

Gönderim Tarihi: 23.12. 2024

Kabul Tarihi: 11.02.2025

DEBORDIAN PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY AND IDENTITY IN EŞİKTE BY MINE BAY

Mine Bay'ın Eşikte Romanında Debordcu Psikocoğrafya ve Kimlik

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Çalışmanın Türü: Araştırma

Öz

Bu çalışma, Mine Bay'ın Eşikte romanındaki psikocoğrafya kavramını ve bu kavramın roman kahramanı Adam'ın kimlik oluşumundaki rolünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, çağdaş edebiyat alanında psikocoğrafya ve kimlik temalarının kesiştiği noktada bir boşluğu doldurmayı hedeflemektedir. Romanın kahramanı Adam, bir ilkokul öğretmeni olarak tanıtılsa da asıl yolculuğu şehrin sokaklarında gerçekleşir. Guy Debord'un "dérive" kavramından hareketle, Adam'ın plansız dolaşımının içsel bir keşif sürecine dönüşümü incelenecektir. Şehrin gizli anlatıları, sabit sembolleri ve sürekli değişimi, Adam'ın kimlik arayışında bir labirent görevi görmektedir. Çalışmada, nitel bir analiz yöntemi kullanılacak ve Adam'ın iç monologları, şehirle etkileşimleri ve romanın genel atmosferi derinlemesine incelenecektir. Bu sayede, psikocoğrafik unsurların Adam'ın duygusal dünyası ve kimlik algısı üzerindeki etkileri ortaya çıkarılmaya çalışılacaktır. Ayrıca, "flâneur" kavramı ile psikocoğrafya arasındaki ilişki de incelenerek, Adam'ın şehirdeki dolaşımının, bu kavramın günümüzdeki karşılığını nasıl yansıttığı tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Duyusal deneyim, psikocoğrafya, dérive, kimlik oluşumu, kentsel keşif

Abstract

This study aims to examine the concept of psychogeography in Mine Bay's novel Eşikte and its role in shaping the identity of the novel's protagonist, Adam. The study seeks to fill a gap in contemporary literary scholarship at the intersection of psychogeography and identity. While the protagonist Adam is introduced as an elementary school teacher, his true journey unfolds within the urban landscape. Drawing upon Guy Debord's concept of "dérive," this study will investigate how Adam's unplanned wanderings transform into a process of inner exploration. The city's hidden narratives, fixed symbols, and constant flux serve as a labyrinth in Adam's quest for identity. Employing a qualitative analysis, this study will delve into Adam's interior monologues, interactions with the city, and the overall atmosphere of the novel. Through this analysis, the study seeks to uncover the impact of psychogeographic elements on Adam's emotional world and sense of identity. Furthermore, by examining the relationship between the concepts of psychogeography and the "flâneur," the study will explore how Adam's urban wanderings reflect contemporary interpretations of the "flâneur".

Keywords: Sensory Experience, Psychogeography, dérive, Identity Formation, Urban Exploration

1. INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY

In the intricate tapestry of urban environments lies the realm of psychogeography. Coined in the 1950s by the Lettrist Group (Coverley, 2006, p. 10), precursors to the Situationist International, the term analyses the environment on the individual. According to O'Rourke (2021), "drifting" was not confined to walking for the Lettrist. Their escapade began on a Gare de Lyon platform during a 1953 summer strike. Engaged in agitprop, they failed to win over stranded passengers for the strikers' cause. Guy Debord, Jean-Michel Menson, and their companions then exited the station. Flagging down cars, they embarked on a non-stop Parisian hitchhiking odyssey, spontaneously adapting their destinations to match the drivers'. Their aim, as Debord quipped sardonically, was to contribute to the general disarray.

Central to this concept is Guy Debord's influential definition: "the study of the specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals" (Debord, 2006b, p. 8). Psychogeography, at its core, acts as a bridge between psychology and geography, exploring how urban spaces shape human experiences and influence actions. Since its inception, interpretations of psychogeography have diversified, enriching the field with a range of perspectives (Debord, 2006b, p. 8). However, its core remains steadfast: to understand the intricate interplay between human consciousness and the built environment.

Psychogeography challenges conventional perceptions. It forces one to look beyond the familiar, highlighting forgotten or overlooked facets of urban landscapes. In doing so, it fosters a deeper connection between individuals and their surroundings (Ross, 2013, p. 5). At the heart of this approach lies the concept of "dérive," a French term meaning "drift," championed by Debord and the Situationists. "Dérive" involves purposefully wandering through urban spaces without a set destination. This practice aims to disrupt habitual patterns of movement and perception, allowing individuals to rediscover their environment through fresh, unfiltered perspectives (Lyons, 2017). This spontaneous exploration emphasizes the hidden narratives embedded within cityscapes. For Debord, "dérive" transcended mere wandering. It represented a deliberate act of disengagement from routine activities, enabling participants to be guided by the allure and magnetism of their surroundings (Debord, 2006a, p. 62). Through "dérive," psychogeography unveils the city's "psychogeographical contours"—persistent currents, fixed landmarks, and intense zones—that shape the experiences of those who traverse them (Debord, 2006a, p. 62).

The notion of the “flâneur,” originating from 19th-century French literature and popularized by Walter Benjamin, embodies a similar spirit of urban exploration. This figure, a detached yet observant wanderer, navigates city streets as both participant and spectator, uncovering the multifaceted layers of urban life (Stephen, 2013). Benjamin's interpretation underscores the “flâneur's” role in deciphering the complexities of modern urbanism, resonating with psychogeography's quest to decode the city's symbolic and social dimensions.

The roots of psychogeography can be traced back to the literary works of visionaries like William Blake, Daniel Defoe, Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, and Walt Whitman. These authors transformed cities into canvases, weaving social critique and introspective journeys into their narratives. Their explorations laid the foundation for psychogeography, a movement that continues to illuminate urban landscapes through the lens of human experience and creativity.

By digging into the urban psyche, psychogeography not only uncovers hidden truths within cityscapes but also fosters a profound reconnection between individuals and their environments. Through “dérive” and the spirit of the “flâneur,” psychogeography invites us to rediscover the cities we inhabit, encouraging reflection on our shared spaces and the narratives they hold. In the following exploration of Mine Bay's *Eşikte*, we study how psychogeography intertwines with identity, offering new insights into the dynamic relationship between individuals and the shifting landscapes they navigate.

2. EXPLORING THE LITERARY LANDSCAPE OF MINE BAY

Mine Bay is a contemporary Turkish novelist whose works focus on social issues, political realities, and the complexities of the human experience. Her novels are characterized by vivid settings, psychological depth, and a distinctive narrative style.

Bay's debut novel, *Kasaba* (The Town), published in 2017, established her as a voice unafraid to tackle sensitive themes. Set against the backdrop of the 1980s revolution in Türkiye, the novel blends elements of magical realism with social commentary. It portrays a town grappling with the upheaval of the revolution, highlighting the lawlessness, oppression, and societal changes that unfolded.

Kasaba is more than just a historical narrative. Bay imbues the setting with a fantastical quality. The town's nature, seasons, houses, streets, and even cobblestones become a character, creating a unique and otherworldly geography. This fantastical element serves to magnify the impact of the real-world events on the lives of the inhabitants.

The narrative structure of *Kasaba* is non-linear, weaving between past and present in a continuous loop. The large cast of characters and the simple, fairy-tale-like narration further contribute to the novel's captivating style.

Bay's second novel, *Eşikte* (On the Verge), published in 2019, marked a shift towards a more introspective exploration. The novel centres around child abuse on social media and its devastating impact on the protagonist. As the story progresses, the narrative delves into the protagonist's psychological turmoil, examining their struggle with guilt and the decision between succumbing to despair or choosing life.

Eşikte highlights Bay's growing mastery in crafting a dynamic narrative. The descriptions of places and their influence on the protagonist's emotional state become more potent. The protagonist's journey through the city becomes a metaphor for their inner exploration as they navigate their emotional landscape and contemplate their future.

Bay's 2020 novel, *Kesit* (Section), tackles the theme of religious indoctrination and the clash between tradition and modernity. The story revolves around a young girl raised in isolation by a religious order. When she is thrust into the modern world for the first time, she embarks on a journey of discovery, questioning the rigid traditions of her upbringing and comparing them to the world outside.

Kesit explores the themes of isolation, cultural differences, and the power of human connection. The unlikely friendships the young girl forms with two men from outside the religious order play a pivotal role in her exploration. Their conversations, described as taking place in a timeless cafe haven, become a space for shared perspectives, mutual understanding, and personal growth.

Bay's foray into short stories came with *Kestane'nin Düşü* (The Dream of Chestnut), published in 2022. This collection of seven stories explores a range of social issues, including the plight of the elderly, the burden of loneliness, the pressure of societal expectations, and the struggles of marginalized groups.

The stories in *Kestane'nin Düşü* offer a poignant and unflinching portrayal of contemporary Turkish society. Bay's keen observation and evocative storytelling bring these social realities to life, prompting reflection and empathy.

Bay's latest work, *Ulak* (The Messenger), published in 2023, marks a departure from fiction. This book is a compilation of her political essays and investigative reports published between 2019 and 2022. *Ulak* offers Bay's unique perspective on current affairs, political developments, and social issues in Türkiye. In addition to her own analyses, the book also includes reviews of books, travelogues, memoirs, and essays, highlighting the breadth of her intellectual curiosity.

Mine Bay's literary journey reflects a continuous exploration of themes, narrative styles, and genres. Her novels and stories offer a nuanced understanding of contemporary Turkish society, tackling complex issues with depth and sensitivity. As her work continues to evolve, Mine Bay undoubtedly stands as a prominent voice in the Turkish literary landscape.

3. DEBORDIAN PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY AND IDENTITY IN *EŞİKTE*

The novel begins when the protagonist, Adam, whose name carries symbolic weight, being both the first man in Western mythology and a common term for humanity in Turkish, and echoing the biblical Adam, expelled from Eden and grappling with a new reality, serves as a primary school teacher in a typical city situated in the heart of Anatolia and is on the brink of divorcing his wife, an art teacher, as she is cheating through social media on Adam with someone she's never met. She believes that they share similar backgrounds, as her lover is also an artist residing in Europe who devotes most of his working hours to exploring emerging talents (Bay, 2023, p. 51).

Adam returns home to find his house nearly emptied by his estranged wife, leaving him shocked and disoriented. Forced to sleep on the floor, his psychological state deteriorates, leading to a reclusive lifestyle. Only his friend Şadi offers unwavering support. Despite his personal struggles, Adam finds solace in his role as a teacher. He diligently guides his students, addressing their academic and personal challenges with care and empathy. His keen observation skills lead to the discovery that one of his students experiences synesthesia.

It is obvious from his statements that he and his best friend Şadi are extremely interested in travelling, and they visit different cities and countries whenever possible. Once he says to his wife, “We’ve traveled to so many places and experienced such diverse cultures and people that you would not believe” (Bay, 2023, p. 20).

Şadi, Adam's loyal friend, supports him generously, even buying him furniture. Feeling indebted, Adam plans a surprise visit. Using a key from his mother, he enters Şadi's home and discovers a horrifying truth: hundreds of photos of naked children on Şadi's computer. Disgusted and horrified, Adam, searching for familiar faces, stumbles upon images of a six-month-old baby, overwhelming him. This shattered his perception of his friend, plunging him into a moral crisis.

Unsure what to do, Adam saves the images onto a flash drive. He leaves, deeply disappointed, and grapples with inner conflict. He wants justice for Şadi's actions but also remembers their years of friendship. He decides to report Şadi to the police but discovers he has lost the flash drive. The police, unable to act without evidence, leave him helpless.

His sole purpose now is to find Şadi, who knew about the pictures and left the city, and to deliver justice with his own hands. While investigating where Şadi might have gone, some claim to have seen him in the city. This prompts Adam to decide to scour the streets and avenues in search of Şadi, taking the narrative into a different dimension. This pursuit, initially focused solely on finding Şadi, gradually transforms into a psychogeographical exploration. He begins to comb through every street and alley of the city, looking for Şadi but also encountering the city's underbelly and its forgotten inhabitants. This unexpected journey not only leads him to Şadi but also helps him discover the city, its previously ignored inhabitants, and ultimately, himself.

Just as Debord (2006a) claimed, expressing his views on psychogeography and psychogeographers, until that day Adam was like many other city dwellers who are so focused on their daily routines that they fail to notice the world around them. He rushes from home to work and back again, only paying attention to the most basic aspects of his surroundings. In his work-and-consume-based life, he only takes in certain parts of the urban world when he is traveling through the city or going from one place to another for work. Adam starts his process of psychogeographical trips by visiting the flea market:

He had discovered that a flea market was set up two streets away every week, and he made it a point to go there and explore. Even if he didn't buy anything, he enjoyed spending time in this peculiar place that reminded her of a fairground. He stood in front of a man who had haphazardly arranged his goods on a dirty, wrinkled cloth, sat cross-legged, and eagerly ate tomatoes while waiting for customers. He stopped and watched the man out of the corner of her eye, pretending to browse through old and worn-out items (Bay, 2023, p. 112).

As an emblematic drifter defined by Debord (Debord, 2006a), he abandons his typical routines, social connections, and preconceived notions of how to spend his time. He allows himself to be guided by the appeal of his surroundings and the chance encounters he comes across, embracing the unknown and unplanned. In contrast, he aims to experience those often overlooked and unnoticed places within our living environment as he wanders aimlessly, rather than focusing on the spaces emphasized by the spectacle-driven society. Psychogeography plays a significant role in connecting Adam more deeply with his urban surroundings. It offers an opportunity to escape the pressures of our fast-paced lives, encouraging him to pause, observe, reflect on our emotional responses to the environment, and ponder our interconnectedness with it. This emphasis on urbanism, as Wark (2011) states, is central to the situationist perspective because they believe in the profound connection between physical space and human consciousness.

Adam, wearing the clothes he bought from the flea market, which are the same as those worn by municipal cleaning workers, begins to roam the streets with a broom in his hand. He assures himself that he will locate Şâdi, even if it requires thoroughly exploring every street in the city, pausing in front of each house to observe, and pursuing the faces of passersby as they stream down the sidewalks like a river (Bay, 2023, p. 119).

For the first time in his life, “he wanted to observe the recently restored medreses from a distance at sunrise, which the townspeople considered their paternal home, a place around which they orbited and eventually gathered” (Bay, 2023, p. 121), despite having lived in the city since birth. This act of deliberate distancing marks a psychogeographical rupture, as Adam begins to detach himself from the lifestyle and cognitive frameworks imposed by the social structure. Through this detachment, he starts to reassess events he had previously witnessed but never truly contemplated or observed from a critical, distanced perspective.

A striking example of this psychogeographical awakening occurs during a meeting held by the ruling party. Adam, wearing the uniform of a city sanitation worker, is barred from entering the meeting venue. Undeterred, he adopts the role of an observer, akin to a “flâneur,” determined to witness the political performance with the fresh eyes of a moviegoer or theatre enthusiast. By pretending to clean the surroundings, he transforms the urban space into a stage, where the politicians become actors in a theatrical spectacle. This act of subversive observation underscores the interplay between the city’s fixed symbols—such as the medreses and the political meeting space—and its fluid, performative dynamics.

Adam’s engagement with the city reflects key components of psychogeography: the “dérive,” or unplanned drift through urban spaces, which allows him to recontextualize familiar environments; the emotional and psychological impact of the city’s hidden narratives and power structures; and the role of the “flâneur” as a detached yet deeply engaged observer. His actions reveal how the urban landscape functions as both a labyrinth and a catalyst for identity formation, where the interplay of space, power, and performance shapes his evolving sense of self. Through this lens, the city becomes not merely a backdrop but an active participant in Adam’s psychogeographical journey, challenging him to navigate its contradictions and uncover its latent meanings.

As a “flâneur” described by Benjamin (Stephen, 2013), Adam is transformed day by day into a symbol of powerful awareness within the modern urban activity—someone who is part detective, exploring the city’s intricacies rather than his so-called friend Şâdi, while also embodying the alienation essential in urban life and capitalism. He not only observes the streets, buildings, parks, and all the other places in the city with fresh eyes, but he also starts to redefine the people he encounters in the city.

He was not only acquainted with the regulars at the cafe from a couple of neighborhoods; he also engaged with the people in the streets, becoming familiar with individuals whose names he could recall, gaining deeper insights into their sorrows, happiness, aspirations, and daily lives as time went by. The warm relationships he established with neighbourhood shopkeepers are among the best examples of this. Before deciding to aimlessly search for Şâdi in the streets, his relationship with shopkeepers had never extended beyond that of a seller-customer or a teacher-parent relationship. “What he enjoyed the most was when, during the midday hours, he worked while sweating profusely, and the regulars from the nearby

alleys' coffeehouses would say, 'You're tired; come take a break and have our tea' (Bay, 2023, p. 126). The locals were fond of engaging in conversation with him, not as a teacher or a customer as it was in the past but as a worker on the streets, vying with one another to showcase their renowned Anatolian empathy. As they gestured and called out invitingly, "Join us!," Adam knew that they would always offer him something to eat. Their generosity knew no bounds, as they would proffer a variety of dishes, ranging from mouth-watering meatball sandwiches to savoury chicken burritos. And if by chance they had nothing on hand, they would not hesitate to request a slice of freshly baked bread from someone passing by (126).

Despite the novel keeping the city's name shrouded in secrecy, clues are scattered throughout the narrative. We learn that this rural town is not nestled in a valley or on the coast. Instead, it sits perched at a high elevation, a detail that hints at a place like Sivas City, Türkiye. This altitude brings with it distinct seasons. Winters grip the town tightly, their icy fingers etching a chill that lingers. But when spring finally arrives, it is a revelation. Unlike other regions where spring unfolds gradually, here it bursts forth in a vibrant spectacle, a unique display that speaks to the town's resilience and its ability to bloom even in the face of harsh conditions.

The speaker acknowledges that a city cannot stay deserted even with an exodus of residents. Buildings, streets, and workplaces still stand. The city also attracts newcomers from villages, creating a two-way flow of migration. This rapid demographic shift is a challenge for those who move from rural areas to urban centres. It takes multiple generations to fully adjust to a new city environment. But what happens in a city experiencing both a large influx from villages and a loss of its established population? The argument is that instead of adapting, the newcomers will reshape the city itself (Bay, 2023, p. 31).

Adam's initial perception of the city is a mental map – familiar, yet demonstrably inaccurate. A dream and his subsequent exploration challenge this map, revealing a more intricate and layered reality beneath the surface. This act of questioning his preconceived notions exemplifies a core principle of psychogeography. By encouraging a critical engagement with the urban environment, psychogeographers like Adam do shed light on the hidden narratives embedded within the city's fabric.

Techniques like "dérive" (wandering aimlessly) and "drift" (following chance encounters) are fundamental tools for psychogeographers exploring a city's hidden depths. Fuelled by a newfound curiosity sparked by

his dream, Adam takes to the streets in a form of “dérive”. This act transcends mere sightseeing; it allows him to discover not only hidden aspects of the city but also facets of himself he never knew existed. The city transforms from a static backdrop to his life into an active participant in his journey of self-discovery. Each chance encounter becomes a brushstroke on this evolving canvas. The little girl with the old ribbon, a constant presence, might hold a key memory or represent a yearning for a simpler time. Cengâver (The Warrior), the strong and determined recycling worker, embodies resilience in the face of urban challenges, mirroring a strength Adam needs to cultivate. The old bagel seller, a fixture on a street named for his wares, might represent a sense of rootedness Adam seeks. Through these encounters, the city becomes a mirror reflecting not just its own complexities but also the unexpected aspects of Adam's own identity.

Adam's quest to find Şadi bore a striking resemblance to the situation of Nabi, a student in his fifth-grade class. As a sign of this resemblance and association of the child with himself, he has a dream in which

He was a small boy clad in a crisp black uniform with a gleaming white collar, a student in elementary school. Lost in a sea of faces, he sat alone in the very back of the bustling classroom. An urgent need to use the restroom gnawed at him, and he fought valiantly to contain the impending release. Just as the tension reached its peak, the piercing sound of the recess bell sliced through the air, sending a flurry of orange triangles dancing across the room (Bay, 2023, p. 60).

Desperate to find a cause for Nabi's undiagnosed condition, Adam throws himself into research, hoping to alleviate the boy's suffering. Using his smartphone, he devours dozens of articles, even stumbling upon master's theses, all on the topics of common childhood psychological disorders and the behavioural patterns of abused children (Bay, 2023, p. 59). In this segment of the story, Adam's search for answers to his dream's perplexing imagery leads him to a groundbreaking discovery—the concept of synesthesia. “Now everything falls into place. In this disease, one sense perceives another sense, and the brain transforms sounds into visuals and visuals into sounds. In addition, they started having difficulties in finding direction and determining which side the left and right were on (Bay, 2023, pp. 60-61).

The child, like a robot vacuum cleaner that needs to map its surroundings before cleaning, wanders around aimlessly, lost and confused, unsure of what to do or where to go. Adam's predicament was not unlike that

of a child lost in a labyrinth, aimlessly wandering the streets without a clear plan or direction. Just as the child needs to mentally map out the maze to find their way, Adam, too, needs to reconstruct the city's psychological landscape in his mind with his attempt to locate Şadi.

In the aftermath of these profound revelations, Adam finds himself drawn to the city's streets, seizing every opportunity to wander and immerse himself in the urban landscape and its inhabitants. He begins to realize that the city he has called home for years is, in fact, a stranger to him. The image of the city he has long held in his mind is starkly different from the one that is now unfolding before him as he traverses its streets with a newfound purpose. "Then, he would randomly choose a street or avenue and, in his own way, determine where it started and where it ended. He would outline the boundaries in her mind and then earnestly begin cleaning within those imaginary limits" (Bay, 2023, p. 128).

Despite having walked these streets countless times in his so-called search for Şadi—knowing the residents by name and being certain Şadi is not there—Adam feels compelled to revisit them daily, finding a peculiar satisfaction in meandering aimlessly through the same four streets. Adam has given nicknames to four streets in his neighbourhood each of which has a distinct character: Children's Street is a haven for children with unique pathways and green spaces for them to play freely. Ribboned Girl Street is a bustling market side street with a large mosque. Adam often sees a mother and her young daughter with an old ribbon in her hair there, persistently asking for something. Cengâver Street is home to government workers, with rows of apartment buildings and parked cars. Adam calls it Cengâver Street because of a young, strong recycling worker with curly hair who skilfully sorts through the overflowing dumpsters. Turkish Bagel (Simit) Street is characterized by seven-story apartment buildings with their own gardens, connected by narrow, winding paths. Unlike most neighbourhoods, children here have the freedom to play outdoors. Adam enjoys wandering aimlessly through this maze-like street, in which he comes across an old man who sells Turkish bagels.

Psychogeography emphasizes the emotional impact of a place. Adam's experience exemplifies how a city can be a source of both confusion and disorientation, represented by the labyrinth metaphor, and discovery and connection. The city's layout, its inhabitants, and the everyday interactions that occur within its walls all contribute to a complex emotional response. As Adam digs deeper into the urban landscape, his emotional connection to the city deepens.

This emotional journey is not always comfortable. His initial exploration through “*dérive*” can be disorienting, like navigating a labyrinth. The unfamiliar streets, the cacophony of sounds, and the sheer number of people can be overwhelming. Yet, amidst this confusion, moments of connection emerge. His regular encounters with the old bagel seller, a fixture on Turkish Bagel Street, spark a curiosity about the man's life beyond his daily routine. One day, on a whim, Adam invites the seller, hesitant at first, to a fancy restaurant across town. This act of crossing social boundaries exemplifies the way psychogeography can foster connection. The upscale restaurant, a stark contrast to the seller's usual environment, creates an initial sense of unease for both men. However, as they share stories and navigate the unfamiliar menu together, a deeper understanding develops. Adam learns about the seller's struggles and triumphs, his family history intertwined with the city's own. The seller, in turn, gains a glimpse into a world he would not normally access. This shared experience, born from Adam's psychogeographical exploration, transcends social divides and strengthens their emotional connection to both the city and each other.

The encounters demonstrate the city's ability to evoke a range of emotions – confusion, curiosity, discomfort, and ultimately, connection (Mazlum, 2023). As Adam delves deeper into the urban fabric, these emotional responses become more nuanced, painting a richer picture of his relationship with the city and its inhabitants. Take, for example, Children's Street. For most, it might be a haven of green spaces and playful shouts. But for Adam, the unique pathways might evoke a sense of movement, the laughter of children translating into a vibrant melody in his mind. Similarly, the overflowing dumpsters on Cengâver Street would not just be a visual reminder of waste but a cacophony of metallic clangs and acrid smells, amplifying the struggle of the young recycling worker, Cengâver. These synesthetic experiences would not just paint a more vivid picture of the city but also heighten his empathy for its inhabitants.

The little girl with the old ribbon in her hair is another intriguing detail. While her exact significance remains unclear, her repeated presence could be a recurring visual element that triggers a specific memory or emotion within Adam's synesthetic experience. Perhaps the colour of the ribbon, or the way it flutters in the breeze, unlocks a forgotten fragment of his own childhood, weaving a deeper connection between him and the city's past.

Adam's exploration becomes a multi-layered sensory experience. The sights, sounds, and smells of the city are not just perceived but

potentially translated into a richer tapestry of emotions and memories through his synesthesia. This unique perspective allows him to connect with the city on a profound level, surpassing the surface interactions of a typical resident. His psychogeographical journey becomes a constant dance between the city's external reality and his own internal world, shaped by his heightened senses.

In conclusion, Adam's journey through the city, guided by the principles of psychogeography, is a testament to the transformative power of our urban environments. By encouraging us to question our preconceived notions and engage with the city in a more mindful way, psychogeography offers a valuable tool for self-discovery and a deeper understanding of the places we call home.

As Adam reconnects with the city and its inhabitants, his initial goals – finding and punishing Şadi and forgetting his wife's abandonment – fade away. He stands on the verge of a new life, drawn to a woman in red shoes he encounters daily, leaving her young daughter with a babysitter. He begins to think about her, trying to understand her. “After searching for Şadi at Çerkez's Coffee House, he would quickly pass by Banks Street, a street lined with banks one after the other, just to see if the Woman with the Red Shoes was there (Bay, 2023, p. 148). He feels ready to start a new life, hoping to rekindle the one he lost with his wife. He even writes a letter to Woman with the Red Shoes to inform her about his feelings, and although she harshly rebukes him in her reply, this act itself is a sign of his renewed engagement with life.

Adam's relationship with the two recycling workers, Cemile and Cengâver, exemplifies not only his personal transformation but also the power of acknowledging the often-invisible members of society. This relationship, which begins with observing Cengâver as he checks the rubbish containers at regular intervals, transcends a mere transactional one. Adam progresses from simply noticing Cengâver to greeting him, fostering a connection. Cengâver's emotional response to this simple act underscores the profound impact of being seen and acknowledged. As he says, “When you said “may it be easy” to me, I felt happy because of it. I was so happy that I almost collapsed to the ground and cried, buddy! Someone saw me, treated me like a human, and greeted me, and I was going to cry for that, buddy!” (Bay, 2023, pp. 153-154). This quote encapsulates the significance of Adam's gesture. A simple greeting dismantles Cengâver's invisibility and validates his humanity, a stark contrast to how society often overlooks him and his work. This newfound connection paves the way for Adam to meet

and befriend Cemile as well. His bond with these people grows so strong that he eventually gives Cemile all his belongings in the house.

At the end of the story, when his wife returns and delivers the news that Şadi, for whom he has been searching for months, has abandoned the city and ventured to a foreign land, he resolves to terminate his professional activities and establish a completely new life as a blank slate. However, he remains ignorant of the measures he must take to ensure his continued existence. He explains his decision to Cengâver, who has come to visit him out of concern, as follows:

My brave Cengâver, I've decided. I'm no longer going to sweep the streets. I remember telling you about a man I was searching for and even showed you, his picture. I've lost hope of finding him; he must have gone somewhere else. School is about to reopen, and I can't teach. I need to find another job (Bay, 2023, p. 192).

As the summer vacation draws to a close, Adam realizes he needs to go to school and resign from his job. He shaves his beard, puts on his new clothes, and sets off for school. However, when he turns on his phone, which he has not opened in a long time, he learns from the messages that his mother has passed away. His relatives had been trying to reach him for a long time but were unable to. His obsession with finding Şadi and his adventure of rediscovering the city and its inhabitants had prevented him from being reached when his mother was on her deathbed.

Wandering aimlessly, unsure of what to do next, Adam suddenly comes face to face with Şadi, for whom he's been searching for months. He freezes in his tracks. The novel ends with Şadi's words: "Brother! It's been so long; your anger must have subsided. You know, neither you can give up on me nor I on you," as he opens his arms and walks towards the man with a smile. Adam realizes that he's not dreaming; Şadi is real."

The novel ends with many unanswered questions. The reader is left to wonder what happens next, whether Adam forgives Şadi, and how his relationship with his wife, who is present in the final scene, will unfold. The only certainty is that Adam is no longer the same person he was at the beginning of the story.

The only thing that is certain is that Adam's quest to find Şadi has not only led him to rediscover the city and its inhabitants but has also embarked on a new journey of self-discovery. This journey has transformed

both the city, its people, and his own sense of self, imbuing them with new meanings.

Author Mine Bay leaves the rest of the story to the reader's imagination and interpretation. Adam's quest to find Şadi has not only led him to rediscover the city and its inhabitants but has also embarked on a new journey of self-discovery. This journey has transformed both the city, its people, and his own sense of self, imbuing them with new meanings.

4. CONCLUSION

In *Eşikte*, Mine Bay masterfully employs psychogeography to explore how urban landscapes shape and transform individuals, particularly through the journey of protagonist Adam. The novel delves deeply into the ways in which the city is not merely a backdrop but an active force that influences perception, emotions, and identity.

Adam's descent into personal crisis—triggered by betrayal in his marriage and the shocking revelation of Şadi's secret—becomes the catalyst for his psychogeographical exploration. His retreat from his former life leads him to navigate the city in a state of “dérive,” wandering through its spaces in search of both Şadi and a renewed sense of self. This act of drifting allows Adam to experience the city as a dynamic, shifting entity, where each encounter and location offers new insights into both his inner world and the sociocultural forces at play.

Bay's depiction of urban space goes beyond surface-level descriptions, emphasizing the emotional and psychological effects of modern cityscapes. Adam's journey is marked by moments of alienation and nostalgia, highlighting how the impersonal, fragmented nature of contemporary urbanization can evoke a longing for lost histories and a sense of belonging. The novel also interrogates how certain spaces—whether neglected alleyways or bustling avenues—carry the weight of memory and emotion, shaping human behavior in subtle but profound ways.

Throughout his wanderings, Adam encounters locations such as *Children's Street*, *Ribboned Girl Street*, and *Cengâver Street*, each imbued with distinct symbolic significance. These places function not only as physical settings but as narrative devices that illuminate broader themes of social change, exclusion, and resistance. His interactions with these spaces reveal how urban environments function as both repositories of history and arenas for personal transformation. The novel underscores the ways in which the aesthetics and structure of the city affect mood and cognition,

demonstrating how architecture, movement, and sensory stimuli influence the individual's lived experience.

A crucial aspect of Adam's psychogeographical engagement is his heightened sensory perception, particularly his experience of synesthesia. This unique characteristic allows him to interpret the city through overlapping sensory impressions, where sights evoke sounds and textures generate emotions. For instance, the cacophony of a marketplace may materialize as a swirl of colours, while the decayed facade of a building may carry the resonance of a sorrowful tune. By portraying the city as an immersive, multisensory experience, Bay deepens the reader's understanding of how physical spaces shape not only movement but also affective states.

The novel also explores themes of urban alienation and unexpected connections. Adam's encounters with figures such as Cemile, Cengâver, and the woman in red shoes highlight the role of chance interactions in reshaping one's perspective on both the self and society. These relationships emerge organically from the urban milieu, reinforcing the idea that cities, despite their vastness and anonymity, foster moments of intimacy, solidarity, and meaning. A fleeting conversation with a street vendor may unveil an entire hidden community, while a shared moment with a stranger in a park may redefine one's sense of place and belonging.

Moreover, Bay critically examines the impact of modern urban development, particularly its tendency to strip cities of their historical and emotional richness. The novel suggests that the sterile, impersonal architecture of contemporary cityscapes fosters a sense of disconnection, further complicating the relationship between individuals and their environments. However, Adam's journey demonstrates that even within these cold and fragmented spaces, one can cultivate new forms of engagement, rediscovering the city's latent potential for wonder, nostalgia, and self-discovery.

In conclusion, *Eşikte* exemplifies the transformative power of psychogeography, urging readers to reconsider their own relationships with urban environments. Bay presents the city not as a passive setting but as an active participant in shaping human experiences, encouraging deeper observation and interaction with the spaces we inhabit. The novel challenges us to navigate our surroundings with curiosity and empathy, revealing the profound ways in which urban landscapes influence identity, memory, and emotional life. As Adam reaches the threshold of a new beginning, *Eşikte* leaves us with a lasting appreciation for the interconnectedness of personal

and spatial transformation, demonstrating that the city is not only a physical entity but a living, breathing force that continuously shapes and is shaped by those who move through it.

5. SUMMARY

Mine Bay's novel *Eşikte* provides a compelling exploration of psychogeography within the context of contemporary Turkish society. The novel centres around Adam, a protagonist grappling with personal turmoil after his wife's infidelity. Devastated and adrift, Adam embarks on a journey of self-discovery that intertwines with a deeper exploration of his urban surroundings. This journey, characterized by aimless wandering and heightened sensory awareness, reflects the core principles of psychogeography—the study of how the built environment influences human emotions and behavior.

Initially, Adam's response to his wife's betrayal is one of isolation and withdrawal. He retreats into himself, struggling to cope with the emotional turmoil. However, a series of unexpected events, including the discovery of his friend's disturbing secret, propel him onto the streets. Driven by a combination of grief, anger, and a desperate need to find meaning, Adam begins to wander aimlessly, engaging in a form of “dérive” – the deliberate act of aimless wandering championed by the Situationist International.

This seemingly aimless wandering soon transforms into a deeper exploration of his urban environment. Adam starts to notice details he had previously overlooked: the intricate patterns on the cobblestones, the subtle shifts in light and shadow, and the rhythms of daily life unfolding before him. He becomes acutely aware of the city's inhabitants – the street vendors, the recycling workers, and the elderly woman sitting on a park bench. These encounters, initially fleeting and insignificant, gradually begin to weave a tapestry of human connection.

As Adam's exploration deepens, he starts to experience the city through a heightened sensory lens. The sights, sounds, and smells of the city are not just perceived but translated into a richer tapestry of emotions and memories. He begins to notice the way the sunlight filters through the leaves of a particular tree, the sound of a distant prayer call echoing through the streets, and the aroma of freshly baked bread wafting from a nearby bakery. These sensory experiences, combined with his heightened emotional state, create a unique and profound connection with the urban environment.

The novel masterfully depicts how the city itself becomes a character, influencing Adam's emotional journey. The labyrinthine streets, the bustling markets, the quiet corners of forgotten parks – each location evokes a unique emotional response within Adam. He experiences moments of disorientation and confusion, but also moments of profound connection and unexpected joy. His encounters with other city dwellers, particularly the recycling workers Cemile and Cengâver, highlight the importance of acknowledging and valuing the often-invisible members of society. These interactions, born from his psychogeographical exploration, foster a sense of empathy and connection that transcends social divides.

Through Adam's journey, Mine Bay demonstrates the transformative power of urban exploration. By encouraging us to question our preconceived notions and engage with the city in a more mindful way, psychogeography offers a valuable tool for self-discovery and a deeper understanding of the places we call home. *Eşikte* serves as a poignant reminder that the city is more than just a collection of buildings and streets; it is a living, breathing organism that shapes our experiences, influences our emotions, and ultimately contributes to the formation of our identities.

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Çatışma Beyanı: Bu çalışma ile ilgili taraf olabilecek herhangi bir kişi ya da kurum ile finansal ilişkilerimin bulunmadığını dolayısıyla herhangi bir çıkar çatışmasının olmadığını beyan ederim.

Destek ve teşekkür: Çalışmada herhangi bir kurum ya da kuruluştan destek alınmamıştır.

