

Abstract

Nâzım Hikmet, one of the most important figures of the modern Turkish poetry known for his realistic and political style, has developed a non-linear narrative style built around spatial depictions in his recent poems. The purpose of this article is to reveal the spatial experience produced Hikmet's architectural metaphors within the scope of his works in his last years. In order to examine the emotional experience of Hikmet's multi-dimensional spatial metaphors, Paul Ricoeur's metaphor theory will be applied on the basis of the narratology of space as an interdisciplinary field. Ricoeur's theory defines both literature and architecture in the three categories of the outside world, the artwork as structure, and interpretation, which connects his framework to Hikmet's interest in real life, his structured poetry and his functional agenda to reach out to people. For him, metaphors are not just substitutions between the two names, but a means of reaching a new field of otherwise indescribable layers of the world. Unlike his canonical realist style, Hikmet's spatial metaphors open the door to a new existential tension in his last poems. The original aspect of the work is that it analyzes architectural metaphors through narrative space, which produce an experience in the imagination. Focusing on Hikmet's architectural spaces to explain his architectural spaces based on a non-linear narrative is the other original contribution of the article. The results of the study are that Hikmet's architectural spaces of his late years moved away from realistic visualizations -that contain the plot, contain symbols or broaden the context of the text- and produced ungraspable, uncanny, and ever-changing surroundings producing an effect of the flow of life met with a political hopefulness and subjective angst at the same time. To conclude, it can said that the narrative spaces as metaphors open up new ways of architectural experience due to their special qualities transcending their main function as containers of the plot.

Öz

Gerçekçiliği ve politik yönüyle modern Türk şiirinin en önemli figürlerinden biri olarak kabul edilen Nâzım Hikmet, son dönem şiirlerinde mimari betimlemeler etrafında inşa edilmiş doğrusal-olmayan bir anlatı tarzı geliştirmiştir. Bu makalenin amacı Hikmet'in son dönem mekânsal metaforlarının ortaya çıkardığı deneyimi tanımlamak ve incelemektir. Hikmet'in çok-boyutlu mekânsal metaforlarının ürettiği duygusal deneyimini incelemek için disiplinlerarası bir alan olan mekânın anlahtilimi zemininde Paul Ricoeur'un metafor kuramına başvurulacaktır. Ricoeur hem edebiyatı hem de mimarlığı dış dünya, yapıt ve yorum olarak üç aşamalı olarak ele alır. Bu açıdan Ricoeur'un bakış açısı, gerçek yaşamla şiiri birbirinden ayırmayan, şiirsel yapılarını dikkatle tasarlayan ve okura ulaşmayı metnin temel işlevi olarak tanımlayan Nâzım Hikmet'in poetikasıyla bir koşutluk oluşturur. Ricoeur'a göre metaforlar yalnızca iki isim arasındaki bir

Architecture as Metaphor and Experience in Nâzım Hikmet's Last Poems

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1. The Narrative Space As Metaphor

1.1. Experience in Architecture

Given the epistemological diverseness of the written, drawn, or built architectural object, the experience of architecture can offer a comprehensive ground for a theory of the poetic effect in architecture, as each sphere ultimately leads to a comparable process of perception of space. The design practice has avoided the dependence of the observer's experience more often than not for it escapes to be formally objectified or unequivocally determined. Whereas the architectural aesthetics canonically priorities the design quality of the artifact, the demanding clients and the ethical responsibility to the inhabitant have challenged the self-referential aspects of modern architecture and it can be said that the subjectivity of the inhabitant has not been consigned to oblivion. Phenomenology, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience have provided a background for an interpretive meaning and affectivity in architecture. From an experience-based point of view, the written, drawn and built architecture entails a commensurable epistemological status as the sources of spatial imagination. In that case, not only the structuralist notion of architecture as text acquires a crucial communicative edge but also the architecture depicted in fiction

might unveil new insights due to the poetic devices in relation to the experience, which has basically been an engineered functional program for architectural modernity.

Thanks to recent cognitive neuroscientific research, our understanding of imagination, perception, and body has drastically changed. In her embodied simulation theory, Sarah Robinson (2005) explains the multimodal conception of experience illustrating how perception, imagination, motor systems, and memory work together. Juhani Pallasmaa (1996) recently put forward a multi-sensory approach architecture around the concept of atmosphere pointing out the importance of the bodily experience of inhabitants. His views trace back Heinrich Wölfflin's idea that body and psychology correspond to each other in their apprehension of the surroundings. According to his classical Prolegomena for a Psychology of Architecture (1886/2016), our intuitive response to architecture, which stems from our bodily presence in the space, is based on a psychological appraisal. Wölfflin's views, also inspired by the breakthroughs in biology and psychology, has some connections to Edmund Husserl's phenomenological philosophy, as he defines the Ich-Leib, the carrier of self, as the continuous center of perception. According to his



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Ding und Raum (1907/1991), the spatial connections are generated through the self to create the transcendental possibility of the objective outer world. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962/1996) took a more bodily turn and defined the body as the anchorage in the world bridging the world and consciousness. As an anti-thesis of Newtonian absolute space, Merleau-Ponty argues that the experience of movement is the generator of space. The phenomenological approach is taken up by architectural theorists, too. Steen Eiler Rasmussen in his essential book, *Experiencing Architecture* (1962), notes that it is not enough to see architecture but it must be experienced. From that point of view, the experience is the key element that connects the built and written spaces in terms of their emotional impact. Through the experience as the focal point of architecture, the narrated and perceived spaces are different forms of spatial awareness in consciousness. The experience of architecture as an artwork can be epistemologically linked to the experience of the reading of written architecture, for both are multimodally imagined in somatosensory ways despite the categorical distinction of actually perceiving and reading. Narrative spaces as elements of literal compositions can be considered in the same bracket with the affective actual spaces, given that both possess the spatial imagination as their landing-place. Based on a phenomenological notion, the parallelism between built and written is surprisingly connected to the structuralist approach of architecture.

1.2. Narratology of Space

The narratology of space as a rather new interdisciplinary field, following the lead of Bakhtin's concept of chronotope (1938/1981), which correlates the structures of space and time with patterns of actions, and tries to capture the role of space in narratives as the environment in which characters move, act and live. A semantic point of view put by Juri Lotman in the 1970s focuses on spatial relations as semantic correlates of cultural values

(1970/1977). Gabriel Zoran (1984) suggests three-dimensional criteria for defining narrative spaces and, more recently, Katrin Dennerlein (2009), among others, emphasized the literary aspect of the narrative spaces. Similarly, David Spurr, in his literary analysis *Literature and Architecture* (2012), illustrates how the narrative spaces are deeply related to the modern traits of literature.

Moreover, the parallelism between literature and architecture is also an issue discussed by Structuralist and Post-structuralist theories. Terzioğlu (2018) showed that Umberto Eco's idea of semiotics as the study of all aspects of culture as communicative processes does not neglect to incorporate architecture. In his analysis of the column, Eco (1972) claims that architectural signs are a "system of...objects and...spaces that communicate possible functions". He further argues that "in architecture the communicative aspect predominates over the functional aspect and precedes it". The signified functions of architecture are not uses but types—classes of possible functions: "they are cultural units, before being practical acts". Eco explains that the utilitarian primary function operates as denotation and the symbolic secondary function is connected to the realm of values as connotation. Yet, it was Paul Ricoeur, even though he didn't specifically write about narrative spaces, brought literature and architecture in his parallel theories.

1.3. Metaphor as the Interpreter of Unspoken Reality

Ricoeur's literary and anthropological theories, interestingly have close links to both phenomenology and structuralism. According to Ricoeur (2016), literature and architecture have three common structural movements comprised of the preexisting outer world (*pre-figuration*), the work of art as configuration, and the interpretation of it giving the work back into life (*re-figuration*). His phenomenological view rests on his central concept of metaphor as the nucleus of subjective interpretation as it is the work of art as the configurative act where his

değiştirme değil, dünyanın başka türlü tarif edilemez katmanlarından oluşan yeni bir bilgi alanına ulaşmanın da bir yoludur. Hikmet'in son dönem mekânsal metaforları da kanonik gerçekçi tarzından farklı olarak yeni bir varoluşsal gerilimin kapısını açarlar. Çalışmanın özgün yönü, Hikmet'in şiirlerindeki mimari mekân kullanımını gündeme getirmesinin yanı sıra; son dönem şiirlerindeki farklılaşmayı, ideolojisinden uzaklaşmamakla birlikte doğrusal olmayan bir anlatıya dayanan mekânlartıyla açıklamasıdır. Çalışmanın temel bulgusu Nâzım Hikmet'in son dönem metinlerinin gerçekçi görselleştirme stratejilerinden uzaklaşarak siyasi umudun yanına varoluşsal kaygıları ekleyerek sınırları belirsiz ve tekinsiz mekânlar ürettiği yönündedir. Sonuç olarak metafor olarak yazılı-mekânların birer anlatının kabı olmanın ötesine geçerek yeni mimari deneyimlerin kapısını açtığı belirtilebilir.

Keywords: Architecture, spatial experience, metaphor, narratology of space, Nâzım Hikmet, poetry.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mimarlık, mekânsal deneyim, metafor, anlatsal mekân, Nâzım Hikmet, şiir.

special definition of metaphor operates to be interpreted later and given back to the world. On the other hand, the conventional notion of metaphor, largely inherited from Aristotle, is a simple model of substitution. In that regard, the metaphor operates as a secondary device dependent on the level of ordinary descriptive language. It does not truly offer a new proposition as a plain repositioning. According to Aristotle (1457b 6-9), the metaphor operates by giving the thing a name that belongs to something else, with the assumption of referential relation between language and the world. The metaphor, therefore, does not disturb the logical order of correspondence. Ricoeur's plural understanding of the meaning of metaphors, on the other hand, entails a new meaning to metaphor's objects, which cannot be expressed through the conventional name of the object (Ricoeur, 1983). In that regard, the meaning of written architecture in a metaphorical use comprises new aspects about the space and about the poetic idea it substitutes.

The understanding of metaphor has changed from Nietzsche to Ricoeur (Theodorou, 2013), as the metaphor has extended across a linguistic device and assumed the role of a connection to the being. A metaphor, in that regard, plays an important role in the imagination of the narrative space as an ontological equal to architecture. Starting with Nietzsche, the metaphor acquired a philosophical magnitude as the implicate disclosure of reality for he upholds that the concepts themselves are metaphorical constructions. Ricoeur gives the metaphor the role of crossing to the object domain referring to the main concepts of Husserl's phenomenology. The intentional nature of consciousness gives metaphor the role of expanding its referential meaning towards a horizon of possibilities. In his study, *The Role of the Metaphor* (1983), Ricoeur argues that the metaphor acts as the primary interpreter of reality generating a polysemic discourse. The relation of a metaphor to its object-reference originates in the encounter with a living text, as he notes that "the interpretation of symbols

is worthy of being called a hermeneutics only insofar as it is a part of self-understanding and the understanding of being" (Ricoeur, 1974). He enables a dynamic meaning transfer on the discursive level where all forms of figurative language become disclosures of being (Theodorou). The likeness of two objects initiates a nameless act through the likening to the unspoken. Without a direct object to refer, the nameless act creates a cognitive leap and a new meaning association. The rules of meaning are challenged through the new connection to a new object domain unspoken before the metaphorical meaning transfer (Theodorou). From that point of view, it can be argued that the narrative space as a metaphor expands towards its correspondent, the architectural realm, and facilitates the disclosure of its being. Through the spatial metaphor, the narrative space's object-reference is substituted with a poetic idea. Thus, space gains a previously unspoken object-reference in the imagination. This polysemy differs a spatial metaphor from a mere symbol as both the source of three-dimensional imagination and the generator of a new unspoken experience.

2. *Hikmet's Metaphors of Narrative Spac*

2.1 *Nâzım Hikmet and His Narrative Spaces*

The life of a well-educated and patriotic young poet from the Ottoman capital of Istanbul, Nâzım Hikmet (1902-1963), took a serious turn when he decided to travel to Anatolia to take part in the war of independence while his interest to the Soviet revolution was going to lead him to Russia soon afterward. He was thoroughly fascinated by the upheaval of society and decided to stay in Moscow to continue his education, where he has stayed until the end of the decade. Influenced by the Futurist-Constructivist art scene, he grew into a notable member of it. The years in the Soviet Union shaped Hikmet's understanding of the world as a political activist and also brought out of him a Futurist poet utterly convinced of the

functional role of art as a means of social engineering and of the necessity to cut the ties with the tradition. This period presents an understanding of space as an abstract and generic entity assuming direct symbolic references.

On his return to Turkey in 1929, he shocked the intellectual community not only with his experimental poetry but also with his self-confident and antagonistic attitude towards the modestly modernized literature scene (Timuçin, 2002). However, when the global political waves of nationalism hit Turkey in the 1930s, the country started to renounce its process of rapid modernization, so did Hikmet his meteoric futurism. His language softened and became more communicative (Fuat, 2015). The way he treats political propaganda in terms of very personal and concrete emotions paved the way for his fame, but a figure of Hikmet's popularity with a left-wing political agenda in times of nationalism was always going to be suppressed. He was condemned to prison after fake trials and only released 13 years later thanks to an international campaign (Kadir, 2009). Followed by the police and worried about the death threats, he was forced to leave Turkey for good (Karaca, 2011). His time until his adventurous escape via the Black Sea presents various spaces as the container of the plot in coherence with his communicative style.

Until his death in 1963, he lived in Moscow as an exiled cultural attaché, who was extensively traveling to several countries except for Turkey itself. It was like an everlasting condition of being on the road yet never reaching its ultimate goal, which is returning to his hometown, Istanbul. His productive late years include various forms such as anthem-like propaganda poems or experimental travel poems. This period offers a richness of real-life places enabling a contextual change of the narrative.

The most striking narrative spaces of his last years, however, are the metaphorical ones hosting a different kind of anxious and complicated set of emotions written in

a different style. The non-linear narration of his very last years can be seen as a deviation and interestingly revolves around architectural metaphors. It can be added that the architectural metaphors he used differ from his spatial narrative from the rest of his career. The stylistic change (*as well as thematic*) is reflected in the change of his use of narrative spaces.

2.2. Hikmet's Late Years and His Architectural Metaphors

In his poetry, Hikmet has extensively relied on spatial narration. His abstract and generic spaces in his early Futuristic poems and descriptive environments later as the container of the plot or as contextual inputs by the real-life places provide crucial aspects of his poetry. But some of his poems from the late 1950s and early 1960s stand out in terms of their metaphorical essence (Duyan, 2020). Hikmet's spatial metaphors have surfaced, it can be argued, due to a need to host complex emotions, to which his realistic style does not seamlessly fit. His last years present poems more and more involved in the yearning of the homeland, fear of death and tentative memories with the growing age, criticism towards the rock-solid example of his utopia, the Soviet Union, after the death of Stalin, and his untypical unassured love with his wife, Vera Tulyakova. He never sailed away from his political agenda and utopic self-assuredness, but a new domain of complex and uncanny emotions was getting off the ground paving the way for a striking stylistic transformation when allowed in certain poems.

The numbered examples of his non-linear narration generated by spatial metaphors showcase a step-by-step evolution as his first metaphorical narrative spaces were static images to be perceived. In a short time, however, his architectural metaphors have become spaces to be moved through accompanied by irregular use of language. From tone-setting centers of gravity, they went on to become weightless linguistic cross-cuts as a generator of experience in a multilayered and volatile way.

2.3. Early Architectural Metaphors (1951-1960)

One of his first architectural metaphors, in the strict definition put above, is The Book of the Festival (*Festivalin Kitabı*), where the architectural visualization represents a certain poetic idea. The poem includes an interesting cinematic technique incorporating spatial connotations to characters' ideologies. The text revolves around Hikmet's conversation with his driver Fedya, to whom he tells the story of a young revolutionary from Turkey, Ahmed. At the same time, Hikmet imagines talking to Ahmed, too, telling him about Fedya. This talk, indirectly, serves as a comparison of their respective situations as workers. The structure of the poem is based on these parallel conversations while the places interchanging constantly. It is a cinematic technique using the blurry background and its alternation as a poetic element.

His poem The Times in Prague (*Prağ'da Vakitler*) written in 1956 starts with the description of the atmosphere of the city at dawn. It is a portrayal of the city conceived as an obscure and symbolic urban environment. A rough architectural imagination that sets the main emotional tone of the poem. The city is illustrated as a background, but as a background, it is at the forefront of the reading. The city's impression becomes the main expression of the melancholy. It is not a stage where the action is set but it is an image guiding the flow of the text.

"In Prague the baroque slowly lights up: uneasy, distant its gilt grief-blackened.

The statues on Charles bridge look like birds descended from a dead star. (...)

In Prague's Jewish Cemetery, death is breathless, stone-still.

Ah my rose, ah my rose exile is worse than death" (Hikmet, 2020)¹

The third part of the poem The Times of Prague, the Noon, has a similar attitude, and it uses the cityscape as the main generator of feelings. The experience of

the opening of the sky in the city becomes a parallel narrative for the poet's state of mind:

"It stopped snowing first on the hill up by Prague castle, Then, suddenly, a cool blue descended on the chesnuts, clear and soft.

And with a gentle glow. The poet far from home and riddled with longing, stood all alone in the square in Old Town.

High on a Gothic wall, Master Hanus's clock struck noon (...) A soft, cool blue descended on the square at noon" (Hikmet, 2020)²

In his Walnut Tree (*Ceviz Ağacı*), Hikmet dreams about being in Istanbul in the disguise of a tree. The tree in the park personifies everything the poet imagines to experience:

"My head is a foaming cloud, inside and outside I'm the sea.

I am a walnut tree in Gülhane Park in Istanbul, an old walnut tree with knots and scars. You don't know this and the police don't either. (...)

My leaves are my eyes, and I am shocked at what I see.

I look at you, Istanbul, with a hundred thousand eyes and my leaves beat, beat with a hundred thousand hearts." (Hikmet, 2002)³

Hikmet also wrote a few poems connecting architecture to certain ideas, such as Windows (*Pencereler*), where he personifies the windows and use them as a leitmotiv to connect different moments in his life. Each stanza depicts another memory in a generic and allegorical way in front of a window.

"windows entered my room with curtains and without

1 "Pirag'da ağır ağır aydınlanıyor barok: / huzursuz, uzak / ve yıldızlarında kararmış keder. / Ölen bir yıldızdan uçup gelen kuşlara benziyor Dördüncü Şair Köprüsü'nde heykeller" (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1588).

2 "Kar, önce tepede dindi, / Pirag Şatosu'nun orda. / Sonra, birdenbire, berrak, / nazlı, serin bir mavilik / kestaneliklere indi. / Yumuşacık parlıyor da. // Şair, memleketten uzak, / hasretlerle delik deşik, / Eski Kent'te duruyordu, / meydanlıkta, yapayalnız. / Gotik bir duvar üstünde / Hanus Ustanın saati / on ikiyi vuruyordu. / (...) Geldi indi salınarak / nazlı serin bir mavilik / meydanlığa ögle vakti." (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1592).

3 "Başım köpük köpük bulut, içim dışım deniz, / ben bir ceviz ağacıyım Gülhane Parkı'nda, / budak budak, şerham şerham ihtiyar bir ceviz. / Ne sen bunun farkındasın, ne polis farkında. / (...) Yapraklarım gözlerimdir, şaşarak bakarım. / Yüz bin gözle seyredirim seni, İstanbul'u. / Yüz bin yürek gibi çarpar, çarpar yapraklarım." (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1618).

but there were lace curtains too
and black shades

(...)

and windows with broken glass

I cut my hand

some had no glass

windows without glass sadden me

like empty eyeglass frames /

(...)

the windows of many houses fill my room

I sat in one

and dangled my feet in the clouds

you could almost say

I was happy” (Hikmet, 2020, 218)⁴

The poem Houses (*Evler*) discloses the democratic aspects of architecture in Hikmet’s mind, through which he puts arguments about his utopic political system.

“houses can have a single-floor or hundred floors

that is not the issue

as long as they don’t overbear our streets,
as long as they serve us clean agile smiling

I have nothing against the bare walls if
they are fresh and lively

narrow windows remind me the guillotine
a window has to be comfortable large like
a friendly promise

I don’t like asphalt without green

there can be ponds in parks white dark
swans in ponds or even bands from time to
time but most importantly one should be
able to kiss in parks

I don’t like the mannequins, which open
their stupid dead hands like singing arias
at the opera

I don’t like the people of stone and bronze
unless they get off their bases and walks
among us

I don’t like the cities boasting about their
banks and government buildings

the cities I like are the ones boasting about
their health houses the ones boasting about
playgrounds” (Hikmet, 2020, 218)⁵

It is his poem Construction and

Constructers (*Yapıyla Yapıcılar*) where space itself becomes the undisputed main element. The text is a straightforward allegorical parable of Soviet socialism, which he was not going to refrain from criticizing later on:

“A building cannot be constructed like singing a song.

This job is a little bit harder.

Yes, hard but the building is rising and rising.

Vases have been put on the windowsills
in ground floor

Birds are carrying sunlight on their wings
to the first-floor balconies.

There is a heartbeat

In each beam, each brick, each cement.”⁶

A Fable Of Fables (*Masalların Masalı*) is a primarily visual piece with philosophical depth. The self and nature are brought upon the face of existence and death. The relation of perception and the existence of things is explicitly tackled through the stepwise appearing and disappearing of the reflection on the water.

“We are by the waterside
the plane tree and I.

Our reflections are thrown on the water
the plane tree’s and mine.

The sparkle of the water hits us
the plane tree and me.

(...)

First the cat will go
its reflection will be lost on the water.

Then I will go
my reflection will be lost on the water.

(...)

The water is cool
the plane tree is huge

I am writing a poem
the cat is dozing

the sun is warm
it’s good to be alive.

The sparkle of the water hits us
the plane tree, me, the cat, the sun, our
life.” (Hikmet, 2020)⁷

- 4 “Girdi odama pencereler / perdeli perdesiz / ben basma perdeleri severim / ama tül perdeler de vardı / kara ıstırlar da / (...) ve camlan kırık pencereler / elimi kestim / kimisi camsız büsbütün / camsız pencereler içime dokunur / camsız gözlükler gibi / (...) kırık evin penceresi odama / girdi ben oturdum birinin içine / sarkıttım ayaklarımı bulutlara / bahtıyarım / diyebilirdim belki” (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 167).
- 5 “Euler tek katlı da olabilir yüz katlı da / iş bunda değil / yeter ki sokaklarımızı ezmesinler yeter ki temiz çevik güler yüzlü görsünler hizmetimizi / çıplak duvarlara diyeceğim yok taze ve canlısalar / dar pencereler gilyotini hatırlatır bana / pencere dost sözü gibi rahat ve geniş olacak / ağaçsız asfaltı sevmiyorum / parklarda göller göllerde ak kara kuğular olabilir hatta arasına bando mızıkama en önemlisi parklarda öpüşülebilmeli / aptal ölü ellerini operette arya söyler gibi açmış mankenleri sevmiyorum / taştan ve tunştan insanları sevmiyorum tabanlarından inip aramızda dolaşmıyorlarsa / bankaları ve hükümet konaklarıyla övünen şehirleri sevmiyorum / sevdiğim şehirler sağlık evleriyle övünenlerdir çocuk bahçeleriyle” (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1814).
- 6 “Türkü söyler gibi yapılmıyor yapı. / Bu iş biraz daha zor. / (...) Zor mor ama / yapı yükseliyor, yükseliyor. / Sakslar konuldu pencerelere / alt katlarında. / İlk balkonlara güneşi taşıyor kuşlar / kanatlarında. / Bir yürek çarpıntısı var / her putrelinde, her tuğlasında, her kerpicinde.” (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1555).
- 7 “Su başında durmuşuz / çınarla ben. / Suda suretimiz çıkıyor / çınarla benim. / Suyun şavkı vuruyor bize, / çınarla bana. / (...) önce kedi gidecek / kaybolacak suda sureti. / Sonra ben gideceğim / kaybolacak suda suretim. / (...) Su serin, çınar ulu, / ben şiir yazıyorum, / kedi uyukluyor, / güneş sıcak, / çok şükür yaşıyoruz. / Suyun şavkı vuruyor bize / çınara, bana, kediye, güneşe, bir de ömrümüze” (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1633).

The Last Bus (*Son Otobüs*), starts with a daily reflection of his exile life, with his wife and son still in Turkey after six years, he turns the house into a metaphor in the ending after talking about the closeness of the death:

"Midnight. The last bus.

The conductor cuts me a ticket.

Neither bad news nor a big dinner

awaits me at home.

For me, absence waits.

I approach it without sadness or fear

(...)

Death is now awfully close.

The world is more beautiful than ever.

The world was my suit of clothes

I've started undressing.

I was at the window of a train,

now I'm at the station.

I was inside the house,

now I'm at the door-it's open.

I love the guests twice as much.

And the heat is blonder than ever

the snow whiter than ever." (Hikmet, 2002)⁸

Hikmet's early spatial metaphors work as the narrative space almost as stand-ins for the object reference. The comparison on the grounds of the metaphor between a narrative space and the topic acts inside the plain language as the center of the gravity of the texts. Yet they give previously unspoken insight to the spaces as well as to the topic of the metaphor, which will only be used more radically in his final poems.

2.4. Narrative Spaces as Linguistic Cross-Cuts (1960-1963)

In his last years, Hikmet adopted a surrealist non-linear narrative method. His simple language switched to an uncanny, agile, and continuous language producing a perforated meaning. This language results in cross-cutting of the immediate surroundings and works as a spatial strategy, which, in turn, drastically transforms how the object references are understood in the sense of the Ricoeurian cognitive leap.

He used this technique in Havana Interview (*Havana Röportajı*), About the Night Rides with the Tram in a City (*Bir Şehirde Tıramvaylarla Yapılmış Gece Gezintileri Üstüne*), and at full force, in Straw-Blond (*Samansarısı*), whereas traces of that can be seen in various poems, including in his Astoria Hotel in Leipzig on the fall of 1960 (*1960 Güzünde Laypzig'de Astorya Oteli'nde*). The repetition of "four of us", creates a visual closeness and the story opens up starting from that visual togetherness and acts as a roof throughout the poem. The poem is set in the different locations of the hotel and this technique of using the repetition with contrasting situations in this grammatically erratic language visually recreates the complex emotions.

"four of us slept on the same bed

four of us walked in the hallway next to each other

four of us ate from the same plate

four of us listened to the same radio sitting close together

four of us you were far away to the utmost

four of us I was devoted to you and the world to the utmost

four of us the death took off his gloves

four of us in the Astoria Hotel in Leipzig on the fall of 1960" (Hikmet, 2002)⁹

As part of the series of interview poems in the early 1960s as journey impressions, Hikmet wrote a comprehensive piece on Cuba, The Havana Interview. It is eye-catching to see how time and space alter steadily. The scene starts in Free Havana Hotel's elevator and suddenly jumps to a distant future in Istanbul. Then the narration develops into a dialog and in a couple of lines, Hikmet describes the city of Istanbul after a fictional revolution. The idea of time and space becomes relative as his understanding of space opens up a new opportunity for poetry. By molding the space, he decorates his line of narration with surprises and tension. In the sense of Ricoeur's understanding of metaphor, the narrative space expands towards its correspondent, the architectural realm, and facilitates the disclosure of its being

8 "Gece yansı. Son otobüs. / Biletçi kesti bileti. / Beni ne bir kara haber bekliyor evde, / ne raki ziyafeti. / Beni ayrılık bekliyor. / Yürüyorum ayrılığa korkusuz / ve kedersiz. / (...) iyice yaklaştı bana ölüm. / Dünya, her zamankinden güzel, dünya. / Dünya, iç çamaşırlarım, elbisemdi, / başladım soyunmağa. / Bir tiren penceresiydim, / bir istasyonum şimdi. / Evin içerisiydim, / şimdi rapisiyim kilitsiz. / Bir kat daha seviyorum konukları. / Ve sıcak her zamankinden sarı, / kar her zamankinden temiz." (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1619).

9 "Dördümüz aynı yatakta yattık / dördümüz holde dolaştık yan yana / dördümüz yemek yedik aynı tabaktan / dördümüz diz dize dinledik aynı radyoyu / dördümüz sen alabildiğine uzaktın / dördümüz ben alabildiğine tutkundum dünyayla sana / dördümüz eldivenlerini çıkartmıştı ölüm / dördümüz 1960 güzünde Astorya Oteli'nde." (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1741).

-in other words, this spatial dynamic self-evidently corresponds to the constant motion and possibility of change, which echoes Hikmet's revolutionary point of view.

*"I took the elevator to the lobby
Peasant girls in the elevator from the city
Oriente from the villages around Bayamo
They came to the city to learn how to sew
They live in Havana Libere (Free Havana)
Hotel, where shadows of the millionaires
have remained on the walls
The old name of the hotel is Hilton
Population has risen up to 24 million
In the elevator peasant girls from the city
of Bursa from the villages around Ankara
girls what are you doing in Istanbul how
did they let you in Hilton
Hilton is not Hilton anymore they say it's
been converted to Free İstanbul a long
time ago
and they laugh closing their mouths with
their hands covered in henna
landowners flee too along with the
Americans
what about the land
we shared it" (Hikmet, 2002)¹⁰*

The poem About the Night Rides with the Tram in a City depicts a night journey in a tram. A troubling abstract description of the street is made using irrational juxtapositions of images and mixing up the differences of conscious and unconscious thought.

*"at nights we ride trams the trams we don't
know where they are heading to
with terrifying squeaks, the large, clean
trams with three cars take us to somewhere
at nights
burnt walls appear suddenly and walk
towards us under the light of street lamps
high and stubborn
windows appear and come towards us in
masses and trampling each other without
glass without frames and windows of the
emptiness not of rooms and people
we pass by the doors without wings doors
opening nowhere" (Hikmet, 2002)¹¹*

Hikmet's masterpiece, The Straw-Blond, seems to be far away from the center of gravity of his oeuvre, as he successfully flirts with a post-world war subjectivism, shaped by the legacy of Surrealism and a style that fits the post-war mood of anxiety and trauma. Straw-Blond's political material and historical narration are more of a decoration, and they only help to strengthen the conscious fragmentation of the text rather than emphasizing his realistic position as the poem does not reflect the solid foundations of linear narration. The wiggling mesh of love and loss, exploring and homesickness, past and present, tragedy and peace are instead presented through dynamism and pluralism.

Straw-Blond, a synthesis of his political stance and a surrealist experiment, hinges on a long journey through different cities and periods. The spaces and places, thus, are functioning on two different layers, the realistic and the symbolic one. The flow of spaces holds the worlds together; a real journey and life as a journey. That metaphor has a distinctive quality in the sense that the realist storytelling and the metaphor intertwine. The object-reference is enhanced with a poetic idea of flow while the narrative journey spaces gain a previously unspoken object-reference as the sophistication of existence echoing Riceour's conception of metaphor.

On that basis, the journey as the main two-fold main instrument creates opportunities to bring up various topics. Straw-Blond's spaces of journey create the main poetic methodology for a one-time experiment in bringing realist narration and avant-garde surrealism together.

*"at dawn the express entered the station
unannounced
it was covered with snow
I stood on the platform my coat collar
raised
the platform was empty
a sleeper window stopped in front of me
its curtains were parted
a young woman slept in the lower berth in
the twilight*

¹⁰ "Asansörle iniyorum hole / asansörde köylü kızlar Oriente ilinden Bayamo köylüklerinden / şehre dikiş öğrenmeye gelmişler / Havana Libere (Hür Havana) otelinde duvarlarında milyonlerden gölgeler kalmış apartmanlarda oturuyorlar / otelin eski adı Hilton / 24 milyona çıkmış / asansörde köylü kızlar Bursa ilinden Ankara köylüklerinden kızlar İstanbul'da işiniz ne kızlar sizi nasıl bıraktılar Hilton'a / Hilton Hilton değil gayrı diyorlar Hür İstanbul'a çevrildi adı çoktan / ve gülüyorlar ağızlarını örtüp kınalı elleriyle / ağalar da kaçtı Amerikanla birlikte / ya toprak / bölüştük" (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1762).

¹¹ "Geceleri tiramvaylara biniyoruz nerelere gittiklerini bilmediğimiz tramvaylara / üçer vagonlu geniş temiz tramvaylar bizi korkunç gıcirtılarla bir yerlere götürüyor geceleri / yamış duvarlar çıkıyor karşımıza ansızın ve sokak fenerlerinin ışığında yürüyor üstümüze yüksek ve inatçı yürüyor / pencereler çıkıyor karşımıza ve geliyor bize doğru yığınla ve birbirini çiğneyerek camsız çerçevesiz ve odaların insanların değil boşlukların pencereleri / kanatsız kapıların hiçbir yere açılmayan kapıların önünden geçiyoruz" (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1774).

*her hair straw-blond eyelashes blue
and her full red lips looked spoiled and
pouting
I didn't see who was sleeping in the upper
berth
unannounced the express slipped out of the
station
I don't know where it came from or where
it was going
I watched it leave
I was sleeping in the upper berth
in the Bristol Hotel in Warsaw
I hadn't slept so soundly in years
and yet my bed was wooden and narrow”
(Hikmet, 2020)¹²*

2.5. The Fragmented and Dynamic Architecture as Metaphor

His late years incorporates an extraordinary undertaking of a deconstructed space use as an intrinsic part of the text. The succession of spaces is the main stylistic instrument of his multi-themed texts revolving around the passing of time and politics. The spatial design, which is based on the succession of individual spaces, takes center stage as Hikmet puts an effort to mold a dynamic, fragmented yet a continuous space out of them. Thus, the cinematographic movement through the flow of spaces creates an architecture of narration to house the main emotion of the text -an anxious yet passionate interest towards the thin and restless line between being and nothingness.

The sudden movements and the viscosity of the space around the passenger remind the multiple vistas and space articulation of modernist architecture. Hikmet rarely wrote about his taste of architecture. He was a supporter of using new materials and planning principles in architecture, as he put it in an article he wrote about architecture in the Soviet Union (Hikmet, 2015). “By architecture a field of art,” he wrote in a letter from prison a decade before, he means “the architecture of endless matter in constant motion” (Hikmet, 1968). On the other hand, he underlined that the visual effects to arouse certain

feelings- such as joy and respect instead of insipidity and tyranny- are more important. He also mentioned in 1935 that he is not a “fan of cubist” architecture as it usually turns to be a standardization wiping off the individual character of buildings (Hikmet, 1992). Another group of newspaper articles from the same year praised the architectural heritage in Istanbul, the works of Ottoman architect Sinan in particular, and the regional character of architecture in general as it reflects the taste and effort of the working-class people (Hikmet, 1991). If so, his position can be interpreted as modest modernism with a regional dose and expressionist character, namely some sort of late modern approach. It fits that he focused on the expressionist character of spaces as a fluent, yet subjective and complex entity given the non-linear narration and sophisticated take on the topics.

3. Conclusion

Nâzım Hikmet’s realistic and sporadically symbolic poetry offers, as a surprise, metaphorical usage of narrative spaces in his late years based on a vague matrix of meaning. The architectural metaphors have step by step become the center piece of his brand new non-linear narration. Hikmet’s worldview, though, remains true to its original materialism but this realm of a polysemic discourse of connotations is closely related to the inner nature of a certain sensibility arisen out of themes of memory, exile, death, and uneasiness. The uncanniness is portrayed as a natural component of his life-story in the frame of a purposeful life. For him, the uncanny nature of his spatial metaphors implicitly corresponds to the dialectical anti-thesis of resolution. His stylistic adventure follows the expression potentials of uneasiness to move beyond the realist framework and the ostensive language.

There, Paul Ricoeur’s understanding of metaphor as a new proposition for the being can be seen surfacing in Hikmet’s search for the expression of his existentialist anxiety. As a much-praised political spokesperson of socialist ideology,

12 “Seher vakti habersizce girdi gara ekspres / kar içindeydi / ben paltomun yakasını kaldırmış perondaydım / peronda benden başka da kimseler yoktu / durdu önümde yataklı vagonun pencerelerinden biri / perdesi aralıktı / genç bir kadın uyuyordu alacakaranlıkta alt ranzada / saçları saman sarısı kirpikleri mavi / kırmızı dolgun dudaklarıysa şımarık ve somurtkandı / üst ranzada uyuyanı göremedim / habersizce usulcacık çıktı gardan ekspres / bilmiyorum nereden gelip nereye gittiğini / baktım arkasından / üst ranzada ben uyuyorum / Varşova’da Birstol Oteli’nde / yıllardır böyle derin uyukulara dalmışlığım yoktu / oysa karyolam tahtaydı dardı” (Hikmet, 2008, pp. 1748).

his true virtue lies in the competence of confessionalist narration of knotty and sophisticated human condition. Thanks to his early use of modernist abstractness, he was no stranger to fragmented narratives and its efficacy. It was his realist ethics, on the other hand, paved the way to the rare but riveting efforts of mischievous metaphors of architecture when the political purposefulness (*and the realistic style*) failed to capture the existential anxiety. He did not hesitate to call for the phenomenological horizons of the metaphors of spatial descriptions. Hikmet never truly entered a realm of the incomprehensibility of architectural metaphor but let himself adventurously driven through it in the guidance of his much-trusted ideological ethics.

The poetic effect of an architectural metaphor as the expression of more than its functional agenda (*or the mere plot it contains*) can prove to be an exciting writing and design tool to interpret the physical environment in the imagination. The architectural metaphor can transcend its main function as the container of plot not at the expense of it but transforming its function into a communicative and critical experience.

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