

Cultural transmission in the children's novel written by Cevat Çapan

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Abstract

Cevat Çapan has published poetry books, theater reviews and anthologies and has translated poems from poets of various countries into Turkish. He is also a writer and academician. In addition to his many works, Çapan also has a novel for children. This children's novel is called "Hapış ile Kapış Havana'da". "Hapış ile Kapış Havana'da" was published in 2018 by the drawings of Semih Poroy. After being friends with each other, the three children characters of the mentioned novel, Hapış, Kapış and Kavruk Yunus, go on a summer vacation to spend their summer holiday in Kâni Uncle's summer house in Yahoba. During this holiday, a cultural transmission is made in the work through the conversations that the children have with Uncle Kâni, the archaeological sites they visit, the music they listen to, and the literary artists they meet. This study aims to examine the cultural transmission in the novel. The novel has been studied for this purpose. As a result of the examination, it has been observed that Cevat Çapan made cultural transmission to his readers about tangible cultural heritage elements, intangible cultural heritage elements, literary cultural elements and music culture. These transmissions in the novel are very important in terms of raising consciousness and awareness of cultural elements in children.

Keywords: Cevat Çapan, children's novel, cultural transmission

Cevat Çapan'ın kaleme aldığı çocuk romanında kültür aktarımı

Öz

Cevat Çapan, şiir kitapları, tiyatro incelemeleri ve antolojiler yayımlamış; çok çeşitli ülke şairlerinden şiirleri Türkçeye kazandırmıştır. Aynı zamanda bir yazar ve akademisyendir. Çapan'ın birçok çalışmasının yanı sıra bir de çocuk romanı bulunmaktadır. Bu roman Hapış ile Kapış Havana'da adını taşır. Hapış ile Kapış Havana'da, 2018 yılında Semih Poroy'un çizimleriyle yayımlanmıştır. Adı geçen romanın üç çocuk karakteri Hapış, Kapış ve Kavruk Yunus arkadaş olduktan sonra okul yaz tatiline girince Kâni Amcalarının Yahoba'daki yazlığına yaz tatilini geçirmek üzere giderler. Bu tatil boyunca çocukların Kâni Amcaları ile yaptıkları sohbetler, gezdikleri ören yerleri, dinledikleri müzikler, tanıştıkları edebiyatçılar aracılığıyla yapıtta bir kültür aktarımı yapılır. Bu çalışma adı geçen romandaki kültür aktarımını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Roman, bu amaç doğrultusunda incelenmiştir. İnceleme sonucunda Cevat Çapan'ın çocuk okurlarına somut kültürel miras öğelerine, somut olmayan kültürel miras öğelerine, yazınsal kültür öğelerine ve müzik kültürüne dair aktarımlarda bulunduğu görülmüştür. Romanda yer alan bu aktarımlar, çocuk okurlarda kültürel öğelere dair bilinç ve farkındalık kazandırabilmek açısından oldukça önemlidir.

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Anahtar kelimeler: Cevat Çapan, çocuk romanı, kültür aktarımı

1. Introduction

The poet, translator and academician Cevat Çapan has published poetry books, theater reviews and anthologies. Çapan's first poetry book is "Dön Güvercin Dön" (1985). The poems of the author, published between 1985 and 2006, were later published collectively as "Bana Düşlerini Anlat" (2007). This published work was followed by poetry books "Ara Sıcak" (2009), "Su Sesi" (2013), "Son Duraktan Bir Önce" (2017) and "Bir Başka Coğrafyadan" (2020). Çapan received the Behçet Necatigil Poetry Award with his work "Dön Güvercin Dön" (1985), and he received the Golden Orange Poetry Award with "Bana Düşlerini Anlat" (2007). The author has published his research works titled "İrlanda Tiyatrosunda Gerçekçilik" (1966), "Değişen Tiyatro" (1972), "Çağdaş Bir Oyun Yazarı: John Whiting" (1975) and following anthologies: "Çin'den Peru'ya" (1966), "Çağdaş Yunan Şiiri Antolojisi" (1982), "Çağdaş İngiliz Şiiri Antolojisi" (1985), "Çağdaş Amerikan Şiiri Antolojisi" (1998), "Dünya Yazımından Seçilmiş Aşk Şiirleri" (1993), "Şiir Atlası 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7" (1994-2000).

The children's novel "Hapış ile Kapiş Havana'da", which is the only work written by Cevat Çapan for children, was published in 2018 with the drawings of Semih Poroy. The story line of this novel begins with two children, nicknamed Hapış and Kapiş, who start a new school and become friend with another child, nicknamed Kavruk Yunus. The three friends go to the summer house of Uncle Kâni, which is an important figure for all of them, when the summer vacation begin. The name of the book comes from the curiosity of Hapış and Kapiş to go to Havana. The grandfather of Hapış and Kapiş stayed in Cuba and he told the children about the extraordinary adventures he had here. Children's Havana curiosity also stems from these expressions.² However, Hapış and Kapiş do not go to Havana and they go to the summer house of Uncle Kâni with their friends Kavruk Yunus. The summer vacation that children spend in Yahoba provides an opportunity to get to know the cultural elements, civilizations and literary riches in their own countries. In this context, the work is covered with narrative elements that enable cultural transmissions for readers.

Before examining the transfer of cultural elements in the work named "Hapış and Kapiş Havana'da"; it will be appropriate to discuss culture, cultural transmission and cultural transmission in children's literature.

The definition of culture in the Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology is as follows: "In the definition of the humanities, culture refers to intellectual and artistic activity and the artifacts produced thereby, to what Matthew Arnold (1822–88) called 'the best that has been thought and said.' Culture is taken as the highest moral and aesthetic achievements of civilization." (Reed and Alexander, 2006: 111)

According to Bozkurt Güvenç (1987), the word culture comes from the word "Cultura". In Latin, the word "Colere" means plow, plant and harvest; Cultura corresponds to the word "ekin" in Turkish. According to him, defining the word "culture" is not an easy task since it is very meaningful. On the other hand, culture is "an abstract word used in anthropology language and used in exchange for the following basic concepts".

² The grandfather's Cuba adventures, which appear on the fictional plane, has a counterpart in the non-textual reality. Çapan's father went to Algeria, Marseille, America, Suriname, and then to Cuba by boarding a ship from Istanbul. He lived in Santiago for 2 years and was named Emilio Çapan. After the Republic was established, he returned to his country. The stories told by his father contributed to the wideness of Çapan's image world (Fişekçi, 2010: 91-92).

(1) *Culture is the cumulative civilization of a society or all societies.*

(2) *Culture is a particular society itself.*

(3) *Culture is a combination of a number of social processes.*

(4) *Culture is a theory of human being and society” (95-96).*

According to Nermi Uygur (2017) *"The living environment of the fish is water, and the living environment of the human is culture. This is 'Naturally' like this. Anytime, anywhere and everyone is born into a culture and lives in culture” (121).*

On the other hand, again according to Nermi Uygur (2017), *“Every person, regardless of age, is a culture-child. The child of yesterday's culture. But regardless of age, every person is a culture-parent: the parents of tomorrow's culture. This is an inevitable reality. This is the reality, although there are differences between cultures. Man does not live with nothing; to live is to live by getting support from something; this requires both adopting, changing and recreating it. So, on the one hand, a person is born in a culture, on the other hand, it gives birth to a culture” (130).*

It is possible to say that the person who "produces culture", that is, the producer of the culture, is also the transmitter of that culture. The transmission feature of culture is an important feature of it. Akçaoğlu (2017) says the following about the transmission and acquisition of culture: *“Culture has an increasing structure with addition and the ability to be transmitted for generations. Transmission feature is provided by education and training. Whether a child born in that culture or an individual who later migrated to that culture, he meets that culture and begins to acquire and learn its dynamics” (6).*

In this context, cultural transmission is very important. The definition of cultural transmission is in Encyclopedia of Child Behavior and Development as follows: *“Cultural transmission is the process through which cultural elements, in the form of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavioral scripts, are passed onto and taught to individuals and groups” (Taylor and Thoth, 2011: 41).*

Various cultural elements are transferred through cultural transmission. Schönplflug (2009) says the following about these elements: *“The concept of cultural transmission, however, indicates the transmission of culture or cultural elements that are widely distributed: social orientations (e.g., values), skills (e.g., reading and writing), knowledge (e.g., the healing power of certain herbs), and behaviors (e.g., the exchange of rings in a wedding ceremony)” (9).*

In the transmission of culture and cultural elements; It is possible to say that many elements such as language, literary works, translation acts, textbooks, educational environments, music, media, family are effective tools. One of these effective tools is children's literature. Children's literature can play an important role in the transmission of culture and cultural elements to children.

According to Barut and Odacıoğlu (2019); *“Some basic features of children's literature are important for cultural transmission and interaction. Artifacts should be suitable for children's interests, likes and reading tendencies. These issues should be covered under themes such as family, homeland, nation, nature, love of animals, sensitivity to good and beauty, and pleasure of living, which are important elements for today's societies. Children identify with the heroes of the books they read. Therefore, the adventures of heroes should be appropriate for the age and level of children. In addition, topics such*

as adventure, heroism, fairy tale, fantasy, culture and traditions of different countries that children are particularly interested in can be covered in children's literature" (Barut and Odacıođlu, 2019: 67-68).

In this context, subject selection, theme, character, and events are important elements for cultural transmission in children's literature. And these elements should be handled in a qualified manner by writers.

2. Transmission of cultural elements in the children's novel named "Hapıř ile Kapıř Havana'da"

Hapıř, Kapıř and Kavruk Yunus, who are the three children characters of the novel, go to spend their summer vacation in the summer holiday of their Uncle Kni. According to the holiday plans; they will visit historical places such as Troy, Assos and Zeus Temple in that region (apan, 2018: 10). Children also decide to publish a literary magazine (apan, 2018: 16). They attend Homer Readings in Bozcaada. (apan, 2018: 52-55). Children also have various literary chats with Uncle Kni. They learn about Karagz and Hacivat and watch the shadow theater (apan, 2018: 45). Together with their Uncle Kni, they listen to various music and talk about music culture (apan, 2018: 31).

In this context, the holiday of children characters is in a central place in the fiction of the novel. This has a functional feature for the transfer of cultural elements to children readers. In the novel, it is possible to tell the children readers that tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements, literary culture, music culture are transferred in a non-didactic way within the story setup.

2.1. Tangible cultural heritage elements

When the children go on vacation, Uncle Kni tells them that they will recognize the ancient civilizations in the region. He states that the work named Iliad is about the events in Troy in the region they traveled, and that Odyssey work tells about the after Trojan War. Uncle Kni tells that Aristotle had taught in Assos (apan, 2018: 14). They make visits to the mentioned places. Together they visit the Temple of Athena and Temple of Apollo (apan, 2018: 50). In this context, it is possible to say that apan's work conveys the cultural heritage of Anatolia to children readers, informs about ancient civilizations and their cultural elements and contributes to the preservation of tangible cultural heritage elements. As a matter of fact, the Trojan Archaeological Site, which was named Troy in the novel, was included in the UNESCO world heritage list in 1998 (UNESCO World Heritage List, 2020).

Cultural heritage is defined as: *"All kinds of works and set of values that are inherited from the past and wanted to be transmitted for different reasons, have a physical presence and are made by people and belong to a society"* (Can, 2009: 3). *"The scope of cultural heritage is wide and is addressed in two separate categories as tangible cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage. Tangible cultural heritage are works that contain structures, historical sites and monuments and must be preserved to be passed on to the next generation"* (Can, 2009: 1).

Troy is one of Turkey's tangible cultural heritage item. *"Troy, with its 4,000 years of history, is one of the most famous archaeological sites in the world. The first excavations at the site were undertaken by the famous archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann in 1870. In scientific terms, its extensive remains are the most significant demonstration of the first contact between the civilizations of Anatolia and the Mediterranean world. Moreover, the siege of Troy by Spartan and Achaean warriors from Greece in*

the 13th or 12th century B.C., immortalized by Homer in the Iliad, has inspired great creative artists throughout the world ever since" (Archaeological Site of Troy. UNESCO, 2020).

In the novel, while Uncle Kâni giving information to the children characters about Troy, children readers also learn about this heritage element. In this context, Çapan conveys cultural heritage elements to children readers.

On the other hand, one of the archaeological sites that children visit with their Uncle in the novel is Assos. *"The Archaeological site of Assos is located in the south-western part of the Biga Peninsula (Troad), within the borders of the Village of Behramkale, 17 kilometers south of the district of Ayvacık in the province of Çanakkale. The ancient city lies on a steep hill, rising 235 m above sea level, and commands panoramic vistas northward over the fertile valley of the River Tuzla (ancient Satnioeis), westward along the southern coastline of the Troad and the Aegean Sea, eastward up the Gulf of Adramyttion and Mount Ida, and southward across the straits of Mytilene to the island of Lesbos"* (Archaeological Site of Assos. UNESCO, 2020).

Assos Archaeological Excavation Site was included in UNESCO's world temporary heritage list in 2017. (Archaeological Site of Troy. UNESCO, 2020). UNESCO defines the Temporary heritage list as follows: *"In addition to the heritages that are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List by the World Heritage Committee, there is also a Temporary List consisting of inheritance which is foreseen to be proposed to this list but whose candidacy processes are not completed yet. The Temporary List is a national inventory for Member States. The fields that will apply to the main list are determined by selecting from this list"* (UNESCO Dünya Kültürel ve Doğal Mirası Geçici Listesi, 2020).

It is possible to say that Çapan created awareness about the cultural heritage of Anatolia through the information he conveyed about Assos, and in this context, the novel is an important work in terms of cultural transmission.

2.2. Intangible cultural heritage elements

"Intangible cultural heritage is a set of values that are impalpable, invisible but also what constitutes a society, these are elements such as; traditions, language, believes, music, songs, dances, shows, nursery rhymes, stories and poems" (Can, 2009:1). On the other hand, "the term 'cultural heritage' has changed content considerably in recent decades, partially owing to the instruments developed by UNESCO. Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts." (What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?, UNESCO, 2020)

In the children's novel called "Hapış ile Kapiş Havana'da" the writer is giving wide publicity to the Karagöz which is one of the intangible cultural heritage elements of Turkey. Karagöz, entered to the intangible cultural heritage list of UNESCO's in the year 2009 and defined by UNESCO as follows:

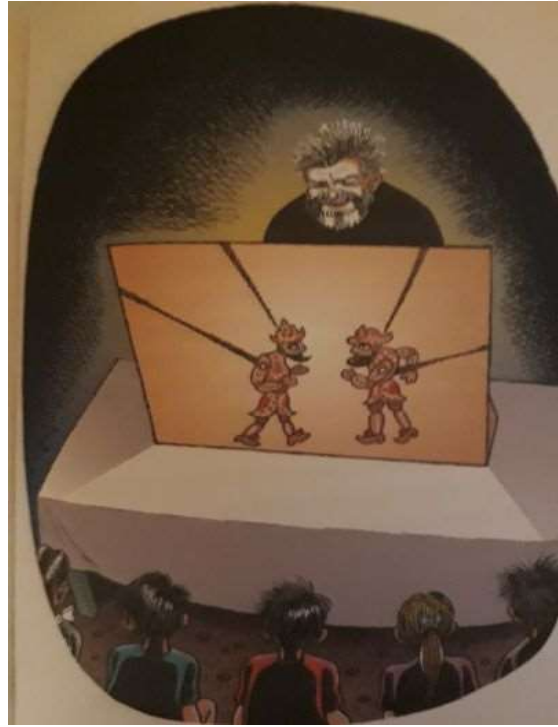
"Karagöz is a form of shadow theatre in Turkey in which figures known as tasvirs made of camel or ox hide in the shape of people or things are held on rods in front of a light source to cast their shadows onto a cotton screen. A play begins with the projection of an introductory figure to set the scene and suggest the themes of the drama, before it vanishes to the shrill sound of a whistle, giving way to a main

performance that may incorporate singing, tambourine music, poetry, myth, tongue-twisters and riddles” (Karagz, UNESCO, 2020).

When the children characters of the book “Hapıř ile Kapiř Havana’da” were spending their holiday at the summer house of the Uncle Kni, the neighbor Ali Rıza Bey performs a Karagz Shadow Play for them (apan, 2018: 459). Before that Uncle Kni gives detailed information about Karagz to the children. Thereby the novel provides substantial information to its readers about the Karagz Shadow Play. With that the Kavruk Yunus who is one of the child characters of the novel, becomes impressed and thinks whether if he can adopt the Iliad epic which he started reading as a shadow play (apan, 2018: 50). This situation indicates the value of both the local culture and the universal culture. The novel character who is still at a young age has an interest in both the local culture and the universal culture. In this context the work is providing information about the either cultural element and raises awareness of these elements.

It is understood from this part of the novel that, for Cevat apan the Karagz Shadow Play is a very important intangible cultural heritage element. As a matter of fact, Cevat apan himself also performed a Karagz Shadow Play. Turgay Fiřeki says that Cevat apan was watching the shadow play artist who played Karagz in the Community Center in his childhood and that his interest in Karagz began. He also says that apan was listening to the Karagz programs of the shadow play artist called Hayali Kk Ali from radio during the Second World War. A Later, apan built a shadow play curtain at the school during Robert College and started playing Karagz (Fiřeki, 2010: 92-93).

Concordantly, it must be noted that it is not a coincidence that Mr. Ali Rıza who performed the Karagz Shadow Play in the work named “Hapıř ile Kapiř Havana’da” has drawn by Semih Poroy as it resembles Cevat apan. Semih Poroy’s drawing is as below:



Visual 1: Semih Poroy’s Drawing, 2018

In a way this drawing alludes to the interest and knowledge of Çapan in Karagöz.

2.3. Literary cultural elements

There is a transmission of literary culture in question in the children's book named "Hapış ile Kapaş Havana'da". Kavruk Yunus bags Iliad and Odyssey before he goes on a holiday (Çapan, 2018: 11). In the holiday he reads these books alongside other activities he shared with his friends. Also, Iliad and Odyssey epics are related to events occurred at the places where the children are spending their holiday. As for the World literature culture, they have a very important place. In this context Çapan in his book provides transmission regarding literary cultural elements along with the cultural heritage elements.

With that, the children characters of the novel decided to publish a literary magazine during their summer holiday (Çapan, 2018: 16). The name of the magazine was going to be Numara (Çapan, 2018: 29). During the holiday, they wrote up various writings that they will publish in the magazine which they will issue. These writings are also quite diverse in terms of literary genres. For example, a fairy tale is written by children. A travel writing is written. The writing of Iliad and Odessiea epics in the form of a shadow play is planned. In this context, the characters of the book are not only in the position of the receptive of the literary culture but also in the position of producer. This condition sets a good and positive example for the children readers.

Aside from all of this, it is seen that in the book the children characters had various conversations about literature with their Uncle Kâni. They had been in literary environments and had conversations with poets and writers. All of these means a possibility for transmission of literary cultural elements to the readers of the book. The most notable part of these is the one where the children characters attended to the Homer Readings in Bozcaada with their Uncle Kâni.

When the children get on the car ferry from Geyikli to participate in Homer Readings, Uncle Kâni introduces them to the poet of the year, Hakan Savlı. That year, Dimitri Kakmi who is a former resident of Bozcaada was also going to be attending to the readings and Kakmi, was going to be reading quotations from the book he wrote down named Mother Land (Çapan, 2018: 52-54).

What is interesting here is that the facts which Cevat Çapan approached in a fictional level are also exist in the out-of-text reality. Homer Readings are performed in Bozcaada every year. Cevat Çapan, is one of the architectures of the Homer Reading performed in Bozcaada since 2002. (Prof. Dr. Cevat Çapan ile "Odyssey" Okumaları, 2020) Hakan Saylı is one of the contemporary Turkish poets. Dimitri Kakmi is a writer born in Bozcaada. In this context Çapan, carries cultural elements that exists in the reality to his work and is transmission a cultural accumulation which exists in the literary field to his readers.

2.4. Music culture elements

In the children's novel that Cevat Çapan wrote up, there are also transmissions about music culture. But these transmissions are limited. Because the music culture elements in the novel are less than the other cultural elements.

Transmissions about music culture are provided via conversations between three children characters of the novel and their Uncle Kâni who hosts them at his summer house and music listened together. Uncle Kâni introduces both West and East music to the children. He plays them Toccatta and Füg single by Bach. He mentions Radio Ankara and Choir of "Yurttan Sesler". He tells that his own father is interested

in songs of composers such as řevki Bey, Rahmi Bey, his mother likes famous singers such as Safiye Ayla, Mzeyyen Senar, Hamiyet Yceses (apan, 2018: 31). These anecdotes of the book undertake a function of transmitting elements about music culture to readers.

3. Conclusion

Cevat apan, is one of the important names in the Contemporary Turkish Poetry. Along with that the fact that he wrote up a great number of poems he also is a translator who brought in poems of poets from many different countries to Turkish. Aside from these he is an academician and writer. He wrote up a work for children for the first time with the book he named "Hapıř ile Kapıř Havana'da". This work is a children novel. It published in the year 2018 with Semih Poroy's drawings. Hapıř, Kapıř and Kavruk Yunus, who are the three children characters of the mentioned novel, go to spend their summer vacation in the summer holiday of their Uncle Kni in Yalıoba. Throughout this holiday, a cultural transmission is always carried out in the work through the conversations that the children have with their Uncle Kni, the archaeological site they visit, the music they listen to, and the literary cultural elements they meet.

Children's literature is a significant factor in the transmission of cultural elements. Through children's books various cultural elements can be passed on from generation to generation. Especially the subject, theme, character and event as elements of children's literature play an important role in cultural transmission. However, Cevat apan used these elements successfully in his book. He used these elements as a means of cultural transmission.

Cevat apan, provides transmission about tangible cultural elements, intangible cultural elements, literary cultural elements and music culture for his readers in the children's novel he wrote. This novel provides children with the opportunity to develop their own opinions about the cultural elements. And provides a possibility for them to learn about their own cultural heritage. This is very important in terms of raising awareness and consciousness of cultural elements in children.

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