, the more we arrive at the assumption that the idea of escape is just a dream that could never be realized as Adorno (2001) wrote. That is why he defined the whole system as a *vicious circle* that spins around itself, endlessly.

### 2.3 The expectation of fidelity

Regarding the fact that Kohen cancelled a widely popular show, we should compare the source novel and the screen adaptation from two perspectives: first by accepting the inevitable changes that the adapted work goes through during the process of adaptation and secondly, by discussing the possible reasons of those changes regarding the rating worries which surpass the importance given to the fidelity of an adapted work to its source material.

“Indeed, it is questionable whether strict fidelity is even possible.” (Stam, 2008, p. 3) The reason why I started with this quotation is that even though there is an endless search for similarity in an adapted work, it is a futile attempt to do so. The theory of adaptation, unlike the literary criticism that sees the adaptation as inferior works to the literary material, makes the logical assumption that a novel cannot be *exactly* adapted into screen or to stage. Given the nature of the series, which is accessible to all masses of audience, the novel *Fi* was supposed to undergo some alterations while getting adapted to screen. Having severely criticized the capitalistic means of conveying a life-changing message, Kohen came up with a reason to cancel

the series: the alterations in the adaptation because the second season was completely different from the plot of the second, particularly the meaning thereof. But did she have the right to complain? As the writer took place actively in university speeches, newspapers or social media, the news that she cancelled the series also gained considerable attention by the followers of the *Fi* series. Reasonably, for them the issue of fidelity had little importance compared to their curious waiting for the next season.

Yet adapting implies change. It implies a process that demands rethinking, reconceptualizing, and understanding how the nature of drama is intrinsically different from the nature of all other literature (Seger, 1992, p. 2)

Adapted works have been severely criticized by many academic, journalistic and literary sources for being unfaithful to and harmful for the source material. They have been regarded even an insult to the original. Luckily, theoreticians of adaptation have been stressing the impossibility and unnecessary of one-to-one transition of the content from one medium to another.

Through the concept of adaptation, the notion of origin comes to the surface one more time. Kohen, who dreams of removing the origin to the point that “Neither education, nor poverty is the biggest problem in the world, mothers are” and creates all her characters accordingly, unexpectedly starts seeking for originality when it comes to the screen adaptation while the originality of an adapted work is already another topic of discussion. Here, instead of originality, the word “fidelity” can be used as the general assumption refers to the notion of fidelity that the screen adaptations are supposed to have. The search for ‘fidelity’ is probably the reason why “in both academic and journalistic reviewing, contemporary popular adaptations are most often put down as secondary, derivative... (Hutcheon, 2002, p. 2). Because of the same expectation, film adaptations of literary works are evaluated as “wilfully

inferior forms of cognition” (Newman, 1985, p. 129). Hutcheon (2002) states the fact that we are in a “postmodern age of cultural recycling” which should not be forgotten. As adaptations are inevitably everywhere, it is a necessity to analyse the possible reasons of changes instead of complaining about them.

Stam goes back to the literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin for the understanding of the issue, which works perfectly well for the concept of adaptation as well:

The artistic utterance is always what Bakhtin calls a “hybrid construction” mingling one’s own word with the other’s word... “hybrid construction” applies even more obviously to a collaborative medium like film. Complete originality as a consequence, is neither possible nor even desirable (Stam, 2008, p. 4)

For Bakhtin and, by extension, Stam, even the search for originality becomes unnecessary as the adapted work is a collaboration of many readings, interpretations and effort. Just like the orchestrating author of the novel, the adaptor creates something unique out of their own combination of “pre-existing discourses”. When the source material (novel) enters the adaptation process, it becomes the director’s vision of what they would like to see on screen. As creators of different medium, each (writer and director) produces content of their own medium.

In addition, there is a further argument that the adapted work belongs to the director and the technical crew as it is created by them. Even though there exists a novel, it only acts as a reference point. Therefore, to what extent can Kohen meddle in the process after giving the permission for the screen adaptation?

...there are many and varied motives behind adaptation and few involve faithfulness... *adaptations*; that is not only autonomous works. Instead they are examined as deliberate, announced, and extended revisitations of prior works... we use the word adaptation to refer to both a product and a process of creation and reception... (Hutcheon, 2006, pp. xiii, xiv)

What attracts attention in Hutcheon’s perspective is that she sees adapted works as original in themselves instead of being inferior or unfaithful versions of an original

work. It should also be kept in mind that the adaptation is neither the final work that is seen on the screen nor a product made by only one person, instead it is a process and in Kohen's case, the novelist has nothing to do in it, except for being the owner of the copyright. However, she meddled in the process of adaptation so much so that she cancelled the show because of lack of originality.

Denying that faithfulness is a motivation for adaptation, Hutcheon (2002) reminds the reader that the motivation of a director or production company is not to adapt Kohen's trilogy without any changes or with the maximum level of fidelity to the screen, but it is to make the most of a story which, they believe, would attract audience. The attraction may vary from a certain point of the story to a certain character according to the adapter. As Hutcheon (2002, p. 92) stresses: "They not only interpret that work but in so doing they also take a position on it". In other words, the adapted work is the interpretation of the adapter. Therefore, the only way that would please Kohen is her directorship. Otherwise, all have their own interpretation and understanding of a story or a certain character.

Turning back to *Fi* series, for every individual who read the books and watched the two complete seasons of the series, the changes can easily be noticed in the screen adaptation, especially during the second season. It proves very different from the second novel in the sense that the plot changes completely in the adaptation process. Environmental worries and critique of media and politics disappear and, instead the conflict appears on the level of characters and love relationships. Having seen the direction where the series were oriented towards, she announced on a radio show that she would like the series to end as the plot started centralizing only the characters. The online series with a large audience ended because of Kohen's worries of fidelity, but not of humanity, awareness or environmentalism. At this point,

originality can be disregarded only for the writer's characters in order for her to have godly features of writing. The original must disappear on the level of content but exist everywhere else such as on the level of interpretation. Just like the issue of awareness, this one also becomes a dilemma.

To begin listing the important changes that were made in the adapted work, first one would be the omitted characters. In Kohen's trilogy, there are opinion leaders, singers, businessmen which are depicted in such a detailed way that the reader might assume that they refer to real people in Turkey. The first one is Kohen's famous singer, songwriter Şadiye Reha who is described as a fat, cocaine addicted lady who has undergone a lot of cosmetic surgeries and becomes a beloved singer with her catchy songs that were against Deniz's understanding (and also Kohen's) of music as an art.

...mentioned as an angel by people, this cocaine addict, man eater, lunatic woman... Şadiye's maternal attitude, which came from her fatness, did not actually exist, it was an image, something that people suited her... (Kohen, 2015, pp. 204-205, own translation, see Appendix A, 7)

This character, existing in all three books, has a very "special" house that every person in the music business would die for to get invited. Şadiye is one of the people who take advantage of Ada's musical gift. Another interesting personality would be "Hoca" who mentored and took care of Sadık when he was young:

His meeting with his godfather changed everything in his life. Hoca was a man who made a difference in his surrounding. He was the one who named him "Sadık". He met Hoca when he was a child, got under his wings and made it to today in the frame of his vision. For Sadık, this so-called open-minded man, who perceived the world through commerce, was an expert in directing people who needed the fear of God, with religious discourses. Inside he was irreligious, but his sayings were religious. He knew how to address people's fears, he was a master of organizing people and get them moving. (Kohen, 2017a, p. 34, own translation, see Appendix B, 2)

It would not be inappropriate to think that characters like Hoca or Şadiye are omitted because they might offend real people in Turkey. Besides Kohen already claimed that 12 characters were based on real people with their consent. Clearly, she had certain names in mind while writing about the characters. As she frequently complains about the “wrong” celebrities people care about, writing might be her way to criticize them by disguising them in her story. In this respect, to avoid any possible lawsuit, the production house’s omission of certain characters is understandable.

Another omission is the protests that take up almost all of the second book, *Çi*. In her second book, parallel to the main characters’ story, Kohen narrates urban protests by young people who stayed on the streets for months even it meant getting beaten up by the police.

When the door opened Özge got on the street, and noticed the crowd that piled up in front of the building. At the corner of the street there were hundreds of people yelling “Sold out media” (Kohen, 2014, p. 100) ... Got a bang on and Özge woke up. When she turned back, she saw someone hidden behind a body armour, throwing around the truncheon in his hand with revenge. (Kohen, 2017a, p. 104, own translation, see Appendix B, 3)

The chaos lasted for months in front of the media buildings, corporations and city squares. The youth were taken into houses where people wash off the tear gas from their faces. The police interfered in a violent way. Even though it aired on the internet, the adaptors choose not to show anything about the protests. In any case, as mentioned before, the second season was completely different except for most of the characters.

In the second book, Deniz secludes himself in a small Aegean village and stays there for months. However, in the series, after travelling for months, he makes a stop in Rome and meets a young woman there that never existed in the book. Played by well-known actresses, many additional roles are included in the second

season. Instead of the story with the protests, the second season is mostly based on a preparation phase of a musical called *Afife*. The play brings Duru and Deniz together since the last time they met but the two are very different: Deniz dates other women and Duru gets married. To turn up the drama's volume, the additional characters all help things to get more entangled but not that further away from new and numerous love triangles.

The aforementioned issue of different interpretations comes up clearly in the second season. The musical *Afife*, with Duru playing a leading role, is made up as a parallel story to the eponymous ballerina's: they both love the stage but nothing else. On the other hand, *Afife* is not even mentioned in the footnotes of the second book *Çi*, let alone in the content thereof. In the screen adaptation, the musical is nothing but the excitement of Duru meeting Deniz again for the audience.

In addition, one of the other changes is the exclusion of the secret health center called "Heaven" from the screen adaptation:

Can looked at the girl walking before him. When her modest dress crashed sunbeams that glided from place to place, created a very erotic transparent affect...Inside was a section of 50 square meters, full of tropical trees, delicate red fruits as strawberries or blackberries, other plants. The ground was warm as if it was heated and covered with the softest soil. Between the trees, there was the weird looking bed-like thing that Can figured out later that was designed for varied massages. There was a fall in the corner that was joined by a shower. (Kohen, 2015, p. 297, see Appendix A, 8)

Depicted as a secret health center with a hidden entrance behind a car wash, Heaven is an alternative hospital where only plants are used as medicines, and only men who have the economic power to afford them could enter. Skipping Heaven in the adaptation may have many reasons. Undoubtedly, one of them is a budget-related reason as it would be expensive to create and film such an environment. Besides the health center has an almost fantastic mood that would certainly not match the rest of the series.



In Kohen's opinion, apart from those omissions and exclusions, the biggest and most hurtful change must be Deniz and Özge's love for Kohen as she picked the characters in the trilogy to be a glimmer of hope. Instead of demolishing electric poles with children in order to build solar panels, Özge was only able to expose Can Manay's identity in the series. The adaptor ignored her ecological aims and focused on her superficial doings. In the trilogy, she became a congresswoman but in the series, she only confessed her love to Sadık who represented everything she criticizes and moves in with him in a secluded chalet.

The music references Kohen made in the trilogy attracted the study's attention as they seem unusual. It is necessary to look through them, as they are paired with dialogues in the trilogy. Mention of a certain song a character listens to, or that is played in a certain moment that takes place in the story has probably happened before in numerous novels. The difference in Kohen's trilogy lies in that the writer directly gives the song references without hiding it between the lines as a depiction of the atmosphere narrated on that page. Given the plentiful visual descriptions, the song references raise the issue of Kohen's position in the whole project.

As she had an academic background in the fields of cinema and television, the music suggestions seem as if they are soundtracks. The issue here is that in cinematic works, soundtracks are selected or composed by professionals of that field. Having done that already in the novel, Kohen, in a way, implies that she has already done the work and the books are ready to be adapted. During the process of adaptation, Kohen confesses that she had frequently meddled in the crew's business.

While interviewing Kohen, a journalist asked the writer if she was expecting the screen adaptation of her novel. Kohen explained:

I already wrote it in a visual perception. All the readers said ‘we did not read it, we watched it, that is why I was expecting the books to take place in different media and the stories were designed that way (Haberturk, 2017, own translation, see Appendix D, 2).

Kohen interfered actively to the process of adaptation starting with the trilogy. In a talk show, while commenting on the adaptation, she adds “I am doing the last reading of the scripts” (Rutkay, 2017) and she confirms having played a role during the casting as well. Kohen, without having literary worries, spends a great amount of effort on the screen adaptation.

All in all, the writer Kohen’s attitude is director-like. Both in the books and screen adaptation, Kohen’s name comes up not as a credit but as a reference as well. In the third book, *Pi*, Deniz reads a short chapter from *Aeden* (2016) the writer’s next book, published after the trilogy. Moreover, in an episode of *Çi* series, Özge writes an article on her computer with the same novel, *Aeden*, next to her.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE AUTHORIAL STANCE

During an interview at Bilgi University, Azra Kohen answered the question “Can anyone write books?” by saying “That is a decision to be made by that person. I am against talking on behalf of somebody. The ones who say ‘I can’ can write, but the ones saying ‘I cannot’ cannot” (Kohen, 2017c). This attitude gives a clue about Azra Kohen’s position as a writer and her definition of a writer. Clearly, she finds herself capable of fulfilling such a task and accomplishes it. Apparently, writing books is not an action she cannot fulfil. However, she does not take on this attitude to brag about herself, but to underline how little importance she gives to her identity while writing. She is just a person who thinks that they can write a book. This utterance of hers accords importance to the content of the trilogy rather than Kohen’s personality or her experiences.

Moreover, there are other concrete examples that point to the elevation of content over her authorship: why is this constant need to hide her identity behind a pen name from book covers? The characterization in the trilogy also mirrors this question: can the lack of family found in almost every character of the trilogy have something to do with Kohen’s frequent reminder of how little importance she has as an author in the face of her goals and messages? In this chapter, these questions will be worked on in accordance with certain passages from the trilogy and Kohen’s utterances in media.

The emphasis on the content rather than the author and the use of a pen name combined with the characterization of the novels, bring to mind the concept of origin that will be dominantly discussed during this chapter related to the notion of authorship.

After providing a global look to Kohen's definition of her own authorship, this chapter discusses the contradicting nature of it: regarding her humble claims that become an example of Barthes' (1967) dead author and also considering the godly attitude throughout the process. Although she is not a character of the trilogy, the journey of writing the books changes or evolves the writer as well. Her books become bestseller after the second publication by a different publishing house from the first one. Even though she wants to keep her pen name Akilah and herself in the dark, away from the spotlights, all the talk shows; newspaper interviews and magazine articles have transformed Akilah to the mediatic figure Azra Kohen. Unwillingly (or not) the writer became a person whose opinions were valued and listened by thousands. Not only the articles but also the screen adaptation undisputedly promoted the trilogy's sales. While trying to cover her identity she became widely popular, which echoes the dualistic progress she puts her characters into. Briefly, while trying to cover Azra Kohen with Akilah, Akilah was left in the shadow of Kohen.

### 3.1 Azra Kohen's ideas on her own identity as a writer

I would have liked to tell you about where I was born, where I grew up, which schools I graduated from, I would really love to tell you all about my life but I will not. I will also not tell you about my journeys or who I am, because at this point, who I am does not matter. What is only important are the things we become aware of. (Kohen, n.d., para 1.)

The statement above is directly taken from Azra Kohen's website, placed alongside a picture of her, sitting on the ground, holding and pressing her forehead against a

giant pencil. Titled *Akilah*, the page is supposed to contain her biographical information. This statement reveals her effort to keep herself in the background, separate not only from the trilogy mentioned here, but from all of her written work that can be found on the website. Meanwhile, a curious reader will not be able to get enough information about her background from her biography on the website. They would not be able to find traces of her personal life in her works, either.

In addition to this statement, she incessantly emphasizes that she is not a writer. She is in effect one as she is a renowned person with many written works, but what she accentuates is that she does not aim to be a literary figure. She supports this claim by constantly reminding the spectators and readers of the awareness she aims to create. In this case, as she expresses during an interview she made right after she published the trilogy, “I wrote to change the world ... Otherwise I do not even care about the nonsense of the literary world” (Arman, 2015, own translation, Appendix D, 3). Rather than telling the reader a well-crafted story or dragging them into a fictitious world, her other concerns prove that she is indeed not a writer in the very sense of a literary figure.

In Azra Kohen’s work as a product of someone who is self-allegedly not a writer, literature becomes a medium but not an end in itself. She suggests that by her blurb:

Phi is the journey of living the experience to its fullest instead of being lost in it. The stories of manipulation, sex, cheating and being cheated that are majorly present might attract everyone’s attention, but there is only awareness at the destination after the journey of truth. (Kohen, 2015, back cover, own translation, See Appendix A, 10)

Apparently, writing or telling a story becomes a tool for Kohen, not the goal itself. Kohen defends the idea that every human has a task, a mission to accomplish and hers is to tell stories as she defines: “I guess I am a student, a story telling auntie. I

tell stories. It is not a charismatic task but it is pleasant. Because everything I tell has to take its roots from the truth; that is why I always have to stay as a student”

(Arman, 2016, own translation, See Appendix D, 4). So, Kohen’s stories are not a product of her creativity; instead they constitute the bright colored front cover that makes the reader reach the book amongst others on the shelf. In a sense, the brightness of storytelling draws attention to the content inside.

In addition, when she had a second interview with Ayşe Arman in 2016, she responded to the question, “You do not want to be a writer but you blew everyone away. How do you explain that?” by saying “... Need. There is nothing easier and more natural than answering a need ... I guess writing books is my effort to be a part of what I am missing. I am not expecting literary awards as long as it is useful in life.” (Arman, 2016, own translation, See Appendix D, 5). The need to help readers, as she claims, comes from her disturbance about the level that humanity has reached. The books serve as a mirror that shows the reader the current mood of life:

... our conscious was surrounded by the duties of daily life, we were chasing after something every moment, we were worthless unless we worked, we were constantly working to give life a meaning and we were not working, we were meeting others to numb ourselves, we were socializing and by giving our curiosity constantly to others, we were sacrificing our potentials ... Humanity reached a shitty level... Not because of hunger, accidents, diseases or death! But because our identity consciousness that we were brought to life to work on, was pushed aside and we were made curious about meaningless things. We were lost. (Kohen, 2015, p. 12, own translation, see Appendix A, 9)

The quotation above is an excerpt from a monologue of one of the characters in the novel, *Ali*. Apparently, the character shares Kohen’s ideas on the paralyzing effect of social life on people. Transference of the message through the mouth of characters is Kohen’s method of waking the numb, showing the problem and thereby getting their senses to work again. This quotation is representative of Kohen’s view on the current conditions of human life and the reason that urges her to write about it.

On the other hand, instead of simply telling a story of a love triangle in a corrupted media world, she analyses features of each character in such a detailed manner that she acts like a therapist who diagnoses psychiatric disorders. As parallel to the fundamental narrative, she talks about the fact that all the characters, except for the two hybrid ones, are inspired by real patients of a psychologist whom she used to work with. The stories of the real-life people do not make the books non-literary but the writer's effort to show what is wrong with them does. A literary product may as well be inspired by real-life stories, yet the author's goal is not to tell those stories but to arouse a certain feeling or to evoke thoughts through them in the narration. Thus the writer aims to warn the reader about psychological disorders rather than provide a platform for delightful reading. She shows the reader the consequences of bad choices precipitated by ill-directed curiosity.

### 3.2 The issue of origin

Collins English Dictionary (2014) defines the word "origin" as "a primary source, derivation" secondly "the beginning of something first stage or part", and thirdly as "ancestry or parentage; birth; extraction". Etymologically, the word takes its root from Latin "originem" which means "a rise, commencement, beginning, source, descent..." It can easily be observed that Kohen aims to remove all that is original and she realizes this removal on the levels of form and content. Claiming that she is not an author, Kohen raises the issue of origin that would point to the relationship between the work of literature and its so-called creator.

The use of a pen name creates the impression that she wants to be someone else rather than herself while writing. However, this does not change the fact that she *is* the writer of these books and the creator of the characters within. This is the reason why she chooses to remove all the origins of the characters, i.e. the families they are

born into and afterwards develop them in a way that they turn out to be completely different people at the end of the story. Since she acts as the creator of the characters in the narration and nurtures them in an environment according to her choices, the nature of the characters, i.e. biological origin, is precluded from the very beginning.

The ultimate removal of the origin warns the reader about its advent. The last book of the trilogy, *Pi*, foreshadows “This story will end here and you will begin” (Kohen, 2017b). In a sense, this statement implies that the readers have not found themselves and are not “there” yet. By stating that they will begin after reading the books, Kohen disregards the personal experience and knowledge of the readers. In the next two sub-chapters, the ways Kohen removes the origin through both form and content will be analyzed.

A person’s name tells a great deal about their origin as we are all named by our parents and do not have the opportunity to name ourselves with the name we will be called for the rest of our lives. By attempting to remove her real name, Azra Kohen removes her origin and therefore her identity. She prefers to exclude her name from the front cover as she takes on the pen name Akilah, since she wants to keep her identity separate from the content of her book, given that the name “Azra Kohen” would possibly give the impression that this book is written by a woman, which would cause various prejudices. The questions regarding the use of a pen name are responded in these words: “I want my book to be the center of attention, not me” (Börekçi, 2015). Therefore, she chooses a less common name, Akilah. However, the book was not published without including her real name and therefore the name Azra Kohen had to be written on the front cover, but in a smaller font under the pen name Akilah. Although the publishing house would not publish the book without the writer’s real name, the author wanted to use the pen name Akilah in any case. Even



though we do not know if that was the intention or not, Kohen's attitude refers directly to Roland Barthes' idea of a dead author.

Having applied the methodology of semiology, Barthes exploited the idea of signs in his interpretation of literature and authorship. He approached semiology as a challenging discipline to offer a critique of traditional academic views of literary criticism. In doing so, he renounced the idea of a theological author shifting the focus from the author to the reader with a specific emphasis on time as something that is constantly re-written in the process of signifying.

In his ground-breaking essay *The Death of the Author*, Barthes accentuates that the emphasis should be on what is written instead of who has written it. What is written does not refer to the predetermined and fixed meaning of a narration, if there is any, but to the focus on the act of reading it; as, for Barthes, death of the author grants more freedom to the reader and it even comes to mean the birth of the reader which gives birth to the plurality of meanings.

Referring to the history of narration, he uses shamanic narrations to emphasize the performance of the narrator, not the product of genius of the writer. While listening to a sort of narration, the admiration or dislike is oriented towards the performance. However, traditional literature and history have brought about a modern figure: the author. The concept of writing was built on a prestigious tyranny which Barthes labels *intellectual imperialism*. Instead of thinking that the authorship is a fixed establishment, Barthes suggests to focus on what is written because signs are arbitrary and any reading with the idea of an ultimate truth superimposed by the authority of the author would address intellectual imperialism. When the reader has a certain text in front of their eyes, would the author's life, past, background or ideology really mean anything for them? For Barthes, the answer would be negative

as the author dies within the infinity of interpretations that are made only by the reader:

... the image of literature to be found in contemporary culture is tyrannically centered on the author, his person, his history, his tastes, his passions...the explanation of the work is always sought in the man who has produced it, as if ... it was always finally the voice of one and the same person, the author, which delivered his 'confidence.' (Barthes, 1977, p. 143)

Barthes' literature is not explicative, as the language is not used as an instrument to convey an explanation. Language simply refers back to itself, as it is all that surrounds us, i.e. the only existence. Signs, their meanings, and the process of interpretation follow that system. Above all, signs exist without an actual content, which causes all possible meanings to go "ad infinitum". The text is re-written through each and every reading as Barthes remarks on reading: "... no one (that is, "no person") utters it: its source, its voice is not to be located; and yet it is perfectly read; this is because the true locus of writing is reading" (Barthes, 1977, p.147). He concretizes his thoughts with the example of Greek tragedy that builds its tragic side upon misunderstandings, as the text is full of double meanings of words. However, there is one person who "understands each word in its duplicity, and understands further... the very deafness of the characters speaking in front of him: this someone is precisely the reader (or here the spectator)" (Barthes, 1977, p.148). As in the Greek tragedy, the meaning can be nothing but the plurality of its systems, the infinite (circular) transcribability. As long as there is the reader, there is an endless circle of interpretation.

Culler (2002) comments on Barthes' concept in *Essais critiques* which can be regarded as almost the gist of the idea that language is valuable in its essence but not in its use, to put it more correctly, not in what it signifies at a certain moment:

Fashion and literature signify strongly, subtly, with all the complexities of an extreme art, but, if you will, they signify “nothing”, their being is in the signifying, not in what is signified. (Culler, 2002, p. 62)

Barthes prioritizes “signifying over what is signified” (Culler, 2002, p. 63); because signs are fluid and the only permanent thing is that language unceasingly signifies things and there is no end to that process. In this respect, can an author really mean anything, let alone a stable thing, and also can s/he make sure that s/he transfers the meaning to the reader?

This perspective breaks down the image of an author-ity, of an Author-God.

In a sense, the written text loses its origin or never has one. Barthes gives his opinion on this issue of originality of a text by saying:

We do not know that a text does not consist of a line of words, releasing a single, “theological” meaning (the “message” of the Author-God), but is a space of many dimensions, in which are wedded and contested various kinds of writing, no one of which is original: the text is a tissue of citations, resulting from the thousand sources of culture. (Barthes, 1977, p. 146)

Barthes’ author is a human that is capable of writing. By writing, he refers to the first and foremost meaning of the word. What is read is written by this person, with a pen in her/his hands, shaped by “thousand sources of culture”, thereby s/he has indeed no origin. The author inscribes:

...for him... his hand, detached from any voice, borne by a pure gesture of inscription (and not of expression), traces a field without origin – or which at least, has no other origin than language itself, that is, the very thing which ceaselessly questions any origin. (Barthes, 1977, p. 146)

Accordingly, why focus on Azra Kohen as the author of the trilogy while the only stable fact is that she wrote it? And for the reader, would it really matter that she, as the author in the sense of a creator, wrote the books? The trilogy, in that sense, has no voice or origin, but only a flow of words that also creates an endless flow of

meanings that change according to the act of reading. The moment the book is being read, the writer dies and the text lives forever.

Barthes begins the essay with the example of Balzac's *Sarrasine*, where the text talks about "castrato disguised as a woman". Quoting the passage from Balzac, Barthes questions the voice: "Who is speaking in this way?" (Barthes, 1977, p. 142). He emphasizes the impossible aspect of knowing the possessor of the voice:

Is it the story's hero, concerned to ignore the castrato concealed beneath the woman? Is it the man Balzac, professing certain "literary" ideas on femininity? Is it universal wisdom? Or romantic psychology? It will always be impossible to know, for the good reason that all writing is itself this special voice, consisting of several indiscernible voices... (Barthes, 1977, p. 142)

Kohen's writing also urges the reader to have this exact feeling of confusion: "Who is talking?" In several scenes, as Kohen calls them, it is hard to distinguish voices from one another such as Kohen or the character. This might be better explained by this quotation:

The reflection of her nudity in the mirror woke her up. She gazed at herself through the broken mirror. She looked at her bruised beauty, which caused her to be hunted. This was the favor of primitivity: Beauty. It was a poisonous affect that undervalued character. It was inspiration to the spectator, pain to the lacking, target to the hunter, reason to the lover... facility to the possessor at the beginning, but a curse at the end which covered all over her body (Kohen, 2015, p. 131)

Here, Duru is looking at the broken mirror after a brutal fight she had with Deniz.

Who is this voice then commenting on the human beauty? Is it Duru? Is it Deniz? Is it Azra Kohen? Is it Kohen as a beautiful woman? The questions can be infinitely varied as long as the indiscernibility of the voice is accepted.

The removal of origin is not limited to the use of pen name or the ambiguity of voices. It is also included in the fundamental narrative as well, but in a more symbolic way. Almost all of the characters are away from their families, especially from their parents:

He was a poor man defeated by life, by gravity... Never had an identity consciousness. His wife's death eased his life. Bilge's mother was not an easy-going woman. His father was an officer at the municipality and he lived his days as if he was a slave who had already accepted his defeat in life... She wished this man who cost her a father had never existed. (Kohen, 2015, p. 85, own translation, See Appendix A, 11)

This paragraph is squeezed into the scene where Bilge is at home trying to get her brother and father to have dinner. While Bilge is preparing the table, all of a sudden, the reader gets the information on her relationship with her father and their past as a family. The voice of this flashback is neither her father nor Bilge, but it is Kohen:

Her anger was a consequence of the loneliness she felt throughout her life. The anger she felt for the death of her father, for her stepfather who dragged her mother away from her. She was angry for the love her stepfather had for her mother and her mother, who get rid of her, first by sending her to boarding school and then to her grandmother. (Kohen, 2015, p. 189, own translation, See Appendix A, 12)

Here, Duru is walking towards home after a fight on the phone with her boyfriend Deniz. She is angry and the writer relates the anger of that moment to her past, specifically to her loneliness caused by her family. Here as well, the reader has a hard time understanding who is talking. Duru is not the one reminiscing all these issues but it is Kohen who explains the reader why Duru gets so vicious when she feels lonely.

Characterization in the trilogy reveals that the lack of origin is there but in different forms. Duru lost her father and was left by her mother. Özge lost her mother and then her father who turned out to be an outlaw living a double life with a different wife and children. Deniz's parents are not even mentioned. The reader does

not know who and where they are. Ada lives with her grandmother, the only person left from her family. Göksel was raised in an orphanage. Can lived in different orphanages, asylums and we do not even know who he truly is until the end of the trilogy. By removing the parents, Kohen signals that this is the journey searching for their true origins, but in the wrong places. The moment they stop looking for the things that poisonously corrupt their curiosities and their potentials, they all arrive where they are supposed to be.

With this in mind, she rejects the given and offers the readers an option: “this story will end here and you will begin” (Kohen, 2017b, own translation, see Appendix C, 1) the words that are written on the front cover of the third book, *Pi* (2017b). After turning the page of acknowledgement, the reader faces the motto: “Life is the reaction of an action.” Without even reading the content of the book, she implies so far that we are the results of our actions. She removes the idea of a destiny and encourages the reader to find oneself by analysis, knowledge and process of those actions: When the story ends, the last sentence that the reader sees on the blurb is this: “An unquestioned, unanalyzed life, has never been lived.” (Kohen, 2017b). She takes the role of a storyteller, tells her story, takes a step back, and lets the reader “find herself/himself”. The books carry the intention to make the reader question, revise, analyze and see through themselves. Following the self-analysis, the author advises the readers to find themselves as someone who is not defined by their origin. Instead, they should start observing their own experiences.

After having studied her thoughts on her own writing, the contradictory side of her writing career needs to be discussed. Although she tells a great deal about how her identity has no significant role in the aim and message of these books, she takes on certain roles and uses such a tone in her writing that she confuses the reader who

has already listened to her statements about her denial of being a writer. The whole situation evokes the questions such as: “Is she really not a writer? Does she really not see herself as a literary person? Do the use of a pen name and statements that she has little importance as a writer really suggest that the content is highlighted instead of herself as an author?”

Looking at the quotation above, a literary analysis and psychoanalysis parallelism can be structured. Even though there is an effort to remove it, we are trying to get to the core, origin, primal scene; or to the author as origin. Author-reader relationship parallels analyst-analysant relationship. While claiming she is a story-teller, Kohen only seems as one on the surface, while in depth she takes on an even godly role of an analyst or someone who has authority over the reader.

So far, it has been observed that Azra Kohen claims that she offers some serious changes in human life that could be triggered and realized through the reading of her trilogy. She has a bold motive behind the act of writing: to change the world. It is important to make a distinction between her motive and the medium: she dreams of changing the world, not of being a writer. She assumes that her books can trigger an urge to change the system that we, human beings, live in, so books act as tools to realize her dreams. As a famous author of supposedly life-changing books, Azra Kohen was invited to an interview with a communication guru Dr. Fatoş Karahasan to an award show, organized by Turkish Public Relations Association. The video where Kohen answered Karahasan’s questions was loaded on Indigo Magazine’s website with the title *The Legendary Speech Azra Kohen gave in The Golden Compass Award Ceremony* (Indigo, 2017). Amongst many striking sentences, one revealed her aim in the most honest, aggressive and daring way:

I am systematically preparing an army ... Millenium, the seventy-five per cent, which are my reader, will urge to support life in ten years. To a mass

that will move on, if I can be even a tiniest inspiration for them to build a system where humanity ... will taken out of the prison-like schools and for them ... to exist in a more supreme form I will feel as if I have accomplished my goal of existence. (Indigo, 2017 own translation, see Appendix D, 6)

Assumingly, she gained this ecological sensibility during her education at the University of Ottawa where she studied Economics of Third World Countries Aid. In the meantime, as she talks a great deal about earth, biology, nutrition and media culture, Kohen also suffers from the fact that some of the readers' attention and focus get caught in the love triangle of Can, Duru, and Deniz and all that happens within. She would like the reader to read and understand more than that. In that "legendary speech" she complains: "I am actually talking about these kind of things but unfortunately we are so primitive that we are always after love and stuff. In life everyone perceives up to their capacity" (Indigo, 2017).

If one asks "And what are those 'kind of things' she is writing about?" the answer would be a keyword that Kohen uses during a majority of interviews and in her story: awareness. Etymologically, "awareness" or "aware" derives from the Old English word "gewær" which means watchful. In its contemporary use, the adjective "aware" describes having knowledge; cognizant. Given the content of the trilogy, Kohen's use of the word connotes a warning about global economic and political games between politicians and businessmen and their harmful consequences on human life:

The music that is made for that package in which petroleum waste got mixed with powdered milk, would be so popular that people would set it as their ringtone, willingly... There was nothing like listening to good music while with every sip, having a few more cancerous cells. (Kohen, 2017b, p. 151, own translation, see Appendix C, 5)

Her message, to put it more correctly, her aim is to create awareness, wake people up and warn them about the dangers or distractions of the daily life that prevents



humanity from living up to their true potential. The first book starts with the prologue;

This book is not written for everyone.

It is written for those who are aware of how important awareness is, of how nothing is as it seems, that we are, since the moment we are born, are driven away from what we are supposed to be and tortured in order to be turned into a prototype some sort of social animal... (Kohen, 2015, prologue, own translation, see Appendix A, 13)

This positive intention of writing is not negatively criticized in this study. However, Kohen has a certain reader in mind and seeks some features in them: she needs those who feel disturbed by the level that modern life has reached to read her books. The reader who gets caught between the love triangle in the story and cannot read between the lines to get conscious about the unhealthy way of life, in her words, “perceives up to their capacity” (Indigo, 2017). She thinks being understood means more than being read (Arman, 2016). But then whom does she want to wake up? If she wrote the trilogy for those who are more aware, for those described in the prologue, then do they need to be reminded about the harms of drugs, bad television and ready to eat food if they are already aware of all that? This interpretation would suggest that she cannot take a step further as she passes the already known to the knowledgeable. She goes as far as complaining about the present situation.

On the other hand, if we forget about the fact that there is a target reader that the trilogy addresses, if we were to focus on this changed world which Kohen dreams about and aims for, that world would convey the idea of a utopia. She is against television series and shows, packaged food, nuclear energy, the education system and corrupted arts. She prefers solar energy, recyclable and organic agriculture and free art shows. Ali, Can’s driver, builds a farm, Kaya, Can’s assistant quits his job and starts fishing, Deniz founds an art center where there is free music

and dance shows, Eti starts eating home-dried fruits instead of chocolate and the youth protests the politicians and media bosses by walking on the streets for months.

Of course there is the opposite voice from time to time:

Is that why we are still trying to make a living out of what I earn from shows? Let's take all our stuff, go to the woods, I will dance around the trees and you will make your music... Maybe you can practice these because I am there, but me, how am I supposed to do it? Who is going to look after me?" (Kohen, 2015, p. 133, own translation, see Appendix A, 14)

Not that this way of thinking which belongs to the character Duru is right or wrong but this is a response that could come from the reader, as well, to Kohen who passes her own thoughts on art through the utterances of Deniz. The deliverance of thoughts is not only stated as a character's utterance but also by Kohen herself. The author claims that information nowadays is held hostage and can only reach people through certain ways like Kohen's writing.

In a way, Kohen, by criticizing the system and defending the idea that she can be the trigger to the movement that will change the system, she embodies the way through which knowledge is delivered. She takes on the role of being the one who saves the imprisoned information and passes it on to masses.

Needless to say, if achieved, these goals would perfectly make a better living for the humanity. The real question is how such self-confidence that claims to fix the corruption is accompanied by the idea that she has no importance at all. By accepting the invitations to television shows and talking about the harms of modern living, she inevitably talks about, and therefore affirms her authorship. This dilemma has a different meaning on a bigger scale. Even though she claims "If I did not write it, someone else would have" (Rutkay, 2017) her very presence in the media is confronted by the vagueness of "someone else would have" and confirms her authority as the author Azra Kohen. Lastly, this chapter analyses her godly attitude

which also dominates the process of adaptation, that almost become an unceasing meddling from the music to the script.

### 3.3 The writer's godly attitude

Going back to Barthes, some moments in Kohen's writing contradict with her deliberate removal of the author, as if she had read *The Death of the Author* before she started writing the trilogy. Still, she is not completely dead in her story that in some scenes she rises above the reader to the point where she has godly features. In his essay, Barthes (1977) warns about the discovery of the author:

Once the Author is gone, the claim to 'decipher' a text becomes quite useless. To give an Author to a text is to impose upon that text a stop clause, to furnish it with a final signification, to close the writing... in a multiple writing, indeed, everything is to be distinguished, but nothing deciphered; ... there is no underlying ground; the space of writing is to be traversed, not penetrated; writing ceaselessly posits meaning but in order to evaporate it... (Barthes, 1977, p. 147)

Having used a pen name, Kohen removes the origin in appearance. The tone of the author reminds the existence of Kohen as the author-person who is perceived as godly. These moves seem contradictory and they create a dualistic aspect of Kohen's authorship. Especially the imagery of seeds add a theological aspect to Kohen's authorship.

The first book opens with Can Manay and his driver Ali's conversation. Can tells his driver a Tibetan anecdote about gods. According to his anecdote, God planted the seeds of his potential to see them evolve and reach to their fullest. But a wicked god poisoned the seeds' curiosity by creating daily life and prevented them to realize their potential (Kohen, 2015, pp. 11-12). From that moment on, the imagery of seeds is a concept that the reader frequently comes across throughout the whole trilogy, mostly with the mottos "In the name of the seeds that showed the courage to

crack” and “God finds presence in every seed that shows the courage to crack” (Kohen, 2015, p. 8, own translation, see Appendix A, 15).

Starting from the very beginning, Kohen relates the imagery of seeds to God(s). God can plant a seed and make it grow. Those seeds represent the potential of God’s existence. Just like the Tibetan God, or even any god, Kohen plants the characters in her story. What is interesting is that almost every character carries a certain a feature or characteristic of the writer. Just like Azra Kohen, Can Manay is a therapist and he hangs the motto of seeds at the entrance of his clinic. Similar to Kohen herself, Ali the driver is a farmer. The agricultural engineer is just working for Can Manay to earn enough to build his organic farm. Let alone the fact that the music teacher Deniz has the same surname (Sarizeybek) as the writer, he obstinently expresses thoughts on life and capitalism, which very are similar to Kohen’s. He complains about the commercial worries of new generation artists, about the corruption in love relationships and about all those who have lost their soul and dreams to money. In the aforementioned award ceremony, she criticizes the fact that humanity no more produces, instead solely consumes. Very similar to that, in a scene Deniz complains:

The thing you call society is just a system that makes sure the bacteria called human is in touch. It is a system that eases the consumption. It is what allows you to exist even though you do not produce anything. How many of us can produce what they consume? The food we eat, the clothes we wear... We don’t even know how does a seed sprout.” (Kohen, 2015, p. 243, own translation, see Appendix A, 16)

Besides, Özge becomes the fight against mainstream media, she had enough of useless news about celebrities. She wants to expose all the dirt and take them down from their thrones:

“The celebrities of the country were shining in the place where a la turca overstatement with mannerless met... How funny, someone who practiced prostitution 10 years ago could be passed as a role model, as the most clever

woman, to people... Right after İrem Billur, Harika Fors, who acted as if she was an innocent rape victim after her sex tape went public and she was very successful with that role that she could be able to marry a famous director and even had children..." (Kohen, 2015, p. 87, own translation, see Appendix A, 17).

Disturbed by such real life celebrities, Kohen states in a speech the sentences below. She does not approve the fact that some figures are in a position they are not worthy of. Özge has the same ambition to take down the overly valued but extremely worthless famous figures of Turkey.

"Today in television world, there is the fact that the people we see as opinion leaders are very deformed. In fact, if they were not that deformed, we would not live in such a deformed society. The biggest examples are taken to the highest point so that their collapse would be a lesson to learn for billions." (Indigo, 2017, own translation, see Appendix D, 7)

Last but not least, Bilge has a different importance in all these similarities. Azra Kohen names herself and Bilge with almost the same name. The adjective "bilge", in Turkish means "wise, knowledgeable" which resembles very much to the pen name "Akilah". At the end of the trilogy Bilge, the clever young woman she is, is the one to put Can Manay in an asylum because she is the only person who can truly analyze him and what is really wrong with him.

When reminded of these numerous dualisms, Azra Kohen, who writes "... at this point, who am I does not matter" (Kohen, n.d.) actually does matter pretty much. Just like the seeds the Tibetan God planted, she plants parts of herself into characters. This conduct gives the impression that she, as the writer gives herself godly features. It is as if she is the splendid figure on the top of all these little characters and tells the story of how they (could not) find the right path. Kohen (2016) finishes the trilogy by saying: "Come with me. This is not a long road. We are finally going to you, to me... to US." (Kohen, 2017b). She insists on the idea of "US" also in interviews by saying "I believe that every person sitting here, every existence is my versions born from

different parents, shaped by different life experiences. In fact, all of you are me” (Indigo, 2017, own translation, see Appendix D, 8).

Above all, there is of course her omniscient tone to the point that every so often the reader loses the track of who is speaking. Kohen becomes the omnipresent author who sees and knows everything and aware of what everyone thinks. She knows the characters’ backgrounds and instead of embedding that knowledge into dialogues, she passes it directly. She knows what is going to happen and again, and does not hold back from giving the reader what they are supposed to understand:

“They kept going, without knowing one of the people waiting at that stop had the power to change Can’s life completely.” (Kohen, 2015, p. 13, own translation, see Appendix A, 18). “He would only find out years later that this was an original piece composed by Deniz.” (Kohen, 2015, p. 29, own translation, see Appendix A, 19). “She always fantasized about Murat, even when years later he died in her arms.” (Kohen, 2015, p.37, own translation, see Appendix A, 20)

It is not necessary to keep giving all of these kinds of quotes as examples. There are hundreds of them in the narrative that this structure of sentence becomes a signature writing style for Kohen.

## CHAPTER 4

### HYBRID GENRE, HYBRID AUTHOR

The contradictory image Kohen draws of herself is not only seen in the difference of Kohen as the guest of talk shows and Kohen as the author of the trilogy but also it lies between the lines of the trilogy. Humbly claiming she has no importance as a writer, the writer of the trilogy aims to “change the world”. Such a goal is no easy task. Especially for a person who does not see themselves as a writer but also wants to change the world by their writing. In close relation to the difficulty of the task, Kohen’s writing style also looks daring. Just like the way she takes on such a challenging role, she puts herself in a godly position that contradicts with the idea which affected the French literary criticism in the late 1960s such as Barthes’ *The Death of the Author* (1977). Not only the content but also the form supports the idea that she is indeed a writer with writerly ambitions, hopes and goals. The admixture of psychological knowledge, music suggestions, lyrics and self-help techniques as well as socio-ideologically different stories turn the trilogy into a typical Bakhtinian novel doing away with the classification of the trilogy as either self-help or screenplay. Yet, Bakhtin’s criticism offers more interpretations for the authorial function and position. The authorial consciousness, as Bakhtin calls it, would be reflected upon within the framework of the Bakhtinian dialogism and polyphonic novel.

In this respect, the relationship between the author and the work gains a new perspective in Kohen’s position as an author. It can be easily observed that through her tone, she conveys the feeling that she is not just a woman with a pen in her hand but an “Author-God” who comes to know and foresee everything that happens in the story. As if God inserts his features in human beings, Kohen divides herself into

several characters each of whom carries a characteristic of her: such as Ali's farming, Deniz's criticism towards the capitalism, or Bilge's name, which is the Turkish equivalent of "Akilah". In a way, she plants seeds in them. This is indeed a metaphor that is frequently used by Kohen in the story. Not only by planting her features as seeds in them, Kohen also acts godly by naming her characters. To put it more correctly, there is nothing godly for a writer to name the characters in their book, what is godly here is the fact that those names are not arbitrary and Kohen aims to make the reader realize that they are not.

#### 4.1 The ambiguity of genre

By defining the trilogy's genre, Kohen's identity as a 'writer' also comes forward. Putting a name on her work will define whether she is a writer or not. In a way, it resembles looking at a wooden table and naming its creator a carpenter. In this study's case, the process will begin by first defining the genre of the trilogy.

Although the humble claims directed towards her non-author identity, the ambiguity of genre that seems as if it happened naturally, actually looks more planned when analysed in depth. That is why "What is the genre of this trilogy?" is one of the significant questions that this study deals with. As mentioned above, there are newspaper articles that categorize it as self-help, on the other hand the text is embedded with academic references to science and human life and they all have come together in a narrative fiction. By mixing the elements of different genres, she creates a product that does not directly fall into any category. She gives importance to the content or to the message but certainly not to the specificity of a compositional form. However, the notion of specificity brings us to the analyses of specific forms from which she draws in the construction of this novel.



First, let us assume this is indeed a self-help trilogy, as a number of interviews have categorized it so far:

Some will find famous therapists, media bosses, television celebrities, singers, artists, love, sex and deceiving in the story of these books but the ones who can see the details hidden between the lines will be able to understand that this is a book of awareness. (Çetinkaya, 2014, own translation, See Appendix D, 9)

As she aims “to please the reader rather than distress them”, she makes use of the method of narrativization. Although there is a story she tells, her frequent use of words like “awareness”, “transformation”, “realizing yourself” conveys the feeling that this is a self-help trilogy (Çetinkaya, 2014). There is the intention to take the reader from their current position by making them aware of certain things and causing a transformation. For example, there are such paragraphs that dictate the ways of behaving in a correct manner in the instances of personal life such as in love relationships:

If a man joins a woman who jumps on him without knowing her, it is not the woman whom he joins; but it is just a body that he wants to use instead of his masturbating hands. This is why men do not want to see such a woman until the next time. They do not want to share anything with her, they just use her like a pair of hands. I think you are born for so much more than jerking a man off, but of course what I think of you has no importance, what you think of yourself is important ... Unless you put effort into yourself and you start a journey to attain the ultimate form you can, the man of your life will never find you. (Kohen, 2015, pp. 507-508, own translation, See Appendix C, 6)

Kohen comments on how she thinks human relations should be and what is wrong with them. Deniz’s above monologue could be easily taken from a typical self-help book titled “How to Make One Fall in Love with You”. The author interferes in the form and describes how a relationship should not be, and transfers a message to young women about how they should behave in their dating life. Even in some scenes the characters represent the authorial tone and give speeches in the flow of the narration:

... if you keep encoding these experiences like your lack of mother, your brother, Murat's death or even your father as obligations inside of glorious brain of yours, you will never become what you are supposed to be ... You are not alive to be crushed under it, but to take the necessary amount and color up. (Kohen, 2017a, p. 164, own translation, See Appendix B, 4)

In this paragraph, the idea of transforming negative experiences into positive ones is conveyed through the character Eti who gives advices to Bilge. Thus, Kohen speaks to those who can empathize with her utterances and achieve personal growth just as any self-help book would intend to do so. The author even keeps talking through characters who give definitions of overrated notions such as happiness:

What you call happiness is a thought loaded in your head about how to be happy, it is not real. You desire something, you think your happiness depends on that, you acquire it, it is yours, you get bored and you want to get rid of it. You believe that you will be happy when you get rid of it, you get rid of it and start desiring something else. You desire again, you acquire again you get bored again, you want to get rid of it again. This is not happiness. This is consumerism. Happiness is nothing but an illusion, it is just a moment.” (Kohen, 2015, p. 256, 257, own translation, see Appendix A, 21)

This paragraph could have been taken from a self-book titled “How to Achieve True Happiness?”. Here, through Deniz's monologue, Kohen shatters the wrongly constructed idea of happiness that reigns modern life. So, rather than trying to fit in the categories of modern life, Kohen aspires to achieve a compositional form which acknowledges the right connections with the particularities of everyday life. The only difference from the genre of self-help is that these definitions are hidden inside a fictitious story instead of being solely thrown.

Monologues written in the style of self-help genre are not the only example of verbalization that determines the genre of the trilogy as Kohen's writing carries traces of a screenplay. For instance, Azra Kohen narrates the physical aspects of characters, the events or places such as Duru's dance shows in a visually detailed way. Secondly, the chapters are very short, sometimes not even a page and titled with time references. The way chapters are separated evokes the idea that she divides

the text into time pieces: “Duru 2 hours before meeting ... Can Manay earlier that morning ... Bilge 5,5 hours before meeting ...” (Kohen 2015). The “text” is cut into “scenes” in order to narrate what each character is doing that certain moment.

That moment, Bilge

Bilge got lost in the crowd, she felt as if she was the most stupid woman in the world and at that very moment she noticed that she felt like a woman for the first time, inside that dress it was as if she was in hell” (Kohen, b, p. 382, own translation, see Appendix C, 7).

The above quotation is taken to exemplify the aforementioned discussion of short scenes. This short chapter could be a transition scene of a few seconds to show Bilge’s mood at that moment and just as a script it is cut after squeezing many thoughts and feelings in a short paragraph.

Last but not least, Kohen’s footnotes have the most apparent features of a script. They include not only flashbacks but also music suggestions. For instance, while talking about a past event that happened in the previous book, she refers to it as “*Fi*, 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, 4<sup>th</sup> scene. Can Manay’s client” (Kohen, 2017b, p. 623), “*Çi*, 1<sup>st</sup> chapter, 3<sup>rd</sup> scene” (Kohen, 2017b, p. 663). By such self-references, Kohen alludes to certain past events that are necessary to remember. In addition, as if she is a director or a music coordinator of a film, Kohen gives song references for the scenes she wants to complement with musical elements. Aiming to create a better environment for the scene, she makes song recommendations and sometimes she even leaks a song into the narration as if it is being listened to by a character.

While her foot was pressing the gas pedal, she turned up the music a little more ... The song continued: “Wrong questions with the wrong replies... Wrong... Wrong...”. These lyrics were familiar. “I was on the Wrong page of the Wrong book...” (Kohen, 2017a, p.107, own translation, see Appendix B, 5)

The music references are both included in and excluded from the main text. For instance, in the 13<sup>th</sup> scene of the third book, the footnote follows: “Music suggestion:

Eyes Shut (Live at Yellow Berlin)” (Kohen, 2017b, p. 426). She is even specific with the versions and the performances of the pieces. The trilogy is written in such a style that eases the movie crew’s work by making everything already set for them.

The different features that embody the characteristics of different genres such as self-help or screenplay perfectly exemplify the genre ambiguity of the trilogy. It is as crucial to define the genre of her work as to make a clear understanding of

Kohen’s position as an author:

... a genre is a particular way of looking at the world... the emergence of the novel is ... an event in not only the history of literature, but the history of perception: for those who have experienced novelness, the world will not look the same. (Holquist, 2002, p. 163)

The general assumption has placed the trilogy on the Turkish Novel shelves of the bookstores. Also, in the media Azra Kohen is frequently referred as a novelist.

However, the confusion of genre(s) is there as the narration of self-help is distinguishable from that of screenplay. In a way, narration loses its homogeneity through such ruptures. The assumption that the trilogy is indeed a trilogy of novels can be strongly justified by a metalinguistic discussion on the novel, which is Mikhail Bakhtin’s understanding of the genre of novel.

Bakhtin’s thought on the novel can be taken into account in order to put an end to this genre ambiguity. Instead of trying to define it as a self-help book *or* a screenplay, Kohen’s trilogy can be categorized as a Bakhtinian novel and therefore incorporate all the other genres that seem to cause an ambiguity. Before determining the genre, first we have to separate out Bakhtin’s interpretation of literary phrases within the scope of novel. As a “discourse of a whole incorporated genre” (Holquist, 1981, p. 324), the trilogy brings together the discourses of self-help, screenplay or other genres built by utterances on the smallest scale: “what he (Bakhtin) has to say about novels is incomprehensible if the emphasis on utterance is not always kept in

mind” (Holquist, 1981, p. xxi). Thus, the particularity of individual utterances is best understood in the rule of genre inclusiveness which refutes the assumption that there is an ambiguity.

To express his ideas on the multiplicity of genres in the novel, Bakhtin emphasizes the speech aspect of language that transmits the immediate meaning of any discourse. He prioritizes the speech genres over the written ones because his “basic scenario for modelling variety is two actual people talking to each other in a specific dialogue at a particular time and in a particular place” (Holquist, 1981, p. xx). This specific exchange can be basically defined as *multi-speechedness* for which Bakhtin uses the word *heteroglossia*:

Heteroglossia means ‘differentiated speech’, and has been called ‘Bakhtin’s key term for describing the complex stratification of language into genre, register, sociolect, dialect, and the mutual interanimation of these forms’... Bakhtin uses the term ‘heteroglossia’ to mean not simply the variety of different languages which occur in everyday life, but also their entry into literary texts (Vice, 1997, p. 18)

As the novel is a super genre containing a mix of varied voices, the term heteroglossia becomes the very definition for novel. The heteroglossic variety alludes to the togetherness of many characters coming from different educational backgrounds, families or different social groups or classes in the novel. In this respect,

The notion of ‘heteroglossia’ receives its most extended definition, and comes to play a key role in the aesthetics of the novel... the novel emerges as the form which best exploits the heteroglossic tendencies of language, so that the novelistic and the heteroglossic become in effect synonymous (Dentith, 1995, p. 54)

Separate from each other in appearance, different discourses are juxtaposed to support each other as novelistic elements, therefore the novel draws its novelness from such immediacies of speech diversity. Put it another way, what lies at the heart of the modern novel is essentially marked by the hybrid structure of languages:

The novel permits the incorporation of various genres, both artistic (inserted short stories, lyrical songs, poems, dramatic scenes, etc.) and extra-artistic (everyday, rhetorical, scholarly, religious genres and others). In principle any genre could be included in the construction of the novel, and in fact it is difficult to find any genres that have not at some point been incorporated into a novel by someone (Dentith, 1995, pp. 214-215)

Incorporated in a novel, those genres are written within the framework of their own structural features, which distinguishes them from one another between the lines of a novel. In a way, Bakhtinian novel, as a syncretic product, preserves both those meanings of genres and also create many of its own: “All these genres, as they enter the novel, bring into it their own languages...” (Dentith, 1995, p. 215). While preserving the style of the incorporated genres, the writer builds such a unique structure that it preserves all the idiosyncratic features in its own syncretism.

Lastly, before defining Kohen’s trilogy as a Bakhtinian novel, it is necessary to focus on the use of aphorisms in the novel as an example to show the multiplicity of voices. Coming from different origins, raised in different environments, having different backgrounds, all characters offer a variety of utterances that take form of aphorisms that are also incorporated in the novel.

Collins English Dictionary (2014) defines “aphorism” as “a short pithy saying expressing a general truth; maxim”, which falls within the realm of authorial intentions. When it is taken into account that these aphorisms are not only utterances of characters but, as Dentith (1995) claims, “conceptualized philosophical dicta of the author himself”, Kohen’s writing constitutes a good example of Bakhtinian novel in this regard as there are numerous aphorisms on many issues such as miscellaneous examples of –isms. The frequent incorporation of aphorisms appear in the form of utterances that aim to give advices and provide counselling:

...if you don’t experience, you can’t change, if you can’t change you can never become ‘you’. But knowledge changes unceasingly and only

experience can update you (Kohen, 2015, p. 60, own translation, see Appendix A, 22)  
...beauty was an illusion, just as freedom was. (Kohen, 2015, p. 66, own translation, see Appendix A, 23)

In Kohen's trilogy, character utterances reach a level that characters themselves are transformed into genres and they lose their very personalities, humanness or subjecthood in the face of the utterances they produce. Instead, they become emblems of different fields of knowledge. Eti's monologues are almost unnecessarily laden with psychiatric knowledge and Can's inner voice and his ways of manipulation give a great deal on psychoanalysis, as if a doctor diagnoses a disorder. Ada composes a song that takes the form of a poem and is squeezed in the narration. Last but not least, Deniz lectures about Marxist philosophy spreading his aphorisms on the audience and Özge comes to embody the Marxist discourse.

On a bigger scale, just like the inclusion of all these specific voices in the story, Kohen incorporates different genres in her trilogy. Therefore, instead of classifying the trilogy in the limits of one genre such as self-help or screenplay, it is defined as a genre of heterogeneous novel.

As Bakhtin defines a valuable literary form out of what is evaluated as formlessness, Kohen composes one of the greatest concepts of literary form with a complete denial of that she is an author. Even though there do not exist any literary worries in her style and intentions of writing these books, she paradoxically proves to be a novelist. The genre ambiguity is replaced by the genre inclusiveness that inevitably defines the work as a Bakhtinian novel.

#### 4.2 Authorial consciousness of Bakhtin

As studied previously, the trilogy exemplifies Bakhtin's definition of novel as a literary form. However, it does not say much about the author's position within that

form. Therefore, it brings the issue to the notion of authorship in Bakhtinian dialogism. To better understand Kohen's position within the trilogy, it is useful to make a distinction between the character and the person (for the author) through Bakhtin's dialogism. As studied in detail in the second chapter, the notion of authorship has already been the subject of Barthes' literary analysis in the late 1960s: a writer is a subject position within a text who generates the rules and laws for the production of texts, rather than the source and origin of texts as suggested by the humanist view. Deconstructed as such, writer can only exist as the product of a text, not as the figure who is outside the text and who precedes and creates it. The work cancels out the author's particular individuality as a creator and as the centre of the text.

In his unfinished essay *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity* (1924), Bakhtin already formulated a discussion about the author in the work, not of the work. The former is:

subject to numerous theoretical sieges: author as character, as ideologist of the architectonics, as masked voice, as polyphonic ear, as interlocutor in chronotopized dialogue. This "authority" of the work, which Bakhtin will call authorial consciousness as dimension inherent to a text, is an abstract figure of mediation, representative of the author as a semiotic person, producer of signs. (Aran, 2014, p. 7)

Going back to Bakhtinian concept of utterance, what he calls authorship is a "unique and unrepeatable event in the life of a text" (Aran, 2014, p. 7). In other words, the authority of the text is not an authority in the sense of an empirical author whose word belongs to only himself because one's own utterances not only belong to themselves but to someone else. The author is basically the orchestrator of the material in a certain form. With a focus on formal and aesthetic concerns, Bakhtin includes the historical, the social and the cultural in the aesthetic object by creating the author-creator in contrast to author-person which heralds the Barthes' death of



the author with the advent of post-structuralism. That's why Barthes' dead author comes alive with Bakhtin's author not in the sense of "the author as of old ...it is not a question of reviving the old impression of the author as a unique point of origin" (Burkitt, 1998, p. 163) but rather in the sense of the author-creator who transmits their ideas produced out of "the network of social relations and communication" (Burkitt, 1998, p. 164) they live in. By saying the rebirth of the author, it is not meant that the author is back to the centre of the text as the traditional Author-God. Burkitt summarizes Bakhtin's perspective on language as communication in these words: "language is not about individual expression but about communication which is a relational process wherein people take turns as both speaker and listeners" (Burkitt, 1998, p. 166). The individuality of the author is observed in the style of the communication he brings through narration. Thus, the artistic creation of the author-creator addresses a hero who is a different self from his own. Extrapolating himself and looking at the world of the character from outside, the author-creator objectifies, thereby understands and evaluates the character from his own position. The intersubjective relationship where the author-creator and hero "complement each other as in life" (Aran, 2014, p. 12) surfaces with the help of narrative force. Even though human beings are incomplete subjects in real life that is different from art, it is still not possible to separate art from real life where human beings look at themselves "with the eyes of the world, with the eyes of others" (Aran, 2014, p. 12). In the end, the author-creator, as a consciousness, creates a hero, i.e. another consciousness, who is an object of knowledge and completeness of meaning on whom "all the inconclusiveness of the real man, but all the wholeness of the aesthetic object" (Aran, 2014, p. 13) is imposed. Thanks to the aesthetic-formal creation of the character by the author-creator, "a constituent in a work", the author-person, "a

constituent in the ethical, social event of life” can be considered someone who has brought his socially constructed self to the stage (Aran, 2014, p. 13):

The author-as-creator will help us to gain insight into the author-as-person and only after that will the author-person’s comments about his creative activity acquire illuminating and complementary significance (Aran, 2014, p. 14).

In this close relationship between the author-creator and author-person, it should be noted that authorial function cannot be thought separate from the cultural context since not only the author-person but every literary work that includes individual utterances of the author-person is sociological. When the author “speaks not *about* a character, but *with* him” (Aran, 2014, p. 17), the death of the Author-God whose stability and firm position are challenged by the relationship between the hero and the author-creator, which “is rendered powerless in advance and denied the finalizing word”, occurs (Aran, 2014, p. 16).

Going back to Kohen, it is easy to reach the author-person through both characters and the author-creator. As Bakhtin puts it, the author-creator, Akilah, illuminates excessively on the author-person, Azra Kohen. Even though she underlines that she has no importance in the understanding of the novel, she paradoxically does nothing but “help us gain insight into the author-as-person”. Bakhtin’s idea that not only the author-person but also every literary work is sociological implies the inevitable assumptions that one makes about the author-person’s life, views, ambitions or background while reading a work written by him. In Kohen’s case, the assumption that the writer has knowledge on biology, filmmaking, psychology and sociology can be easily made. The author-person Kohen makes us notice her knowledge about filmmaking while narrating her story in a strongly visual way. Another example would be her constant emphasis on ecological issues and the importance of using solar panels instead of electricity or gas. The

trilogy contains a lot of technical information on the issue that she has been building a farm that uses the Sun as an energy source in real life. Thus, Bakhtin's distinction between the author-person and the author-creator becomes blurry as the author-person Kohen overshadows the author-creator Akilah by centralizing her social positioning within a network of social relations.

Even though she dominates the existence and style of the author-creator Akilah, Kohen interiorizes an interesting point of view on the existence of her books. Quoting from Rutkay's talk show, she claims "If I did not write them, someone else would have at some point". In his essay on the authorship in Bakhtinian thought, Burkitt (1998) writes "Texts predate any given individual" and he elaborates on the idea by referring to Althusser's point of view on the subject:

As Althusser once said of ideologies, they lie and wait of the person before her or his birth and, in learning these pre given texts or discourses, her or his subjectivity is called out or constructed (Burkitt, 1998, p. 163)

In a way, even though her sentence can be interpreted as the result of her reckless attitude towards her authorship, her assumption proves to be right as the ideology or the text precedes her existence. Rather than being the center of the product she creates, therefore predates in the traditional understanding of authorship, she evolves with the text which has already been there "authoring" the author.

## CONCLUSION

There are many themes in this trilogy such as, love, desire, obsession, popular culture, art, consumerism, health, environment ... Among them one is of particular significance as it gets into reaction with the others as well as it dominantly exists on its own both in the content and the form of the books: Duality manifests in a strongly visible way in Kohen's trilogy. There is a constant emphasis on the pattern-like togetherness of opposite extremes at the same time in life. The characters almost symbolize extremities inside themselves and in relation to one another. It has been already suggested that all characters go through different journeys and some accomplish self-growth whereas some gets even more corrupted. Deniz quits drugs and dedicates himself to his music, pointing to the transformation of an addict into a healthy and productive man. Duru's journey starts with beauty, talent and admiration but ends with a deformed shape and disinterest. Once a symbol of purity, the beautiful ballerina ends up beaten up and alone while trying to choose between two men. She loses her beauty, not to mention her dancing career. Described as an esteemed therapist; Can ends up in an asylum having lost his mind. In addition to such examples of personal deterioration, juxtaposition of personal characteristics makes them more discernible in the sense that contradictions emphasize their individual qualities. For example, when Duru signifies beauty, Ada stands for the opposite of her beauty. Also, Özge becomes the representation of justice while Sadık is the source of injustice. The examples go on and on. The characters and the experiences change, yet the only stable thing is the dualistic aspect of their environment and the things they all go through.

This duality is not only found during the personal journeys of characters but also Azra Kohen's journey from the first publication date of the trilogy until today on the meta-level of authorship. She gives speeches that are so contradictory regarding her writing that the aforementioned duality even becomes a type of confusion for the reader. This confusion is the starting point of this study: Kohen's unfitting speeches to her writing have caused many questions. Especially the fact that she insistently emphasized on how she wanted her books to be read, understood and appreciated independent of her identity created a dual expression. For a writer who has only written her first book, she manages to talk and write so daringly and so humbly at the same time. This humility and courage are the two poles that divide the second and the third chapters of this study. Just like the duality that is almost in every corner of the trilogy's story, Kohen announces her goals and plans in an extremely confident way while she states in a strangely humble way that her authorship does not matter in the face of the messages that she aims to deliver: "A total of nine books. The first book(s) was *Fi*, *Çi* and *Pi*. The second is *Aeden* and *Nakar*. Third book(s), *See Me* and *Hear Me*. So I am going to write six more books" (Arman, 2019). In Kohen's opinion, "a book" can only be a duology or a trilogy, therefore six books would at least amount to twelve books. Her ambition of writing and the claim that she is not a writer raises various questions to be analysed.

Successive to information on the trilogy and the writer in the first chapter, the second chapter focuses on Kohen's utterances which imply that she does not have literary intentions while writing these books. Her sentences in newspaper interviews, television shows and speeches at universities are discussed alongside quotations from the book. The theoretical companion of the chapter is Roland Barthes (1967), especially his essay *The Death of the Author*. As Kohen constantly warns the reader

not to pay attention to her life, experiences and background, Barthes' comments on the process of reading defines Kohen as a scripteur, but not an author. More importantly, they both talk about the concept of origin. Kohen implies the removal of origin while Barthes emphasizes its non-existence, its impossibility. Together with references to Barthes' essay, Kohen's removal of the origin both by the use of a pen name and the non-existence of the characters' parents is analysed. Simply put, Kohen gives two main messages on the issue of origin: "Who I am does not matter for your understanding of these books" and "to truly find ourselves, we must think outside our origins, focusing on our experiences and analysing ourselves." In this sense she seems as if she aims to concretize Barthes' ideas by her writing.

Of course, as the nature of the whole trilogy suggests, her authorship suggests a contradiction. The third chapter approaches Kohen's authorship from another perspective that seems to be opposite to the second one. First, Kohen's own expressions regarding her true goal of writing are elaborated. The reasons of her writing and the messages she aims to transfer are explored depending on her own utterances. Regarding her aim, one thing becomes ambiguous: what is the genre of this trilogy then? If the most important plan is to reach awareness towards an almost utopian-like style of living, why is the meaning hidden in a plot? Why does an author, who wants to focus on this awareness, distract the reader with a love triangle? In this ambiguity, the books become an amalgamation of self-help, novel, and screenplay and maybe more. This mixture is analysed through Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of novel. In that respect, this multi-speechedness of novel poses no problem. However, the writer's attitude once again is in contradiction with the intention of writing. With the frequent imagery of seeds and the omniscient style of writing,

Kohen makes an up-to-date example of Barthes' Author-God. Barthes' essay helps the reader understand both attitudes of Kohen: the humble one and the godly one.

In addition to the questions of authorship and genre, the fact that the trilogy was adapted to screen catches attention as it reveals a lot about the contradictory decisions that Kohen makes about capitalism and modern living. It even becomes the ultimate contradiction of the trilogy as Kohen first let it be shot and then she cancelled the show. Allowing her books to be adapted into series, she inevitably accepted (or should have known) some changes in the plot, character aspects or other details. Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006) is useful for understanding inevitable changes of the written material to the visual. She also explains that the second production does not necessarily have to be inferior to the source material. Even though Kohen admitted she was content with the way *Fi* was filmed, she cancelled the series after the second season finale. In the fourth chapter, Kohen's decision is discussed in the light of Marxist-inspired Frankfurt School and specifically the concept of culture industry, as coined by Adorno and Horkheimer. The question here is what kind of commercial worries may affect a written material (that is already produced with –so called- other worries) especially if it has a content that is against capitalistic system?

To sum up, the keyword of this study would be dualities. Starting from the smallest component, i.e. characters, the duality becomes a big cloud above the whole project (trilogy, series, television shows, newspaper interviews...) While constantly emphasizing the importance of being balanced, Kohen goes from one extremity to the other. In addition, classified frequently as a psychologist and self-help writer, she does not give a recipe for that. While criticising all that corrupts the good balance, she loses hers. Would Kohen's book be sold thousands, if it was published by a

smaller publishing house and sold in independent bookshops instead of bookstore chains? Again, would the trilogy's sales increase if it were not adapted into series? While making a critique of exactly this situation, she benefited from it in the end in order to transfer her message to larger masses. In other words, the author seems to locate herself on several different levels in the encounter of language and mass culture, given her continuous duality that is supported by the creation of a novel and her interferences in its adaptation to the screen. The unquestionable hypocrisy of the author marks the whole process of the use of (meta)linguistic theories and culture industry.



## APPENDIX A

### *FI* QUOTES IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

1. Bir kütüğün üstünde, tek bacağına üzerinde bir heykel gibi dimdik duran kız diğer

bacağına oldukça yavaş ama hiç titretmeden 180 derecelik bir açıyla havaa

kaldırmıştı ... mükemmel bacak ortaya çıktı ... Fi ... Tanrısal vücudu, berrak teni ve

uçuşan saçlarıyla kız sanki gerçeklik dışıydı. (Kohen, 2015, p. 15)

2. Olması gerektiği kadar kaslı, sağlam, uzun, kadınsı, mükemmel... Fi. Üzerindeki

hafifçe içini gösteren beyaz elbisesi, Tanrısal vücudu, berrak teni ve uçuşan

saçlarıyla kız sanki gerçeklik dışıydı ... Çıplak ayakları, porselen teni ve kusursuz

orantısıyla Can'ı büyülemişti. (Kohen, 2015, p. 15-6)

3. Küveti almasındaki aynı nedenle döşemişti Can evini. Fi oranı. Küvetin

ayaklarının gövdesine, yüksekliğinin uzunluğuna oranı da Fi sayısını veriyordu,

insana güzel gelen her şey gibi. Güzellikten başka hiçbir zaafı yoktu Can Manay'ın.

Tek zaafının nedenlerini araştırırken Fi oranıyla karşılaşmış, bu oranın evrendeki

güzel olarak addedilen her şeyde bulunduğunu görüp önceleri takıntı haline

getirmişti. 10 yıl sonra nihayet Fi'yi uyguladığı bir yaşam tarzı içindeydi. (Kohen,

2015, p. 21)

4. Tanrılar yeryüzüne inseydi yaşamayı seçecekleri tek yer televizyon olurdu,

izlenecek kadar yakın ulaşılamayacak kadar uzak. Şöhret bir tanrıya hayat veren ilk

şey. İkincisiyse insanlarda uyandırdığı inanç, sizde ikisi de var, üstelik insan

olmanıza rağmen. (Kohen, 2015, p. 10)

5.... Kutsal ‘merak’ ımızın... zehirlendiğini (Kohen, 2015, prologue)

6. “Bazı müzikler vardır, her yerde yapılır, herkes dinler. Sözleri, kalbimi parçaladın derken, insanlar eller havada dans eder. (Şadiye’ye) Sizin yaptığınız türden. Biz böyle bir şeyden bahsetmiyoruz. Kendi içinde verdiği duygudan başka hiçbir şey barındırmayan çok yoğun, saf bir şeyden bahsediyoruz... (Kohen, 2015, pp. 227, 228)

7. ... halk tarafından bir melek edasıyla anılan bu kokain bağımlısı, erkek delisi, lunatic kadın... anaç tavrı aslında sadece tombulluğundan gelen... özünde var olmayan ama çevresindekilerin ona yakıştırdığı bir şey, imaj. (Kohen, 2015, pp. 204-205)

8. Can önden yürüyen kıza baktı. Yeniden mütevazı elbisesi yer yer süzülen güneş ışığına çarpıştığında, iç gösteren çok erotik bir etki yaratıyordu ... İçerisi tropikal ağaçların, çilek, böğürtlen gibi narin orman meyvelerinin, bitkilerinin bulunduğu elli metre karelik bir bölümdü. Yer sanki yerden ısıtılmalı gibi ılık, yumuşak bir toprakla kaplıydı ve ağaçların arasında boş bırakılan orta bölümde Can’ın sonradan değişik masajlar için tasarlandığını anladığı, tuhaf görünümlü, yatağa benzer bir şey vardı. Köşede akan şelale bir duşla birleştirilmişti. (Kohen, 2015, p. 297)

9. ... bilincimiz gündelik yaşantının yapılması gerekenlerinin kuşatmasındaydı, her an bir şeylerin peşinden gidiyorduk, çalışmazsak değersizdik, hayatı anlamlandırmak için sürekli çalışıyor, çalışmadığımızda da kendimizi uyuşturmak için diğerleriyle

buluşuyor, sosyalleşiyor ve merakımızı her an diğerlerine vererek potansiyalimizi kurban ediyorduk ... İnsanlık boktan bir durumdaydı... Açlık, kazalar, hastalıklar ve ölümler yüzünden değil! Üzerinde çalışmak için geldiğimiz kimlik bilincimizin, bir köşeye itilip tüm anlamsız şeylerin merak edilir hale getirilmesindendi.

Kaybolmuştuk. (Kohen, 2015, p. 12)

10. Fi, deneyimin içinde kaybolmak yerine korkmadan deneyime sahip olmanın yolculuğudur. İçinde bolca bulunan manipülasyon, seks, aldatma ve aldanma hikayeleri belki herkesin dikkatini çekebilir ama gerçeklerden yola çıkılarak ulaşılmak istenen yerde sadece farkındalık vardır. (Kohen, 2015, back cover)

11. Yerçekimine, hayata yenik düşmüş zavallı bir adamdı bu ... asla kimlik bilinci olmamıştı Osman'ın ... Karısının ölümü hayatını kolaylaştırmıştı. Zor bir kadındı Bilge'nin annesi. Babası ise belediyede üst düzey bir memurdu ve hayata yenilmişliğini çoktan kabul etmiş bir esir gibi günlerini geçiriyordu ... Kendisine bir babaya mal olan bu adamın hiç var olmamasını diledi. (Kohen, 2015, p. 85)

12. Babasının ölmüş olmasına, annesini kendisinden uzaklaştıran üvey babasının annesine olan aşkına, önce yatılı okula sonra babaannesine göndererek kendisinden kurtulan annesine duyduğu öfke hayatı boyunca hissettiği yalnızlığın bir ürünüydü. (Kohen, 2015, p. 189)

13. Bu kitap herkes için yazılmadı. Farkındalığın ne kadar önemli olduğunu, hiç bir şeyin görüldüğü gibi olmadığını, doğduğumuz andan itibaren olmamız gerekenden

uzaklaştırılarak prototip bir toplum yaratığına dönüştürülmek için işkencelere maruz kaldığımızı ... fark etmiş ... hazır herkes için yazıldı (Kohen, 2015, prologue)

14. Bu yüzden mi benim gösterilerden kazandıklarımla geçinmek zorundayız! Alalım eşyalarımızı gidelim bir ormana, ağaçların arasında ben dans ederim, sen de müziğini yaparsın ... Belki bu dediklerini sen uygulayabilirsin çünkü ben varım ama ben, ben nasıl uygulayacağım! Kim geçindirecek beni? (Kohen, 2015, p. 133)

15. Tanrı çatlama cesareti gösteren her tohumda ... var olur. (Kohen, 2015, p. 8)

16. Toplum dediğin şeyse insan denilen bakterinin iletişimde olmasını garantileyen bir system sadece. Tüketimi kolaylaştıran bir sistem, üretmesen de var olabilmeni sağlayan şey. Kaçımız tükettiğimiz şeyleri üretebiliyoruz? Yediklerimiz, giydiklerimiz... Bir tohumun nasıl filizlendiğini bile bilmiyoruz. (Kohen, 2015, p. 243)

17. Ülkenin ünlüleri, alaturka abartının görgüsüzlükle buluştuğu yerde parlıyorlardı ... Ne komik, resmen fahişelik yapmış biri ülkenin en örnek gösterilen akıllı kadını diye yutturulmuştu halka ... İrem Billur'un hemen ardından gelen Harika Fors ise çıkan porno kayıtları sonucu tecavüze uğrayan masum kızı oynamış ve toplum içindeki bu rolüyle çok da başarılı olmuştu, hatta ünlü bir yönetmenle evlenmiş ve çocuk bile yapabilmişti. (Kohen, 2015, p. 87)

18. O durakta bekleyenlerden birinin Can Manay'ın hayatını tamamen değiştirecek güçte olduğundan habersiz yollarına devam ettiler. (Kohen 2015, p. 13)

19. Bu eski şeyin sadece evde dinlemek için Deniz tarafından iki sene önce yapılan original bir parka olduğunu ancak yıllar sonra öğrenecekti. (Kohen, 2015, p. 29)

20. Murat'ın fantezisi hep kafasındaydı, seneler sonra Murat onun ellerinde öldükten sonra bile. (Kohen, 2015, p. 37)

21. Mutluluk dediğiniz şey, nasıl mutlu olunması gerektiğiyle ilgili kafana yüklenmiş bir düşünce, aslında gerçek değil. Bir şey istersin, mutluluğunun ona bağlı olduğunu sanırsın, elde edersin, senin olur, sıkılırsın ve kurtulmak istersin. Kurtuluğunda mutlu olacağına inanırsın, kurtulursun, başka bir şey istemeye geçersin. Yine istersin, yine elde edersin, yine sıkılırsın, yine kurtulmak istersin... Bu mutluluk değil, bu tüketmek. Mutluluk bir illüzyondan başka bir şey değil, sadece bir an. (Kohen, 2015, pp. 256-257)

22. Eğer sürekli bilgiye dayalı hareket etmeye çalışırsan asla özgürleşemezsin, özgürleşemezsen deneyimleyemezsin, deneyimleyemezsen değişemezsin, değişemezsen asla senleşemezsin. (Kohen, 2015, p. 60)

23. Güzellik bir yanılsamaydı, tıpkı özgürlüğün olduğu gibi... (Kohen, 2015, p. 66)

## APPENDIX B

### Çİ QUOTES IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

1. Ne kadar da parlaktı bronz teni, boynunda atan damardaki hayat nasıl da gözlerinden fışkırıyordu... İçindeki ateşin, hatta güzelliğinin kaynağıydı bu ihtiras hali. Yaşamın hayat bulduğu bir bedende, bu Çi'ye en çok yakışan şey amaçlandırılmış bir ihtirastan başka ne olabilirdi ki! (Kohen, 2017a, p. 42)
2. Manevi babasıyla tanışması hayatındaki her şeyi değiştirmişti. Etrafında fark yaratan bir adamdı Hoca. Ona Sadık adını veren de oydu. Daha çocukken Hoca'yı tanımış, kanatlarının altına girip onun vizyonu çerçevesinde bugünlere gelmişti. Sadık için, dünyayı ticaretle algılayan bu özde açık fikirli adam, Allah korkusuna ihtiyaç duyan kesimi yönetebilen dini söylemlerinde uzmanlaşmış, özde dinsiz ama söylemleri dinli bir akıldı. İnsanların korkularına nasıl hitap etmesi gerektiğini, kitleleri organize ederek nasıl harekete geçirmesi gerektiğini bilen gerçek bir ustaydı. (Kohen, 2017a, p. 34)
3. Kapı açıldığında Özge sokağa çıktı, binanın önünde biriken kalabalığı fark etti. Caddenin köşesinde "Satılmış medya" diye bağırان yüzlerce insan vardı ... Ama darbe indi ve Özge uyandı. Arkasına döndüğünde, suratına kocaman siyah bir gaz maskesi takmış, üzerindeki çelik yeleğin arkasına saklanmış, elindeki copu intikamla sakınmadan sallayan birini gördü. (Kohen, 2017a, pp. 100-104)
4. ... eğer o muhteşem beyninin içinde bu deneyimlerini, annesizliğini, kardeşini, Murat'ın ölmesini hatta babanı mecburiyet olarak kodlarsan asla olman gereken şey

olamazsın ... Altında ezilmen için deęil, gerekli olduęu kadarını alıp renklenmen için yaşıyorsun. (Kohen, 2017a, p. 164)

5. Ayaęı gaz pedalını baskılarken müzięin sesini biraz daha açtı ... şarkı devam ediyordu: “Wrong questions with the wrong replies... wrong... wrong...” Bu sözler tanıdık geliyordu. “I was on the wrong page of the wrong book ...” (Kohen, 2017a, p. 107)

## APPENDIX C

### *PI* QUOTES IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

1. Bu hikaye burada bitecek ve sen başlayacaksın... (Kohen, 2017b, front cover)
2. Kimseyle böyle olmuyor. (Kohen, 2017b, p. 600)
3. Herhangi bir duyguyu hissetmeyecek kadar aptallaşıp bedenlerini televizyonlara teslim ediyorlar. Dizilerde yaşıyor, filmlerde hayat buluyor, aktör ve aktrislerle aşık oluyor, televizyona çıkan herkesi adam yerine koyuyor ve kitap okumaya çalışınca da hemen uyuyuveriyorlar! Daha fazla hissetmemek için ilaçlara sığınıyorlar...  
AMA hissetmek için buradayız, hissetmek ve anlamak için, gerekirse acıya da hazır olmalıyız. (Kohen, 2017b, p. 109)
4. “Bir gece için yirmi veriyorlar, üç gece çıkacaksın. Altmış çok iyi” dedi... Ada... kokaini ... iki çizgi halinde tezgaha döküp çekti ... Tugay’a dönüp, “Üç yüz isterim!” dedi. Kandırıldığını biliyordu artık, kendisine yüzde 8 verildiğini arabasına el konurken öğrenmişti. (Kohen, 2017b, p. 495)
5. Petrolyum atığı, süt tozunun kahveyle birleştiği o paket için yapılan bu müzik, öyle popüler olacaktı ki insanlar gönüllü olarak cep telefonu müziği yapacaklardı Ada’nın bestesini. Her yudumda ... biraz daha kanserli hücren olurken iyi müzik dinlemek gibisi yoktu. (Kohen, 2017b, p. 151)



6. Bir erkek üzerine atlayan kadına, onu tanımadan katılıyorsa katıldığı şey o kadın değildir, mastürbasyon yapan elleri yerine kullanmak istediği bir vücuttur. Bu nedenle, erkekler, böyle birlikte oldukları kadınları bir dahaki sefere kadar, görmek istemezler. Onlarla herhangi bir şey paylaşmak istemezler. Onları sadece bir el gibi kullanmak isterler. Bir erkeği boşaltmaktan çok daha fazlası için doğduğunu düşünüyorum ama tabii benim ne düşündüğümün bir önemi yok, senin kendinle ilgili ne düşündüğünün önemi var ... Sen kendine emek verip, olabileceğin en tam şeye dönüşmek için yola çıkmadan hayatının o erkeği asla bulamayacak seni. (Kohen, 2017b, pp. 507-508)

7. O an, Bilge...

Kalabalığın arasında kayboldu Bilge, kendini dünyanın en aptal kadını hissetti ve o an ilk defa kadın gibi hissettiğini fark etti, üzerindeki elbisenin içinde sanki cehennemdeydi. (Kohen, 2017b, p. 382)

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW RESPONSES IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

1. İçerik farkı var. Daha farklı bir içerikle izleyici karşısına çıkma şansın var. Yani en azından Fi’de öyle oldu. Sansürün daha az olduğu, hayatın içindeki bazı şeylerin daha fazla gösterilebildiği, denetimsiz olmanın özgürlüğünün olduğu bir ortamda (İçözü, 2018)

2. Ben zaten kitapları görsel bir algıda yazdım, okuyan herkes biz okumadık seyrettik dediler, o yüzden ben daha farklı mecralarda yer almasını bekliyordum kitabın ve öyle dizayn edildiler. (Haberturk, 2017)

3. Dünyayı değiştirmek için yazdım... Yoksa edebiyat dünyasının saçmalıkları umurumda bile değil. (Arman 2015)

4. Sanırım öğrenci bir masalcı teyzeyim ben. Masal anlatıyorum. Pek karizmatik bir görev değil ama keyifli. Çünkü anlattığım her şey, köklerini gerçeklerden almak zorunda. O yüzden de hep öğrenci kalmak zorundayım. (Arman, 2015)

5. -Peki nasıl açıklıyorsun bu durumu? Hem yazar olmak isteme, hem de ortalığı toz duman et ... -Estağfurullah! İhtiyaç... Bir ihtiyaca cevap vermekten daha doğal ve kolay bir şey yok aslında ... Sanırım, kitap yazmak benim eksikliğimi çektiğim şeyin bir parçası olma çabam. Edebiyat ödülleri beklemiyorum, hayata katkısı olsun yeter! (Arman 2016)

6. ... sistematik bir şekilde ordu hazırlıyorum ... Milenyum, yüzde yetmiş beş, on sene içinde yaşamı desteklemek için harekete geçecek bir kitleye ... onlar benim okuyucum zaten... insanlık adını verdiğimiz bu organizmik, parazitik sistemin, eğitim adı altında hapishaneye benzeyen okullardan çıkartılıp, insan yaratığının aslında kendi olması gereken, daha yüce bir formda var olmasıyla ilgili bir system kurmalarında küçük bir ilham olabilirsem zaten bütün varoluşumun amacını gerçekleştirmiş gibi hissedeceğim. (Indigo, 2017)

7. Bugün televizyon dünyasında da kanaat önderi olarak koyduğumuz insanların ne kadar deformatif oldukları gerçeği var. Zaten o kadar deformatif olmasalar biz bu kadar deformatif bir toplumda yaşamayız. En büyük örnekler ancak en tepeye çıkartılırlar ki onların yere çakılması milyonlarca insana ders olsun diye. (Indigo, 2017)

8. Şuna inanıyorum ben: burada oturan herkes, var olan her şey benim farklı anne babalardan, farklı yaşam deneyimlerinden olmuş hallerim. Hepiniz aslında bensiniz (Indigo, 2017)

9. Bazıları bu kitapların hikayesinde ünlü psikologlar, medya patronları, televizyon ünlüleri, şarkıcılar, sanatçılar ve aşk, seks, aldatma ... bulacak ama satır aralarına gizlenmiş detayları görebilenler bunun bir farkındalık kitabı olduğunu anlayacak. (Çetinkaya, 2014)

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