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THE REFLECTION OF COVID-19 IN LITERARY WORKS: THE SAMPLE OF SHORT STORY[1]

Muhammed Fatih SAYIR[2] & Nurullah AYDIN[3]

Abstract

Although it is not on the agenda these days, COVID-19 affected the whole world between 2020 and 2022. This disease, which spread to the whole world in a short time and turned into a pandemic, was an extraordinary experience for humanity. Restriction decisions taken by governments, use of masks, social distance, and various hygiene rules entered our lives with COVID-19. COVID-19 caused many people to lose their lives, and because of the social and economic difficulties during pandemic people had difficult times. It is very possible that this disease, which affected all areas of life, also have reflections in literary works. In this study, The 2021 Story Yearbook of Edebiyat Ortamı magazine published in Türkiye was examined in this context. In the study, document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used.While examining the story yearbook, the characteristics of the COVID-19 disease and its effects on society were taken into consideration. In the story yearbook, which contains 78 stories published in different literary magazines in 2020, it has been seen that there are 5 stories referring to COVID-19. These stories are Gelip Geçenin Sözü, Zor Günler Daha Zor Geçer, Virüs, Korona Günleri, and Korona Günlükleri. In these stories, which were examined in terms of the reflections of COVID-19, it was determined that the authors handled different aspects of the pandemic in their works. The presence of five stories related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the relevant story yearbook can be considered as a sign that similar literary works may be written in the future.

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[2]Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Gazetecilik Bölümü, Basın Yayın Tekniği Anabilim Dalı, f.sayir@alparslan.edu.tr, Orcid: 0000-0002-6347-8760
[3]Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Atatürk Üniversitesi Kazım Karabekir Eğitim Fakültesi Türkçe ve Sosyal Bilimler Eğtimi Bölümü, Türkçe Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı, nurullah.aydin@atauni.edu.tr, Orcid: 0000-0003-2522-7765

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Edebi Eserlerde Covid-19'un Yansımaları: Kısa Öykü Örneği

Öz

Son günlerde gündemde olmasa da, COVİD-19 2020-2022 yılları arasında tüm dünyayı etkisi altına aldı. Kısa sürede tüm dünyaya yayılan ve pandemiye dönüşen bu hastalık, insanlık için olağanüstü bir deneyim oldu. Hükümetlerin aldığı kısıtlama kararları, maske kullanımı, sosyal mesafe ve çeşitli hijyen kuralları COVİD-19 ile hayatımıza girdi. COVİD-19'dan ötürü pek çok kişi hayatını kaybetti ve pandemi sürecinde yaşanan sosyal ve ekonomik sorunlar insanların zor günler geçirmesine neden oldu. Hayatın her alanını etkileyen bu hastalığın edebi eserlerde yansımalarının olması oldukça muhtemeldir. Bu çalışmada Türkiye'de yayımlanan Edebiyat Ortamı dergisinin 2021 Öykü Yıllığı bu bağlamda incelenmiştir. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden döküman analizine başvurulmuştur. Öykü yıllığı incelenirken COVİD-19 hastalığının özellikleri ve toplum üzerindeki etkileri dikkate alınmıştır. 2020 yılında farklı edebiyat dergilerinde yayımlanan 78 öykünün yer aldığı öykü yıllığında COVİD-19'un ele alındığı 5 öykü tespit edilmiştir. Bu öyküler Gelip Geçenin Sözü, Zor Günler Daha Zor Geçer, Virüs, Korona Günleri ve Korona Günlükleri'dir. COVİD-19'un yansımaları açısından incelenen bu öykülerde yazarların eserlerinde pandeminin farklı yönlerini ele aldıkları görülmüştür. Sonuç olarak ilgili hikâye yıllığında COVİD-19 salgınıyla ilgili beş hikâyenin yer almış olması, gelecekte benzer edebi eserlerin yazılabileceğinin bir işareti olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: COVID-19, Edebiyat Ortamı 2021 Öykü Yıllığı, Yansıma, Edebi Eserler, Kısa Öykü.

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 disease, which emerged at the end of 2019 and was accepted as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020 (WHO, 2020), had affected the whole world for more than two years. This fatal virus had affected every aspect of life and caused many changes in people's lives. The rapid spread of the virus had made it necessary for governments and individuals to take various measures. While governments introduced closure decisions and travel restrictions to prevent the spread of the disease, individuals had sacrificed their social lives to avoid catching disease.

When the literature on Covid-19 is examined, it is seen that pandemic impacted nearly every aspect of life, including education, social life, the economy, and tourism. Research in the field of education indicates that Covid-19 led to the

closure of schools and universities (Tarkar, 2020), a shift to online learning environments (Tadesse & Muluye, 2020), and heightened anxiety among students (Hoofman & Secord, 2021). In addition, the closures and travel restrictions during the pandemic period affected people's social lives adversely (Haleem, et al., 2020; Ammar, et al., 2020) and contributed to significant challenges within the tourism sector (Škare, et al., 2021). Moreover, workforce reductions, transportation and supply challenges during the pandemic affected economy negatively (Suskind & Vines, 2020).

Considering the effects of the disease and what happened during the pandemic period, it can be thought that COVID-19, has also affected the world of art.

On the one hand artists affect the society through their different perspectives and sensitivities thanks to their works; on the other hand they are affected by the events and phenomena. The painting *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso is an example of this. Picasso drew this painting, which unrolls the brutal face of the war, by influencing the Spanish civil war between 1936 and 1939 (Rhodes, 2013, p.19). The Vietnam War can be shown as an example in the art of music with the changes it caused in American music (Arnold, 1991, pp.317-318). In this sense, Stendhal's description of the novel in *The Red and the Black* as "a mirror you take for a walk down the road" (Sthendal, 2003, p.53) explains the function of art in the context of the novel.

Literature is one of the branches of art which is affected by the events that have a profound effect on society. Ernest Hemingway, who participated in the First World War as a Red Cross volunteer on the Italian front, is one of the prominent writers in this context. The novel *A Farewell to Arms* by the author is a work that reflects his experiences and feelings during the war (Vernon, 2013, p.388). The novel *Love in The Days of Cholera* by Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who suffered from cholera and malaria many times in his life (Soriano, 2020: 321), can be thought as reflection of the cholera epidemic in the 19th century to literature (Jones, 1997, pp.1169-1172). Besides, the *A Journal of The Plague Year*, written by Daniel Defoe centuries ago, is a fictional work that also has a documentary quality about the plague epidemic broke out in London in 1665 (Defoe, 1904).

Of course, it is not necessary for an author to experience an event or subject in order to write a work on it. Nobel Prize-winning author Orhan Pamuk can be given as an example. In an interview about his novel *Veba Geceleri (Plague Nights)* Pamuk said;

> *In the plague epidemic, I was thinking about both death and the reaction of tradesmen, religious people and secularists against the epidemic, and*

> *the reaction of those close to science, their fights with each other and their contradictions. For the last 10 years, how the quarantine is kept, how people opposed the quarantine, how they rebelled, these issues started to interest me. There were also quarantine riots in the world. Mostly in Europe. Today we all know about microbes. But in the 19th century, people didn't believe them because the microbe was found gropely. I wanted to deal with these issues. As a result, my novel also dealt with the history of quarantine and these issues (Pamuk, 2021)*[1].

As it can be understood from the examples in question, the reflections of the events that affect the society are seen in literary works. The reflection of the COVID-19 pandemic in literary works is a subject worth examining. In this study, The Edebiyat Ortamı Magazine 2021 Story Yearbook (Eraslan, 2021), which has been published in Türkiye since March 1, 2008, was examined in the context of the reflections of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 story yearbook contains stories that were published in the literary magazines in 2020.

METHOD

This study is a qulatative research study. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016, p.41) in qualitative research, data collection methods such as observation, interviews, and document analysis are employed and a qualitative process is followed to present perceptions and events in a realistic and holistic way in their natural environment. The data colection method of study is document analysis. "Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating both printed and electronic documents… it requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge" (Bowen, 2009, p.27).

The Document Examined Within the Scope of the Study

The document examined in this study is The Edebiyat Ortamı Magazine 2021 Story Yearbook. The reason for choosing the story yearbook of the magazine is that it has published a story yearbook every year since 2011. However Edebiyat Ortamı Magazine could not publish the 2022 story yearbook due to economic concern. Essentially, we aimed to examine the 2021 and 2022 story yearbooks, because the COVID-19 pandemic was most effective at these times, we could only examine the story yearbook of 2021.

Data Collection and Analysis

In the data collection process of the study, the researchers first aimed to identify stories related to COVID-19 in the story yearbook. In this context, the relevant

story yearbook was read by the researchers and stories related to COVID-19 were identified. The identified stories were analyzed using the descriptive analysis method. “In descriptive analysis, the collected data are summarized and interpreted based on predefined themes” (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p. 239).

While examining the story yearbook, the characteristics of the COVID-19 disease and its effects on society were taken into consideration. One of the biggest features of the COVID-19 pandemic was that it could spread quickly. This feature of the disease had caused governments to take measures such as closures, travel restrictions and interruption of face-to-face education. As a result of these restrictions, people could not travel freely, shop, and continue their education as before pandemic. The rapid spread feature had also caused individuals to make changes in their social lives. For example, family visits were reduced to a minimum. Another feature of this virus was that it could have more deadly effects in the elderly and people with diseases such as asthma, cardiac trouble, and high blood pressure. Therefore, people in the disadvantaged group against this disease had been affected more intensely. As a result of scientific studies, one of the features of COVID-19 was that the possibility of catching the virus was reduced when social distancing was observed and hygiene rules were followed. This feature had ensured people to pay attention to hygiene and maintain social distance when they were together.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The Reflection of COVID-19 in 2021 Story Yearbook of the Edebiyat Ortamı Magazine

There are 78 stories in 2021 Story Yearbook of the Edebiyat Ortamı Magazine but only five of these stories contain messages related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These stories are Gelip Geçenin Sözü, Zor Günler Daha Zor Geçer, Virüs, Korona Günleri, and Korona Günlükleri.

Gelip Geçenin Sözü (The Word of the Passerby)

The story "The Word of the Passerby", written by Cihan Aktaş, is in the 367th issue of Dergah Magazine, published in September 2020. When the story is examined in the context of the reflections of COVID-19, it is seen that the difficulties experienced by three siblings who take care of their elderly parents during the pandemic are mentioned.

The pandemic changes the routines of the siblings who take care of their parents and they are not as comfortable as pre-pandemic period: “Before the pandemic

started, I barely took him out once a week, so he could wander around the nearby market" and "We were doing well until the pandemic. The three siblings were coming in turn, sometimes I would take them (parents) to my own house" (Eraslan, 2021, p.85)[2].

It is understood that the emotion felt by the heroes of the story after the pandemic is anxiety. The siblings who take care of their parents pay attention to social distance with the fear of infecting them with the virus: "My mother feels sorry for my sister Ayşegül. For weeks she had been gliding through the door like a shadow, doing everything, cooking, cleaning, with a smile from afar." (p.86). Also, "My mom said she has asthma, I don't want her to come again." (p. 86) shows that the mother is also worrying about her daughter, who is in the disadvantaged group against the disease.

Another reason for concern of siblings who take care of their parents is the possibility of their parents catching the virus in the village, where they spend a part of the year: "If they can go to the village, they will try to talk to more people with the lesson they learned from the pandemic, the garden door will always be open." (p.88). The expression "They will not wear masks." (p.88), which is used for the villagers, reveals that probability of parents catching the virus in the village is high.

These statements by the protagonist: "My little boy has a congenital rhythm disorder in his heart, and when this pandemic breaks out, his mother is very stressed, in case we have to go to the hospital." (p.87) shows his and his wife's concern for their child, who belongs to a disadvantaged group in terms of vulnerability to the disease. However, the sentence "When I get home, I close myself directly to the bathroom, I fill my clothes in the washing machine and take a shower." (p.87) shows the precautions he takes with the fear of infecting his child with the virus.

Zor Günler Daha Da Zor Geçer (Hard Days Pass Even Harder)

The story *"Hard Days Pass Even Harder"* written by Emine Şimşek is in the 46th issue of İzdiham Magazine, published in September 2020. The author used the flashback technique, which is frequently encountered in literary works, especially in novels. In the story, the main character, who is very fond of his father, returns from 2026 to 2020 and tells about her father's corona virus, the treatment process, and what happened. In the story, the author narrates the people's fear of losing their relatives who are in the disadvantaged group against the disease during the COVID-19 pandemic, through the character who plays the role of narrator.

One day the protagonist learns that her father is infected with Corona virus and her life suddenly changes:

> *That day. The end of March. Living suddenly stopped with a phone. My mother said, they took your father for treatment. They say corona, said right after. What corona mom? Are you okay? Until then, the corona virus was only in the news and social media for me. I was paying attention, too, but it always seemed like a remote possibility that happened to other people. I came face to face with the reality of corona that day (Eraslan, 2021, p.112).*

She begins to question life and does not want to accept the possible result.

> *I understood that day; life is looking at a moment. Love is at a moment, death is at a moment. Everything suddenly turns into one person, one thing. That day, everything had become one word: Father. When they put my father in the hospital, one of the callers said he was over 65 years old, has diabetes, and high blood pressure. Corona is in the elderly... I didn't want to hear the last word (p.113).*

It is also understood that as her father is in the disadvantaged group against COVID-19 the woman feels a great fear.

Albeit for different reasons, the themes of anxiety and fear are handled in the stories *Hard Days Pass Even Harder* and *The Word of the Passerby*. While the possibility of the old parents and the little girl catching the disease is the source of fear and anxiety in *The Word of the Passerby*, the possibility of the death of the father who caught disease is the source of these feelings in *Hard Days Pass Even Harder*. The common point in the two stories is the fear of losing relatives due to the pandemic.

In many studies on the COVID-19 pandemic, findings regarding the fear of losing relatives had been obtained. For example, in a study aiming to determine the level of anxiety and hopelessness experienced by nursing students during the COVID-19 pandemic process, it was concluded that 42.2% of these students were afraid of losing their lives due to COVID-19, while 91.6% were afraid of losing their relatives (Serin & Doğan, 2023, p.7). In a study conducted with 1337 participants in Poland, the fear of relatives losing their health comes first (9.7 out of 10) among the fears felt against COVID-19 (Nowak, et al., 2021, p.4). Similarly, in another study, it was concluded that 77.44% of the participants (which is the highest rate) were worried about losing their relatives and friends due to the COVID-19 (Alqahtani, 2022, p.329).

Virüs (Virus)

The short story *Virus*, written by Güray Süngü, is in the 4th issue of Muhit Magazine, published in April 2020. The author never uses the term COVID-19 in the story, but he handles one of the conspiracy theories frequently encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the story, first of all, it is narrated that the human population has increased a lot and the reason for this is the prolongation of human life due to the developing medicine and pharmaceutical industry. Then, it is stated that the old people's long-term pensions and health services cause states to face economic problems. Governments seeking solutions to these problems hold pharmaceutical companies responsible for people's longevity and require them to pay heavy taxes as a solution. Pharmaceutical companies reject the tax increase and propose that they can create a virus that can only be fatal to the elderly as a solution. But administrators reject this proposal as they are elderly. Pharmaceutical companies secretly present the same proposal to young administrators, and they accept this proposal as an opportunity to get rid of elderly administrators.

The plan is put into effect and the elderly administrators are somehow infected with the virus and all of them are killed. Young administrators also use the same virus to get rid of other old people in the community. However, the virus does not kill the elderly immediately; it causes them to receive health care for a while. This situation, which creates a new economic burden for the states, enables young administrators to apply to pharmaceutical companies again. Pharmaceutical companies revise the virus, and the elderly people are made to catch the virus again. After a short time, the states quickly get rid of all the elderly people. However, as people age all the time, the deaths continue and society holds young administrators responsible for the situation. Young administrators find the remedy again by applying to pharmaceutical companies. Pharmaceutical companies produce drugs that completely eliminate the virus by making a large amount of profit. Pharmaceutical companies are the only ones who gain from these evil plans. As a result, people go back to their old lives.

Many people had seen similar conspiracy theories described in this story from television, newspapers and social media during the pandemic process. Conspiracy theories emerge in times of crisis when people feel threatened, uncertain and insecure (Douglas, et al., 2017, p.539), and it can be considered natural to encounter them during a pandemic that negatively affects people in many ways, such as COVID-19. So much so that when a search is made by using the keywords “COVID-19 conspiracy theories" with a search engine, a lot of content is encountered.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are studies on conspiracy theories during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a study conducted in eight countries (Belgium, Canada, England, Philippines, Hong Kong, New Zealand, United States, Switzerland), it was determined that a large part of people tend to believe in conspiracy theories and that most of the people who show this tendency are young or have a low education level (De Coninck, et al., 2021, p.6). In addition, studies show that conspiracy theories negatively affect pay attention to social distancing and volunteering to vaccinate (Bierwiaczonek, et al., 2020, p.1270; Romer & Jamieson, 2020, p.1).

Korona Günleri (Corona Days)

The story titled Korona Günleri, written by Orhan Koca, was published in the 362nd issue of Yedi İklim magazine in May 2020. These sentences from different parts of story;

"Gigantic metropolis is secluded."

"There is not a soul around in the streets"

"Closed mosques, schools. Shops are locked, life is frozen."

"Few people used to wear masks. Everyone is masked now. It is forbidden to go out and shop without a mask." (Eraslan, 2021, pp.286-290) describe how the COVID-19 pandemic had limited people's daily lives.

However, the main theme of the story is death. The hero, who plays the role of the narrator in the story, firstly explains with these sentences "The whole world has fallen to the bottom of anxiety, grief, sadness and fear.", "The screens are counting dead like counting sheep.", "On the other hand, the virus is roaming the squares, the boulevards smell of death." (p.286) that the COVID-19 pandemic made people realize the reality of death. Also the hero, who is also suffering in the grip of the disease, feels himself close to death;

> *Dry cough hasn't come out of my lungs since yesterday. My fever goes up and down. I have a headache. I have difficulty in getting to my feet. I want to lie down and die in bed.", "Coughs keep getting worse. It's like it's ripping my lungs out of its nest. Is it the phenomenon of death that disquieting my heart (p.289)?*

One of the issues mentioned in the story regarding death is that, funeral routines are not like before the pandemic. The protagonist complains about the COVID-19 pandemic has changed and made meaningless the funeral routines that are very important to most people;"The dead are buried posthaste after they are washed in the ghusl room, they are neither put on the coffin rest, nor can their relatives and

loved ones attend the funeral ceremonies. Neither mortal understands that he is dead nor can his loved ones mourn" (p.287).

Nevertheless, he does not want to accept this situation and wants to spend his last moments with the person he loves; "In spite of these corona days, in spite of this malignant disease called covid; I would like to gasp my life out in your chest, in your arms and rise to the sky from there." (p.290).

In this story, the realization of the reality of death and the feeling of being close to death experienced by many people during the pandemic are presented to the reader in an impressive way. When the times COVID-19 was most effective remembered, it can be said that most people came face to face with the reality of death that they imagined far from themselves and felt close to death.

The change of funeral rituals due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is covered in the story, adds a different dimension to the story. Funerals contain rituals that may differ from culture to culture and have an important meaning for people. Funeral ceremonies, where people find the chance to fulfill their last duties for their lost relatives and friends, are meetings where pain is shared and friendships are strengthened.

Changes in funeral ceremonies during the pandemic process have also been the subject of scientific studies. According to these studies, which deal with this effect of the pandemic, this situation fuels the feelings of insecurity and anger in people (Burrell & Selman, 2022, pp.374-375), the inability of people who lost their relatives and friends to perform the mourning rituals causes them to suffer psychologically (Corpuz, 2021, p.1), and it is stated that moral support should be given to these people (Gonçalves Júnior, et al., 2020, p.2).

Korona Günlükleri (Corona Diaries)

The Korona Günlükleri story written by Yahya Akengin is in the 85th issue of Bizim Külliye magazine, published in September 2020. This story is longer than the other four stories. In the story, the protagonist Feridun Ağabeyoğlu, who has to stay alone at home due to the restrictions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic process (because his wife had gone to visit their son living abroad and could not return due to restrictions), starts to write a diary with advice of a friend and narrates his experiences and feelings (Eraslan, 2021, p.348).

The first thing that draws attention in the story is that Feridun worries about the problems of other people who are having a hard time during the pandemic process. Feridun is worried not only for people who have economic problems because of being unemployed, but also for the elderly and patients who cannot use it even though they have money;

> *Nowadays, the thing that occupies my mind the most is the people who cannot make a living because of not being able to work. I honestly didn't think I was that merciful. Not only people without money, but also those who cannot go to the banks and withdraw money from banks even though they have money, and patients who can't go shopping even though they have money in their pockets (p.349).*

Feridun is affected by the negativities experienced by poor people who have to live in more difficult conditions after the pandemic;

> *The image in a video coming to my phone is making me lose my appetite. A desperate woman in a poor family who could not find diapers for her child and wrapped her child in plastic. While thinking about how I can find and help this poor family, I realize that my eyes are full of tears. I can't help but ask myself if a person can change that much in these few weeks (p.350).*

Besides, he strives to help these people; "I gave instructions to Tahsin in my office. He was going to find the family that wrapped their baby in nylon because they couldn't buy a diaper, and he would deliver help. I am waiting his call." (p. 351)

Barbers and their apprentices, who are having difficulties due to the closures during the pandemic period, also attract Feridun's attention. "I think of the barbers who make their living from our hair and feel sad. And their apprentices... I know there are people who make a living with the little tips we give." (p.356).

Feridun thinks that there are many other people who are negatively affected by the pandemic and asks a friend for help to reach them;

> *After thinking for a while, 'Look man, I know there are many victims and needy people because of this pandemic. But I've been a little distant and I'm not in contact with anyone. Let me know if you know anyone around you.' A smile of contentment spreads over Selim's face. 'Yes, my friend, there are many. Until yesterday, those who have work to earn their living... You understand…' I get his bank account number from Selim (p.359).*

It is seen that Feridun has developed empathy towards people who have been negatively affected by the pandemic process and wants to help them. Also it is understood that Feridun is a person far from empathy and started to feel this emotion with the closure process in the pandemic; "I honestly didn't think I was that merciful." (p.349) and "I can't help but ask myself if a person can change that much in these few weeks." (p.350)

Another point noticed in the story is Feridun's questioning about his life; "These quarantine days is a bit of the reality sandwich for people to rethink some things.

I'm trying conclusions with myself now." (p.356) For example, Feridun makes an inquiry about his religious life and prefers to turn to books to make up for the lack he feels; "I feel how far away I am from religious matters by chasing money and business. Because of this quarantine, I think I should turn to books about this."(p.351) Also Feridun has a longing for natural life and nature; "By the way, I realize that in times without quarantine, I have already stayed away from adding the plateau, the soil, the mountain to my life. I regret." (p.352)

One of the issues that Feridun questions is his world of thought. Feridun self-criticizes because he does not live a life in accordance with his thoughts;

> *I have come to these days by always hiding my political opinions for the sake of my business. Now I have started to make an accounting of whether this is right or wrong. For example, a question begins to cross my mind; do I love my country or my pocket (p.352)?*

By the way it is seen that some changes have started in Feridun's life;

> *I have now started to do the watering of the flowers, which I used to do from time to time with my wife's advice and which I considered as a chore, with pleasure." "I listen to the birdsong. It's like I'm just hearing them too. I seem to be rediscovering my joy of living (p.352).*

A person reading this story years after the COVID-19 pandemic will probably have the feeling that I would have kept a diary like this at that time. Because, this disease had caused almost every people to experience situations that they could rarely experience in their life. It will be remembered that the problems experienced by people and being away from social life in 2020 and 2021, when the impact of the pandemic was most felt, caused many people to question their lives. Most of us felt what Feridun felt. As we faced problems that we had not encountered before and stayed away from our daily routines, we had the opportunity to review our lives and realized that it was time to change some things. Yes, despite all the negativities it has caused, COVID-19 has offered individuals a chance to reconsider.

The most striking aspects of the story are Feridun's realization of the economic difficulties experienced by people who lost their jobs or who could not work during the pandemic process and developing empathy towards them. When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are many people who think like Feridun and that he is not alone in this sense. For example, in a study conducted with 943 people in China, participants reported greater empathy toward low-income urban workers, farmers, and small business owners (Qin, et al., 2022, pp.5-6). In another study conducted with 3.075 participants at the national level in Germany to clarify the level of empathy and altruism in times of COVID-19, high levels of empathy

and altruism were identified among women, individuals with children, and individuals with migration background (Hajek & König, 2022, pp.3-6).

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic, which is stated by the World Health Organization on 14 September 2022 will end soon if a new variant does not appear (WHO, 2022), is one of the biggest pandemics that humanity has experienced. This disease, which affected everyone without distinction between poor-rich, old-young, and male-female, had caused many changes in people's lives. During the pandemic process, especially due to the restrictions, people made concessions from their social lives, and had a hard time economically. It is very possible that this pandemic, which has affected humanity intensively in almost every aspect for two years, will have reflections in the world of literature.

In this study, The 2021 Story Yearbook of Edebiyat Ortamı Magazine was examined in the context of the reflection of the COVID-19 pandemic in literature. As a result of the examination, it was determined that there are five stories related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the story yearbook. While examining these stories, the characteristics of the COVID-19 disease and its effects on society were taken into consideration. The most interesting conclusion reached regarding the five stories examined is that the stories deal with different topics related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the stories of *Gelip Geçenin Sözü* and the *Zor Günler Daha Da Zor Geçer*, the subject of anxiety is discussed, but the reason for the anxiety is different. The *Virüs* story refers to conspiracy theories that were frequently encountered in the COVID-19 pandemic and had an impact on society. The story *Korona Günleri* is particularly remarkable in that it deals with the changes in funeral ceremonies experienced by people who lost relatives and friends due to COVID-19 disease. The *Korona Günlükleri* story is very impressive in that it deals with the emotional and behavioral changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in individuals and offering them the opportunity to self-criticize.

In fact, it can be expected that there will be more stories about the pandemic in a story yearbook, especially if it covers times when the pandemic is most intense. However, the presence of five stories related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the relevant story yearbook can be considered as a sign that similar literary works may be written in the future.

This study, which aims to determine the reflections of COVID-19 in literary works, is limited to a story yearbook published in Türkiye in 2021. The recommendations based on the results obtained in the study are as follows:

1. In this study, stories were examined; another literary genre could be the subject of a similar study.
2. In this study, a work published in Türkiye was examined; a work published in another country could be the subject of research.

Notes:

1. Orhan Pamuk's interview with Pelin Batu. 07 April 2021. Translation is authors'.
2. Eraslan, Edebiyat Ortamı Öykü Yıllığı. All translations from the story yearbook are authors' unless stated otherwise.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this study is to examine The 2021 Story Yearbook of Edebiyat Ortamı Magazine in the context of the reflection of the COVID-19 pandemic. While examining the story yearbook, the characteristics of the COVID-19 disease and its effects on society were taken into consideration.

Method: This study is a qulatative research study. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016, p.41) in qualitative research, data collection methods such as observation, interviews, and document analysis are employed and a qualitative process is followed to present perceptions and events in a realistic and holistic way in their natural environment. The data colection method of study is document analysis. "Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating both printed and electronic documents… it requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge." (Bowen, 2009, p.27).

Findings: There are 78 stories in 2021 Story Yearbook of the Edebiyat Ortamı Magazine but only five of these stories contain messages related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These stories are Gelip Geçenin Sözü, Zor Günler Daha Zor Geçer, Virüs, Korona Günleri, and Korona Günlükleri.

The story "Gelip Geçenin Sözü", written by Cihan Aktaş, is in the 367th issue of Degah Magazine, published in September 2020. When the story is examined in the context of the reflections of COVID-19, it is seen that the difficulties experienced by three siblings who take care of their elderly parents during the pandemic are mentioned.

The story *"*Zor Günler Daha Zor Geçer" written by Emine Şimşek is in the 46th issue of İzdiham Magazine, published in September 2020. In the story, the author narrates the people's fear of losing their relatives who are in the disadvantaged group against the disease during the COVID-19 pandemic, through the character who plays the role of narrator.

The short story Virüs, written by Güray Süngü, is in the 4th issue of Muhit Magazine, published in April 2020. The author never uses the term COVID-19 in the story, but he handles one of the conspiracy theories frequently encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The story titled Korona Günleri, written by Orhan Koca, was published in the 362nd issue of Yedi İklim magazine in May 2020. In this story, the realization of the reality of death and the feeling of being close to death experienced by many people during the pandemic are presented to the reader in an impressive way.

The Korona Günlükleri story written by Yahya Akengin is in the 85th issue of Bizim Külliye magazine, published in September 2020. This story is longer than the other four stories. In the story, the protagonist Feridun Ağabeyoğlu, who has to stay alone at home due to the restrictions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic process (because his wife had gone to visit their son living abroad and could not return due to restrictions), starts to write a diary with advice of a friend and narrates his experiences and feelings.

Conclusion and Discussion: The COVID-19 pandemic, which is stated by the World Health Organization on 14 September 2022 will end soon if a new variant does not appear (WHO, 2022), is one of the biggest pandemics that humanity has experienced. This disease, which affected everyone without distinction between poor-rich, old-young, and male-female, had caused many changes in people's lives. During the pandemic process, especially due to the restrictions, people made concessions from their social lives, and had a hard time economically. It is very possible that this pandemic, which has affected humanity intensively in almost every aspect for two years, will have reflections in the world of literature.

In this study, The 2021 Story Yearbook of Edebiyat Ortamı Magazine was examined in the context of the reflection of the COVID-19 pandemic in literature. As a result of the examination, it was determined that there are five stories related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the story yearbook. While examining these stories, the characteristics of the COVID-19 disease and its effects on society were taken into consideration. The most interesting conclusion reached regarding the five stories examined is that the stories deal with different topics related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the stories of *Gelip Geçenin Sözü* and the *Zor Günler Daha Da Zor Geçer*, the subject of anxiety is discussed, but the reason for the anxiety is different. The *Virüs* story refers to conspiracy theories that were frequently encountered in the COVID-19 pandemic and had an impact on society. The story *Korona Günleri* is particularly remarkable in that it deals with the changes in funeral ceremonies experienced by people who lost relatives and friends due to COVID-19 disease. The *Korona Günlükleri* story is very

impressive in that it deals with the emotional and behavioral changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in individuals and offering them the opportunity to self-criticize.

In fact, it can be expected that there will be more stories about the pandemic in a story yearbook, especially if it covers times when the pandemic is most intense. However, the presence of five stories related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the relevant story yearbook can be considered as a sign that similar literary works may be written in the future.

Çıkar Çatışması Bildirimi
Yazarlar, bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve/veya yayınlanmasına ilişkin herhangi bir potansiyel çıkar çatışması beyan etmemiştir.
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