

The Abstraction of Reality in Cengiz Dağcı's Benim Gibi Biri (Someone Like Me)

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Abstract

Cengiz Dağcı has been circling around certain facts since his first novels in the 50's and in his many historically unique novels, he attempted to embrace his readers with human adventures, social and individual fractures based on the alienation and isolation of minorities from their own lands and perceivable periods in the shed of clashes and wars. This study aimed at interpreting the aspects of his style in his Benim Gibi Biri (Someone like Me) and presenting the differentiation of the work from its predecessors. The main purpose was to detect the concentration in the narration of Dağcı. The novel underscores the deviations in narration, cohesion and context in general when the character, Joseph becomes the voice of the conscience of the protagonist-narrator. Throughout spatial narration, we observed the traces of Cengiz Dağcı in a silhouette revealing his own personality and experience in actual life. The author's psychology, outbursts, rebels, traumas and feelings are reflected through the main character, Joseph Tucknell. The deviations in narration highlights the scenes that create pathos for the readers when language becomes poetic. This study involves three main parts. In the first part, the novel Benim Gibi Biri (Someone like Me) by Cengiz Dağcı is analyzed in terms of characterization, themes and setting. Secondly, the focus was on the narrative techniques and cohesion within the context of the text. Finally, it was concluded that Cengiz Dağcı applied essential techniques to abstract his ideas from his fiction in this notable novel, distinguished from his previous works. Therefore, his works still mark the literary canon in terms of unique style and themes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cengiz Dağcı is a Crimean author, who wrote works that told the plunged into destruction of the people due to the invasion of the Crimean lands since his fiction from the 1950s. His circling around the same issue has been considered as a weakness in the world of literature. Indeed, works such as *They Were Also Human (Onlar da İnsandı)*, *Those Were Our Lands (O Topraklar Bizimdi)*, *The Man Who Lost His Land (Yurdunu Kaybeden Adam)*, *Terrible Years (Korkunç Yıllar)*, *Days of Death and Fear (Ölüm ve Korku Günleri)* are his historically unique novels in which successive events that tell the shattering of a society and individuals

are depicted. Although there are many common characters and similar events, none of them is a repetition of one another. These are novels, each embracing its reader with human adventures, nourished by strong details. Thanks to these works, social and individual fractures which describe a period have been visible and perceivable.

After these novels, the author embarked on a different trial, looking at all the events from a distance, making fiction stand out. *Someone Like Me (Benim Gibi Biri)* means a few more steps ahead on this way. With the continuity of the human fragility in this novel; from common characters in different novels to people who share a similar adventure with the same names, and from concrete places to fictional places built with roads, tunnels, gardens and huts. In the study, it is aimed to interpret the aspects that distinguish this work from its predecessors and the reasons of this differentiation.

2. Benim Gibi Biri (Someone like Me)

There are two main characters whose roads intersect and depart in the novel. One is the protagonist-narrator that insistently keeps his/her name as a secret, except one scene. The other one is Joseph Tucknell. The story revolves around two main events: the first one is the frame event, distributed between the beginning and the end of the novel. This is a simple fiction that depicts how Joseph Tucknell meets the protagonist-narrator at Polish Aviator Club in London, their conversations till the closure of the club and their departures as they get on different trains at the station. In this context, the narrator is seen to be writing a novel called *Anneme Mektuplar (Letters to Mom)* and his intention to leave Tucknell to write a new novel. The name of the novel would be *Benim Gibi Biri (Someone like Me)*. These two novels, involved in the fiction, are the works of Cengiz Dağcı. These statements include this work as the continuation of the novel series that bear autobiographical traces. Therefore, as the narrator is an author who tells his own experience of writing terminologically provides *Benim Gibi Biri (Someone like Me)* a meta-fiction trait.

He writes this reality into the relatively solid fiction, interspersing chapters of getaway adventures where the paths of narrator and Joseph Tucknell cross and they part company. Fiction is not consistent in these internal narrative sections; these are sections shaped by some factors appearing more suddenly than conscious preferences, but in essence reflect a getaway. The getaway is from the land where the narrator was born and loved so much like many people with concluded conviction decisions and his name was also published on the list of enemies of the regime. Therefore, he escapes from the cities and the interrogators of the cities without knowing exactly his destination.

Tucknell is an enigmatic man who believes in his guilt and thinks he will be eventually get arrested. The narrator feels responsible to him in a way. Every time they meet, Tucknell

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is in a weary outlook. However, with the support of the narrator, he stands up and walks with him for a while. The protagonist-narrator leaves him in a tunnel to find food, yet could not find him as he returns. The narrator is depressed, he is not willing to escape any more. He is caught by the soldiers at a station and manages to escape with the help of a friend from the prison camp. Although he wonders, he cannot see Tucknell again. The war is over and he marries a woman he has met at the camp and they have a daughter. Even though they're asked to leave their land, they consider life with optimism.

Tucknell is introduced from his own point of view in the dialogues of the frame narration while in the inner narration, he is depicted by protagonist-narrator. Based on the information given by Tucknell himself, he is an immigrant living in England. He had first started working as a "garage mechanic" and after a while bought a hostel with the money he saved in the early 1950s. Having lost his wife, Joseph often mentions about how much this loss changed him. While describing the love, he felt for his wife, he says that "he lived the sunny years of his life with his wife" (Dağcı, 1988: 124) and he states the beauty of his wife, which he realized after her death: "Not believing in the existence of God, I seemed to have seen the God in her lifeless face" (Dağcı, 1988: 127). Tucknell has a daughter whom he does not want to talk about and he has not seen her for a long time. At the end of the novel, when the narrator insistently asked about his daughter, it is understood that this relation hurts him: his 29-year-old daughter rejected her family, had changed three husbands in the last ten years, and they got the news that she was divorced before they celebrated her marriages. Moreover, she is addicted to drugs. Although he informed about her mother's illness, she didn't come to visit her, and when he contacted the police, he was warned that they could do nothing because she was an adult. Far from loving, he thinks that his daughter hates him (Dağcı, 1988: 189).

The narration of their acquaintance do not match: Joseph Tucknell tells that he has not known the protagonist-narrator before they meet. Due to a coincidence, a Turkish, who came to their hostel, called them as "citizens" when he heard their hometown and Joseph took his number and kept it (Dağcı, 1988: 71). Although he did not consider calling him, after a dream, he wanted to call. This was dream that began well but became a nightmare. He saw himself as death by turning into a weak man and he woke up as a man beside him tried to take him to the mountains. When he woke up, the first thing that came to his mind was protagonist-narrator (Dağcı, 1988: 49). He found the number and called the man with a desire to meet.

The narrator is displeased to this acquaintance story, yet he does not show. He even thinks that he is unable to distinguish between the dream and the truth. This is the first sign of conflict (Dağcı, 1988: 50). Although he repeats their acquaintance forty years ago many times, he does not tell how. He mentions how he "found" him in a weak state:

He hasn't changed much, and he wants me to keep quiet with his silence, just like before. He stands before me, as I first saw him, forty years ago (Dağcı, 1988: 10).

Two of us have walked a very long way. This road started not from the station entrance, but from somewhere very distant. From where? From a somewhere which those long and harsh years have erased off my memory ...Having walked over for forty years, we came to the entrance of a dark tunnel and we stopped, now we are both tired and exhausted, silently looking into the tunnel ... I see the sunlight penetrating through the opening at the other end of the tunnel. But I used to see the sunshine before... I was saying that the daylight was waiting for us... Despite all the mercy and good deeds, I showed towards him [Joseph], I was guilty again in his eyes... His fault was surely greater than mine. Because he set out before me. I didn't find Joseph, but Joseph found me on the road. He was scared of me first. Only from me? My devotion to Joseph was fake ... Before I set out, I was longing to return to the people whom I lived amongst (Dağcı, 1988: 11).

Joseph was an obligatory friend: a friend who finds himself, after being doomed to loneliness. He is a friend dogging his footsteps whom he cannot give up with even though he has pruned his blossoming hopes.

For the narrator, he is someone who knows a lot about himself: “In my mind, me, a little stranger to me” (Dağcı, 1988: 6); “(B)ut Joseph... Joseph, who was waiting for me somewhere on the edge of silence, was not a real person!” (Dağcı, 1988: 45). Stating that “I think Joseph died not once but several times” (Dağcı, 1988: 108), the author creates a suspense about his existence. While telling that “I know Joseph that Joseph whom I've been walking side by side in all these years, Joseph wasn't the only Joseph. There were other Josephs hidden under Joseph's skin... shall I not be another person, innocent and incriminating person than I am without Joseph?” (Dağcı, 1988: 97), Joseph is someone like symbolizing the inculpatory people that haunted by the narrator. He is evil from the beginning, a selfish one, but despite this, he is someone that the protagonist cannot give up with (Dağcı, 1988: 135).

He struggles with him from time to time: he tells Joseph that he is fighting not with himself but with his inner identity, and when he ends this fight, he will be happy too ... and while leaving him, he says: “You are neither Romus nor am I Romulus; we are not going to establish a new Rome here. Moreover, there is no gray wolf to take care of us and feed us with its milk, in these mountains” (Dağcı, 1988: 68). In saying so, he refers to a common fate and competition to twins who are both in need of one another and in competition via a western legend. He puts up with him because he is like the voice of his conscience: “Maybe I was a pretty criminal. But was I that guilty? Was I truly guilty enough to pound a beat hungrily and

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miserable on those deserted roads for forty years, devoid of human love?" he asks. Despite his compassionate approach to Joseph, he does not receive the same response: "even when separation and homesickness overflow from me and settle in my face", his suspicious attitude towards him does not change, and even a slight smile does not appear on his face (Dağcı, 1988: 12).

Despite all these attitudes and assumptions, when the narrator finds Joseph half-dead, he feeds and nourishes him with his last morsel and lies beside him covering up to express his love (Dağcı, 1988: 53). Although a compassion is clearly perceived in this narrative, the narrator is not consistent at this point and when he states: "Hungry and tired, but now on he followed me quietly like a dog loyal to his owner" (Dağcı, 1988: 57), he uses a derogatory description because he, too, will continue to brutally beat himself up as soon as he recovers. And somewhere else, "I had finally found Joseph and I as well along with Joseph" (Dağcı, 1988: 52) implies that he can only find his place in this world after getting rid of him. The narrator's inconsistent attitude fuels curiosity about his relationship with Joseph: "I and Joseph will be real people. It will be easy for us to live when there are two real people who forgive each other for their crimes" (Dağcı, 1988: 93). The expression of "two real people" this time interrogates the genuineness of both. Joseph also thinks that, despite all his dissonance, he cannot live without the narrator and reach his existence.

As for the main person of the novel, the protagonist-narrator, we see traces of Cengiz Dağcı in a silhouette where he talks about himself. The protagonist doesn't mention his name throughout the novel, except a few scenes: "I had a name years ago. Now I'm nameless" But that name is mentioned in the whole novel: when interrogated by soldiers in the city, he says his name is "Dağcı" and he's from Tavridal. Denotation preferences throughout the novel are a separate point of attention, for now, it is enough to remind that no one has a surname in the entire novel except Joseph Tucknell. The narrator insistently does not talk about his own physical appearance when he talks about Joseph who is dressed like earls and is so cool. Until the end of the novel, he only describes himself as petty compared to Joseph. And towards the end, he describes his emerging face as the woman, who helped him cleaned and shaved her hair:

I wasn't ugly either-My eye-brows are kohl black, my forehead is wide, my eyes are brown and big, my chin is in white marble cross section and strong, yet all these years, the most prominent in my whole appearance, it was my eyes which has looked at the stars, the darkness, and the sky, in all these years it has seen hungry and miserable people /witnessed people who died and killed for so many years (Dağcı, 1988: 164).

He was prosecuted and was sentenced to death in court for rebelling against the

socialist order: “You wanted to own a land... So, you're innocent ha! Who are you, anyway? Did you think that you're the kid of the sky-goat?” He has lost his faith and rebels: “Do you hear me, God! I was standing there even on this deserted mountain road”... how would he tell he would desire to be a landlord and rich and he was not challenging against the socialist order?: “I said only if I am the human being that belongs to this world, a part of the world, no matter how small it is, one particle of the world must belong to me” (Dağcı, 1988: 28).

He was born “in a town by the sea” and says that even crop fields can divert him out of his way because they remind him the sea, he lived next to when he was a child:

I longed to see people other than myself on the way. Other aspirations encompassed myself; whistling, singing, riding a horse, eating a bunch of grapes, or putting a shirt on me like the immaculate shirts my mother had just ironed. I didn't know what fear was in those days. There was no prison in our village. No prison, no police. We could enter the gardens and the vineyards. We were eating apples and grapes, without fear (Dağcı, 1988: 14).

Besides being close to his cosmos narrations, these expressions are not detailed. He forgets everything when a woman offers him to stay and work on land:

Working on land. Being a man of land! A wave of joy rose amid my chest. But before I had time to look at the woman's face, the wave broke and spilled down at my feet. Was she mocking me I am bound by the earth; I am in love with the earth; I was brought before the judge because I wanted to live as a man of the land, I was thrown into the prison; I was humiliated, I was disgraced; I've lost my humanity. Now who the hell are you, woman? I begged... you gave me your bread, thank you. Did you think that I would beg you too, to let me work on this land? On whose land? Is it yours? On the land of your father, your grandfather, your neighbor? Get out of here! I am a traveler in this world (Dağcı, 1988: 23-24).

In him, there are two souls realized: his dreams and longings and loneliness and despair. When he senses Joseph's sadness in his heart, he wants to get away from him and take refuge in his house, which is a cemetery of memories (Dağcı, 1988: 30). He does not find himself resistant to life at all (Dağcı, 1988: 32). He is so familiar with loneliness that even feels the pain of loneliness (Dağcı, 1988: 93) of a tree:

My world is colorless, without a light; my world is a cemetery of memories. But I'm comfortable in my world. Who are you? Nobody is there asking me where you from are... Am I running away from life again? Yeah, I'm running away. Last night in my room, I thought I'd bury myself in that cemetery unless I come out of my memoirs cemetery and meet with fleshy living people in the real world (Dağcı, 1988: 9).

Like the nights in the past, tonight too, looking at the blank page opened in front of me,

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I should have thought with a heavy heart about how and when I would find the words to fill the page in my head (Dağcı, 1988: 105).

I say there is no point in returning to the old life, but I return to the old life anyway. Transformation is not for the purpose of digging out old wounds. Because it is easier for me to narrate incurable wounds, put up with narrated wounds, carry the narrated wounds in my soul and memory than finding a remedy for incurable wounds (Dağcı, 1988: 106).

He is resentful; he rebels against the responsible for this order:

I did not believe in God. Neither God nor the prophet. Far from believing, I had a grudge and hatred of God in my heart. In the world I once lived in, God should have been brought before the judge, not me and similar criminals... How many prayers were recited on our land; how many prayers, how many begging and crying; how much tears were shed God hasn't listened to any of them (Dağcı, 1988: 25).

From time to time, he believes he is spared in some way: For a moment, by stating "A man who has gathered the dust of his hopes of years in his shoes passes by; be in ambush; let him pass, the man is not guilty, do not disturb him", he withdrew the law enforcers (Dağcı, 1988: 93). The things he holds in life live in his hands and when he lost his last friend, the "shovel bearded man", he suffers another great destruction: "My brain was also closed to all sources of consolation. My mother, Joseph, Magdalena sentenced me not only to darkness, not only death, yet they had sentenced me to a truth more terrible than death and darkness - a life out of meaning" (Dağcı, 1988: 134). Even so, he also knows that there is no reason other than finding life beautiful except for wandering these mountain roads, escaping from death (Dağcı, 1988: 35).

When he falls into despair, he thinks of refuge in death, but he quickly gets out of this psychology. While the gardens are burning, he observes birds full of ambition to live and crows that attack him desperately remind him of life (Dağcı, 1988: 34). By stating that "Suicide could not be the solution for me. Although I was thrown out of life, I loved life" (Dağcı, 1988: 101), he decides to continue struggling. Contrary to what is supposed, he realizes that he has the hope for better days and that he is not pointless (Dağcı, 1988: 33).

The protagonist-narrator seeks heaven, the place he has fled because he was judged and sentenced to death. This search is the only reason of his being alive because "The lost object is reestablished in the mind by ego" (Freud, 1923: 28). It is observed that at the end of the plot, the protagonist is trying to create the world, which he is unable to reach in reality, by writing:

I was different ... I believed that in need, I could find the air, water, even bread in the world I carried inside (Dağcı, 1988: 99) (...) In my heart, I longed for the evening in

my own room and buried in those pages. It is pretty that, what I called craving was not crave for work, actually, it was a break away not only from Joseph, but from everyone, even life. In the silence of my room, closed to the outside world, searching for myself in *Anneme Mektuplar (Letters to Mom)* and lick the wounds on my soul left by long and destructive years while searching for myself (These expressions are exactly reflected in the memories). Worst of the worst was to get hold of by the delusion that I would be at peace when I spilled the memories hovering and cavorting in my memory. It lasted for years. I grew old. A whole life is running out; I couldn't find peace. And now, as I stood in the face of an agitated man with an English name, my soul wandered in my unreal homeland, which I tried to perform in *Anneme Mektuplar (Letters to Mom)* (Dağcı, 1988: 7).

However, Joseph Tucknell considers this search as illogical and dangerous. Joseph symbolizes the superego in the novel. Superego is the power of authority and it suggests not to intervene in the works of the authority (Freud, 1923: 34). The protagonist tries to lead the narrator to accept the impossibility of an escape from the authority:

I thought running away. But where? And why? Besides, running away from a woman meant running away from life. Despite everything, even though I was a person disconnected from real life, I was still a person; a person who escaped from a woman could not call himself 'I am a human' (Dağcı, 1988: 152).

This statement is repeated many times in the novel.

Magdalena is the name of all women. Even in environments, where names are not mentioned for a certain period, the narrator thinks that the addressee is Magdalena. All women are good, brave and female. They help the protagonist-narrator regardless of what the people around him say or think. They bathe him, feed him, and offer him a place where he can live for a lifetime. The first of these is someone who lives with her grandfather. The grandfather finds it pointless to help travelers: "Do you think there are no cities in their home? There are! Bones of their own people. They built their town on top of it. They do not know how to live humanly in their own homelands, they do not make the people of other homelands live humanly" (Dağcı, 1988: 22). However, the woman continues to help these passengers.

The second woman appears suddenly when the narrator is by four people who were killed and thrown into the pit. He tells the narrator that two of those killed were teachers, one was a poet, and the other was a pianist. He covers them. Woman complains about terror and close off of schools, churches, cultural centers, pillaging of villages, streets being occupied by soldiers, women being attacked: "Our crime is to speak in another language than those. Is this a crime?" After saying, "there is not a single house that has not been raided, there is not

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a single family whose member has not been arrested”, he explains he is also wanted by the police (Dağcı, 1988: 41). The narrator tells him that if he lives in the mountains, he will not be afraid of death. He says that he couldn't be like the people wandering in the mountains, he has a land granted to them by God: “he has a city, a culture; cultural organizations, universities, places of worship; and tells that he cannot stay away from that culture” (Dağcı, 1988: 44). Rather, he also wants the narrator to go to the cities and fight like himself. This woman is like a voice, despite the all events, that reminds the existence of humanity and the protagonist that human productions such as science, art and religion are worth fighting for.

The third Magdalena runs a roadside coffee shop. She serves those who ask for help in her coffee shop, which is furnished with photos, furs and feathers. It points to the place of childlike details in our lives. Another Magdalena is the one who said that the war she saw in the forest, while she was getting away from the camp, was over. She lives in the forest with a child heirloom of her husband whom she lost in the military and she says that he can stay with them if he wishes (Dağcı, 1988: 121).

Finally, the woman he met somewhere, similar to the concentration camp huts, and eventually married to and clung to life together is Magdalena. She is one of about three hundred women who were brought there to do the camp work. She looks after the narrator for days without letting him get out of bed. She knows how to break all the timidity of protagonist. She tells him about her own pain. She does not visit him for a while. One day, he shaves the head and face of the narrator who is recovered and bathes him. The protagonist gradually warms up to her and feels hopes. He does not think of Joseph as much as he used to. After starting a family with the woman, this story does not end happily. They leave to start a new life, following a warning by the contractor representatives, who has forced them to empty the old barracks in the forest. There is a difference, in this separation, he will continue his journey with Magdalena and his daughter.

In the novel, men are depicted as injured and defeated while women are portrayed as strong and the source of hope and joy: “Women ... till that day, were different beings for me: friend, nanny, cure for my inner wounds and make up for my tired eyes”. This is a significant indication of Dağcı's perception of women with the roles of breeding and existing. A wife in Dağcı could keep existence and love alive even with her death. Magdalena, Tucknell's wife, holds this as a mission in the work. The other Magdalenas are the figures that invite to the isolated land, remind the humanity when forgotten, raise children and eventually restart the new life by making all the wounds forgotten with their whole entities. The Magdalenas in this novel are the symbols of the other female figures of the novels of Cengiz Dağcı: mother, wife (Regina), friend (Halide) and lover (Safiye).

As is known, Magdalena is one of the sayings of Virgin Mary. In *the Bible*, it is told that Virgin Mary observed her as one of the followers of Jesus Christ and she is told as a woman who witnessed his crucifixion (*BBC Mahgelena Mad.* 2011). This woman, who also witnessed the resurrection of Christ, was in time praised in religious terminology. She is presented as a person who helps the needy (Şahin, 1996: 167). It is obvious that the author refers to these utterances with a metaphorical narration.

Men, in the novel, are generalized with the same name. Joseph is the name for the husbands, uncles of Magdalenas and the friend of the protagonist. Some have died of illness, some have been to army and could not return. The author does not depict them in details, he uses a few sentences for them. The “friend” of the protagonist-narrator is also Joseph. It is also possible that the narrator is also Joseph: In a part, he tells his surname, but he never tells his name. The protagonist-narrator is surprised when Magdalena, in the shed, calls him Joseph, yet he does not react. For the first time, the narrator unites with Joseph at that scene (Dağcı, 1988: 166).

After asking the narrator whether he is surprised about his name, Joseph tells that his name changes from Joseph and Yusuf by stating that he is “the child of our North forests” (Dağcı, 1988: 136) in essence. Joseph of *the Bible* and Yusuf of *the Koran* are the same people and they are the characters that were left to death and “exiled from their lands” due to the envy of their brothers in the religious texts (*İslam Ansiklopedisi: Yusuf Mad*). All the men in the novel recall the sorrowful hero of the religious culture again. Similar to narrator, he is betrayed, isolated and struggled to return his country.

“The language is a very strong vehicle as it reflects our style to categorize and conceptualize the world we live in... The metaphor concept should be considered in two sides. This means, the meaning, brought by metaphor, is not merely artistic or aesthetic, but at the same time, it gains a cognitive value” (Thi Vu & Thi Nguyen, 2020: 32). In *Benim Gibi Biri (Someone like Me)*, the author is not content with gathering the male and female characters around the same names in regards to name symbolization, but also he could aim this cognitive impact by choosing the metaphorical names, derived from the universal religious utterances.

One of the elements played on the technical structure of the novel is the spatial narration. These spaces are not the usual habitats that are appropriate for living. Bachelard (2008: 295) asserts that “when we leave the usual sensible objects, we communicate with a renewing object in psychic way”. In the novel, the protagonist-narrator mentions about such psychic spaces.

The road is a light motif on its own in the novel. Setting off, leaving the road and observing the main roads are repeated throughout the novel. They are not entirely alone on

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the roads, there are people who sleep late in rock holes in the bottom of the bushes: families, old people and children. When the narrator asks about them, he either gets the answer “forget it” or “get out.” They are also people, who do not want to reveal their identity and look suspiciously at everyone:

As time passes, I would think that the road we walked on was not a road, but rather a corridor of time and that the cast iron gates of this corridor would suddenly close to our faces somewhere ... People I met in the vicinity of the road were very different from the people I once lived amongst -with the language they speak and the way they dress- ... We seemed not to exist. Those who saw us often ignored us. If we were known as criminals at the time we set out, as the road got longer, the word criminals was replaced by words such as vagrants, travelers or planets (Dağcı, 1988: 13-14).

Joseph and the narrator are among those passengers, yet the narrator leaves the path occasionally. Despite the fact that they seem to have places that they may go and there, especially the Magdalenas are invited to stay with them, the narrator returns to the road each time. Joseph believes that these roads will one day lead him back to where he started and where he ran away and all the ways lead somehow to the idea of “being caught”, which in the novel, Joseph reminds that fact.

In the novel, the roads are the places of the fugitives and those who are hiding, there are other ways in the narrator's imagination: “I have no doubt about that. I will return to this road. When I return again, I will walk on this path, with my head high, fearless and unobjectionable, waving my arms” (Dağcı, 1988: 95).

The concept of being on the road in the novel reminds the metaphor of being passenger and being on the road. Accepted as the root metaphor, “the concept of being on the road is seeking and struggling to know the reality or is finding the peace and maturity of the moment” (Aydın, 2006: 14). Road is the metaphor of search and change in many cultures as theoretically explained by Joseph Campbell. While Joseph, a figure of search, prefers setting a life, proper to conditions, the protagonist-narrator seems to choose a modest life, isolated from people, to convey his longings in his literary works.

The other important space of the novel is the tunnels. The tunnel is one of them in which he hides with Joseph. The protagonist-narrator dreams that they could build a world that they could live without fears and that they could write “Homeland of Peacemakers” in the entrance. However, Joseph has disappeared, and thus, the narrator prefers walking to an unknown path rather than walking through the tunnel. Indeed, the tunnel would lead to the world instead of disappearing in the darkness.

The protagonist-narrator is arrested who walks through the soldiers, as yielding, in

desolation, yet, he is saved from his fears (Dağcı, 1988: 111). The place he is imprisoned resembles to a tunnel: “Although people were gathered from all over the world, they were not interested in each other just like the ancient planets” (Dağcı, 1988: 108). The bars and soldiers limit the lives of the prisoners. The tunnel for the protagonist-narrator, who flees from people and lives in the mountains, and Joseph is both a shelter and a prison. The harsh conditions of heroes are within this dualism.

The spaces, related to prisons, are ditches and slaughter trucks. One day, the protagonist was taken from the prison with a man with spade beard and they were asked to open a ditch. The corpses, taken by the slaughter truck, were put into the ditch. These events, told from the beginning of the novel, make sense of the ditch and slaughter truck leitmotifs, appear in the inner narration a few times. The protagonist witness the mass murders in those ditches. The spade beard man was shot while trying to escape and thrown into the ditch, he himself dug. The protagonist-narrator manages to escape during the events. The spaces, contrary to the other spaces told in the novel, are real. The open eyes, narrated by the protagonist-narrator, “mirror the earth against other worlds” (Dağcı, 1988: 39). In the novel, there is a slaughter truck, recalling the tragedy: “U.K.H. Municipal Butcher: Meat and Sausage Food”. This repeated name in the novel involves a bitter irony. The protagonist-narrator sees the corpses thrown out of those trucks (Dağcı, 1988: 39).

One of the significant spaces in the novel are the shed, remained from the concentration camps, which are depicted as a building with double-winged iron gate, longwise infringed, straight doomed, without windows and chimney (Dağcı, 1988: 117).

Cengiz Dağcı, who witnessed the events in German concentration camps in the Second World War, depicted his experience in his novel, *Korkunç Yıllar (Horrible Years)*. His characters tend to reflect the realities with the mass murders in *Benim Gibi Biri (Someone like Me)*. According to Uğurlu (2014), Cengiz Dağcı was a tragic character because his soul continued living in Crimea while he was actually living in London from the Second World War to 2011:

What makes Cengiz Dağcı tragic is that his culture was tried to be destroyed with the forces of Russian government; that besides the inhumane attitude in concentration camps during the Second World War, his departure from his nation and homeland, where his mother language was spoken, and his longing to his beloved ones, friends, relatives and family and that this departure lasting all his life” (Uğurlu, 2014: 50).

With Benim Gibi Biri (Someone like Me), a cognitive stage is aimed with different linguistic variables.

There are many places that lead the reader question what reality is. In the novel, there

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are appearances and disappearances as fairytales. It is observed that space, where there are women, are designed as homes despite many physical problems and the other spaces are depicted in limitations. One of the Magdalenas tell that cities are the most proper places to live as a human with universities, churches, art centers. These are strange to the protagonist-narrator, the cities do not accept him. While escaping from them, he tries to create a distinctive world in his mind. Opposing the psychic spaces he lives in, he has a heaven that would help him rise up: fields, fences, slopes, tiled houses ... (Dağcı, 1988: 120) and:

“I wanted to live as a full person in my hungry world. I wanted to live while laughing in my agitated world. I wanted to live with laughter in my ruthless world” (Dağcı, 1988: 85).

Asphalt paved highways, railways, stations are being wiped away from my eyes.

Mountains, steppes, burnt fields are wiped away from my eyes

Passenger kids crying on the skirts of passenger women being wiped away from my eyes.

The dead bodies staring at the sky with their dull eyes in open graves are being wiped away from my eyes.

I am in our vineyards; the vineyards are loaded with grapes. I listen to the birds of paradise chirping on the silver fences that encircle our vineyards (Dağcı, 1981: 91).

The clash between these two spaces support the tragic state of the protagonist in the story.

3. Some Notes about the Novel

Contrary to what is implicated in the novel, according to Mustafa Çetin (2011: 92), Cengiz Dağcı was content to be in London and a Londoner. Although the conditions that limited him changed, his not visiting Turkey and Crimea in his health proves this thesis. The meeting of the characters at the Polish Aviator Club in London, in *Benim Gibi Biri*, is accepted as a respect by the author to his Polish wife and the country he met her.

Among the novels of Cengiz Dağcı, *Anneme Mektuplar (Letters to Mom)* can be considered as a previous phase of *Benim Gibi Biri (Someone like Me)*. However, Dağcı, in his book *Hatıralarda (In Memories)*, warns the reader that the publication dates could be misleading by stating that this line is not so. In 1980, the author experienced a major break, was isolated and stated that even his wife Regina, whom he had mentioned with great love, did not understand him. He lives a few months away from letters, newspapers, books or television:

Only earth was close to me. Grasses, flowers, bushes... the intimacy was so deep that the earth and I, like two love-struck, were waiting for the day we would meet each other...Without being aware of my changing and without seeking clues, without

thinking how and when it will end, I started working on the novel *Benim Gibi Biri* (*Someone like Me*). No, the change could not destroy me. I was just me yet. But I could be no exception. Apart from myself, I found someone like myself who was displaced, who was uncertain where he was going: Mr. Joseph Tucknell... We would help each other while passing out of world on a deserted place (Dağcı 1998: 256).

The author stated that he had created the plot, time and space of this novel “as a reaction” to all the novels he had written in the last thirty years (Dağcı, 1988: 257).

In his memoirs, Cengiz Dağcı says that he put the novel he wrote in a drawer because he thought the reader would not understand it. Meanwhile the mother in his mind and heart is reflected in *Anneme Mektuplar* (*Letters to Mom*). The mother in this work provides the reader this novel while wrapping his wounds and makes him to stop running away. *Anneme Mektuplar* (*Letters to Mom*) and *Benim Gibi Biri* (*Someone like Me*) were sent together for publication:

No, my novels are not disconnected from real life and left out of life years ago, they were not novels telling about the homesickness, sorrows, separation, reunion, excitement, abandonment, and despair of forgotten people, which do not concern many people in our time. They would not remain merely artifacts of that era. Actually, artworks had no eras. All art belonged to one era. Those, who seek something different in art, do not seek in eras, but in sound, color, harmony, dialect and style (Dağcı 1998: 258).

4. Conclusion

In the work, instead of real persons and places, individuals and private spaces, whose reality is questioned by the author himself like in fairy tales, instead of a specific event, traumatic experienced people are included. Those traumatic events, similar to those in the earlier novels, are abstracted in a paragraph without being animated in every detail. Dağcı quickly reached the addresses of the abstractions and it is easy to understand what they are referring to. For those, who only read this novel, it is a novel based on escape and loneliness, decorated with symbols.

The novel, appropriate to biographical reading, is a novel he produced when he escaped from people and thought he was not understood despite all his efforts. Cengiz Dağcı, in *Benim Gibi Biri* (*Someone like Me*), leaves almost no distance in allusion where the protagonist-narrator describes himself. The protagonist-narrator, in the identity of the author, is the direct representation of the desire of Cengiz Dağcı in regards to writing. On the other hand, the biographic details told by the author in *Reflections* or *Memories* correspond to Joseph Tucknell. Particularly, his narration is similar to his life in London, his wife, his

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daughter, his wife's death and his departure from his daughter. Only, the causes of his departure with his daughter and the events he faced with his daughter, in the novel, there are more details than biography conveyed. When these details are put together, it can be said that the inner narrative of this novel predominantly carries traces of Cengiz Dağcı's escape from the Second World War and London years of the author.

The images of Joseph in the novel are particularly ambiguous, except for the frame event. It is not clear whether he is a real character or an imaginary one that the protagonist-narrator created in his mind to quench his loneliness in his weak days. Some details can be accepted as the evidence of its existence from his name, his place of birth at the end of the novel and their departure to separate cities. On the other hand, the data that support him as a character in the mind of the author are stronger: above all, he does not show willpower to stop or act when he is with the author; even if he tries to beat him up, he is completely subject to the narrator. Being with the protagonist even on his sleepless days, inability of the narrator to connect the time and place of their meeting, Tucknell's suffering a fatal loss of power after leaving the author and many sentences mentioned above from the narrator expressing doubts about its existence could be taken as details to support this.

Joseph represents the subconscious part of the protagonist-narrator by accepting the accusation of Soviet ideology against the regime, which is not entirely unfounded while reminding him of his guilt. He is a *superego* that exists with the help of the narrator but sobers the narrator. He is the rationalist self that tells he must survive with the new conditions and submit instead of ruining himself due to the things he cannot have. Eventually, he not only settled in London but also had a British name.

As for the abstractions made over space, the inhumane events in concentration camps were depicted in detail in Dağcı's early novels. It is seen in this work, without mentioning about the name of the camp, whose connected places, cities, countries are observed in the middle of an uncertain geography. The author does not have a problem of attributing the experiences to this or that society. It should also be considered as an interesting move consciously fictionalized by the author that will clash the defense mechanisms as can be attributed to the author's creation of the protagonist, generally not belligerent. Thus, anyone, who prepares the ground for such events, is targeted without placing any direct accusation to any society.

The uncertainty in the internal narration in the novel and the similarity between the perspectives could be explained how conditions make people same. Similarly, the fictional deviations in the internal narration could be considered as both to reflect human psychology and the symbolic traumas of those years. In the novel, places, names and form are

meaningless. Everything became unified in the frame event when the protagonist-narrator appears with his authorship and there is a dominant fiction. These dual form in the fiction supports the idea that the author had intentionally planned this.

Unlike his other novels, the word of Crimea is mentioned in the last sentences in this novel. Whereas the work would almost be a Dağcı novel without Crimea, the author makes one last move: After Tucknell told the narrator that one hundred and twenty thousand people watched the last match of the Chelsea team, he says that this figure reminds him of the 120,000 people who died in the exile wagons Crimea. The narrator says, "It's hard to imagine, but I believe it". While Dağcı clearly describes the despair created in people due to years of war, he could not end the novel without mentioning Crimea. While some people, who go to the game happily, continue their lives, there are others who look at them and remember those years later: a stadium full of people died in exile wagons. The survivors have carved those numbers into their minds. One detail in an unlikely place can bleed the wound of another while someone gushes about it.

Dağcı used the name symbolism from his first novels, yet from the novels, *Benim Gibi Biri* (Someone like Me) and *Anneme Mektuplar* (Letters to Mom) onwards, the references from the western worlds are apparent. This expresses his gain of self-confidence as an author and his desire to reach wide mass.

In the novel, the damaged structure of the search of rationale of the super ego in Joseph Tucknell with a Freudian approach. What enriches this rationality is the energy that the emotions and longings of the man produced. On the other side, rationality is the strong and adaptable to life as is seen in this novel.

Cengiz Dağcı used the fiction to depict the feelings of his characters in this work. Order/unity and chaos are felt in the structure of the novel. The internal deviated narrations, which the characters escape and hide in, and its discord reflect the chaos while frame event reflect the simplicity, order and unity.

Abstraction is one of the vehicles used in literary works. Cengiz Dağcı, as a response to those criticism stating that he had always told about Crimea, states that this is not a Crimean issue, but a reality of humanity. In order to clarify his aim, Dağcı, in *Benim Gibi Biri* (Someone like Me) generalized and used metaphors to express what he had told before in his classic books; these are tragic human states. The aim of metaphorical narration of the novel is not aesthetic, yet to create cognitive impact. Therefore, he constituted internal modernist fictive world rather than an external classical fiction. The limits of the main characters are not vivid and the reader must be awake within the process. The name symbolism, generalizations and metaphors are used by the author as an abstraction tool. Even though the character loses his

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belief, the metaphorical identities are theological. This is a preference to underscore not an individualistic but a societal wound.

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