

**The Representation of Ethnic Minorities  
in  
Twentieth Century Turkish Fiction**

**Ruth Margaret Whitehouse**

**School of Oriental and African Studies  
London University**

**PhD**



ProQuest Number: 10672680

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10672680

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

## Abstract

During the first half of the twentieth century, the ethnically segmented Ottoman empire was transformed into a nation state of Turkish citizens. This thesis explores and evaluates the representation of ethnic minorities in Turkish fiction against a background of demographic, political, and social change. Within this context, novels and short stories of selected writers have been studied with a view to determining differences of experience, perception and attitude. The writers include: Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, Halide Edip Adıvar, Reşat Nuri Güntekin, Halikarnas Balıkcısı, Orhan Kemal, Haldun Taner, Sait Faik, and Yaşar Kemal.

The thesis comprises an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The Introduction gives a brief overview of historical events relating to demographic changes and ethnic minority status, and looks at the popular perception of minorities in the Ottoman performance arts. Chapter One is a study of literature written before, during, and after the Balkan wars, the First World War, and the Turkish War of Liberation. Chapter Two continues with a study of literature published during the years leading up to multi-party democracy. Chapter Three traces the emergence of an Anatolian literary perspective in which, with a few exceptions, ethnic issues were generally ignored or suppressed, and observes the gradual re-emergence of ethnic identity in Turkish literature. The conclusion evaluates the extent to which the selected authors: a) reflect the changing ethnic composition of Turkish society during the last century; b) display signs of bias or prejudice in their representations of ethnic minority characters; c) use ethnic minorities as a device to further or enhance the literary quality of their work.

## Table of Contents

Title Page.....	1
Abstract.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	7
Forward.....	8
<b>Introduction:</b> An Overview of Demographic Changes, Ethnic Minority Status, and Popular Perceptions of Minorities in Ottoman Performance Arts.....	9
<b>Chapter One:</b> The End of the Ottoman Empire and the New Turkish Republic.....	19
<b>Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar</b> .....	23
<i>Metres</i> .....	27
<i>Kuyruklu Yıldız Altında Bir İzdivaç</i> .....	32
<i>Cadı</i> .....	33
<i>Kadınlar Vaizi</i> .....	33
<i>Eşkiya İninde</i> .....	35
<i>Efsuncu Baba</i> .....	38
<i>Meyhanede Hanımlar and Ben Deli Miyim?</i> .....	40
<i>Billûr Kalb</i> .....	43
<b>Halide Edip Adıvar</b> .....	47
Early Works - <i>Raik'in Annesi</i> .....	60
Pre-war and Post-war Works.....	61
<i>Yeni Turan</i> .....	61
<i>Ateşten Gömlek and Dağa Çıkan Kurt</i> .....	67
<i>Vurun Kahpeye</i> .....	71
Later Works.....	74
<i>Kalb Ağrısı and Zeyno'nun Oğlu</i> .....	75
<i>Sinekli Bakkal</i> .....	79

<b>Reşat Nuri Güntekin</b> .....	84
<i>Olağan İşler and Leylâ ile Mecnun</i> .....	88
<i>Harabelerin Çiçeği</i> .....	90
<i>Boyunduruk</i> .....	90
<i>Çalığışu</i> .....	91
<i>Akşam Güneşi</i> .....	94
<i>Yeşil Gece</i> .....	97
<i>Ateş Gecesi</i> .....	103
<i>Anadolu Notları</i> .....	110
<b>Chapter Two: The Early Cumhuriyet Era</b> .....	113
<b>Sabahattin Ali - <i>Sirca Köşk and Dağlar ve Ruzgâr</i></b> .....	116
<b>Halikarnas Balıkcısı</b> .....	118
Minorities and Turks in Working Relationships:	
<i>Turgut Reis, Aganta Burina Burinata, Deniz Gürbetçileri</i> .....	123
Greek Main Characters:	
<i>Gençlik Denizlerinde, Ötelerin Çocukları, Turgut Reis</i> .....	125
Gypsy Characters:	
<i>Ege'den Denize Bırakılmış, Ötelerin Çocukları</i> .....	128
<b>Sait Faik Abasıyanık</b> .....	133
An Overview of his Works:	
<i>Semaver, Sarnıç, Şahmerdan, Mahkeme Kapısı, Medarı Maişet Motoru,</i> <i>Kumpanya, Lüziimsüz Adam, Mahalle Kahvesi, Havada Bulut,</i> <i>Havuz Başı, Son Kuşlar, and Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan</i> .....	140
Background Colour.....	143
Ethnic Minority Communities.....	145
Minorities in Family Settings.....	147
Marginalised Minority Individuals.....	148
Admired Male Minority Characters.....	152
Female Minority Characters.....	158

Minorities as Projections of Romantic Images.....	164
<b>Haldun Taner</b> .....	177
“Beatris Mavyan”.....	181
“Şişhane’ye Yağmur Yağyordu”.....	182
“Konçinalar”.....	183
“İki Komşu”.....	184
“Allegro Ma Mon Troppo”.....	184
“Harikliya”.....	185
“Rahatlıkla”.....	186
“Küçük Harfli Mutluluklar”.....	187
<b>Chapter Three: The Anatolian Perspective</b> .....	189
<b>Orhan Kemal</b> .....	194
<i>Baba Evi</i> .....	198
<i>Avare Yıllar</i> .....	201
<i>Cemile</i> .....	201
<i>Suçlu</i> .....	203
<i>Sokaklardan Çocuğu and Sokaklardan Bir Kız</i> .....	205
<i>Murtaza</i> .....	207
<i>Vukuat Var and Hanımın Çiftliği</i> .....	207
<i>Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde</i> .....	208
<b>Yaşar Kemal</b> .....	210
<i>İnce Memed I and Teneke</i> .....	218
<i>Ağrıdağı Efsanesi</i> .....	219
<i>Demirciler Çarşısı Cinayeti</i> .....	221
<i>Yusuçuk Yusuf</i> .....	222
<i>Deniz Küstü</i> .....	223
<i>Kimsecik Trilogy:</i>	
<i>Yağmuncuk Kuşu, Kale Kapısı, Kanın Sesi</i> .....	226
<i>Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana</i> .....	232

<b>Conclusions</b> .....	240
<b>Bibliography:</b>	
List of Literary Works.....	254
General Bibliography.....	259

## Acknowledgments

I am enormously indebted to Dr Bengisu Rona for her professional guidance and constructive criticism throughout my work on this thesis. Her comments and encouragement have been invaluable to me. My thanks go to Dr Herkül Millas for generously allowing me to see his latest work prior to its publication. Dr George Hewitt gave me some expert advice on the peoples of the Caucasus, and I received valuable suggestions and comments from Dr Nedim Gürsel and Dr Nurullah Çetin. Turgut Kut very kindly introduced me to Turkish publications in non-Ottoman scripts. Finally, I would like to thank Dr Harold Lubell for encouraging me to embark on this project, also my family and close friends who have continually given me much needed moral support.



## Forward

The authors in this study have been selected on the basis that they produced fiction of literary merit which contained a variety of ethnic minority representation. The writers are presented in chronological order and studied in three chapters, but naturally their works overlap considerably. For the reasons given above, it is acknowledged that a number of major Turkish writers are not included in this study and also that a number of important works by the selected authors do not fall within its remit.

The aim has been to present an objective appraisal of the literature concerned. The views on ethnic minorities expressed in this literature are not a reflection of my personal attitudes.

Literary references are taken from Turkish texts unless otherwise stated. Quotes have been translated into English by myself, except for those which are acknowledged as having been taken from published English translations. Turkish words and expressions have been used sparingly and appear in italics. The Turkish alphabet is used for Turkish words unless they are spelt otherwise in published English texts. For pronunciation of Turkish alphabet, see *Langenscheidt Turkish Dictionary*.

## Introduction

An Overview of Demographic Changes,

Ethnic Minority Status,

and

Popular Perceptions of Minorities in Ottoman Performance Arts.

The purpose of this study is to highlight and evaluate the presence of ethnic minorities in twentieth century Turkish fiction in the light of the demographic, political and social changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In much of this literature there has been little or no reference to past or present ethnic minorities despite the major impact they have had, and continue to have, on Turkish life. This is in stark contrast to the prominence given to Turks in Greek literature since the population exchange of 1923.<sup>1</sup> During the last two decades a variety of publications on ethnicity and culture have appeared in Turkey, and the question of ethnic identity in literature has started to be discussed at a serious level. For instance Nedim Gürsel has written papers on Greek and Jewish characters in Turkish fiction,<sup>2</sup> Paul Dumont has studied Greek characters in the works of Sait Faik.<sup>3</sup> And there have been some substantial studies made on the occurrence and perception of Greeks and other minorities by Herkül Millas,<sup>4</sup> and on Kurds by Rohat.<sup>5</sup> However, with the exception of Millas's latest book, these studies have focused on single minorities, and usually single authors. The intention here is to present a study of works by major mainstream twentieth century Turkish authors who have included minorities in their scenarios, to see how they have

<sup>1</sup> See Thomas Doulis, *Disaster and Fiction : Modern Greek Fiction and the Asia Minor Disaster of 1922*.

<sup>2</sup> See Nedim Gürsel, N" Sait Faik' in Eserinde İstanbul Rum Topluluğu" [1986] and "Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatındaki Birkaç Yahudi tip Üzerine" [1987] in *Toplum ve Bilim* 40 and 43/44 respectively; also "L'univers de Mario Levi : l'exil et l'écriture", *Paysage Littéraire de la Turquie Contemporaine*, 143-149.

<sup>3</sup> See Paul Dumont, P "Mélanges offert à Louis Bazin par ses disciples, collègues et amis", *Varia Turcica* XIX. 1992.

<sup>4</sup> See Herkül Millas, *Türk Romanı ve "Öteki" : Ulusal Kimlikte Yunan İmajı*.

<sup>5</sup> See Rohat, *Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatında Kürtler*, and *Yaşar Kemal'in Yapıtlarında Kürt Gerçeği : Çukurova - Van Karşılığının Çatısı*.

dealt with or made use of the existence of minorities in Turkish society. The frequency with which any particular group is discussed in this thesis reflects the frequency with which they occur in the works of these particular authors. No attempt is made to judge personal views, nor to criticize inaccuracies and misconceptions with regard to minorities. It is intended that the descriptions and characterizations in these respected and much read works should be allowed to reveal the changing perceptions of authors and their readers through the century.

The area covered by modern Turkey has for centuries been a place of moving and changing populations. Problems associated with living in proximity to peoples of other religions, customs and language were resolved by means which lasted virtually unchanged for hundreds of years, and included pragmatic attitudes towards intermarriage and assimilation, and a pragmatic policy of keeping people of different religious persuasions in separate quarters.

At the Ottoman court of Istanbul it was the custom for royalty and high ranking officials to take wives who could contribute beauty and intelligence to the genetic stock regardless of ethnic origin. High level government posts were also appointed regardless of ethnic background, though conversion to Islam was a prerequisite. Consequently the top level of Ottoman society was always multi-ethnic; it was considered normal, even desirable, to have a mixed ethnic background.

In rural areas nomadic or semi-nomadic groups encouraged the strengthening of the clan through intermarriage or assimilation regardless of ethnicity. Tribal or clan identity was more important than ethnic identity. In the settled communities, religion replaced the clan as the unifying force.

During the nineteenth century the population of Istanbul more or less doubled in size reaching over one million in 1897, of which approximately fifty percent were listed as Turks. The rest of the population was made up of twenty five per cent Greeks, thirteen per cent Armenians, five per cent Jews, and less than one per cent each of Albanians, Kurds, Serbians and Christian Arabs.<sup>6</sup> At this time the term 'Turk' had

---

<sup>6</sup> H. Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914 : Demographic and Social Characteristics*, p. 104.

become almost synonymous with 'Muslim', and in demographic tables the group listed as Turks included considerable numbers of Circassian, Balkan and diverse Turkic immigrants.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile Anatolia was also undergoing a transformation as wave after wave of Muslim immigrants arrived from the Caucasus, the Crimea and the Balkans. In consequence the proportion of Muslims rose to over seventy four per cent of the population. During the years up to 1914 there was little change in official population statistics but the figures masked considerable changes in the population . Immigration continued on a large scale but it was counterbalanced by enormous losses. By the end of World War I up to twenty per cent of the population of Anatolia had been killed, and another ten per cent had emigrated. These included several hundred thousand Armenians and large numbers of Greeks. Eventually the population exchange under the provisions of the 1922 Treaty of Lausanne meant that no Greeks remained in Anatolia and only a reduced number were left in Istanbul. Following an agreement at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, Jewish immigration into Palestine was encouraged and a gradual exodus of Jews from Turkey started to take effect. The Wealth Tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) of 1942 was particularly harsh on non-Muslim minorities with the result that many of the remaining Jews and Greeks in Istanbul left the country.

The Kurds, whose support had been enlisted during negotiations leading up to the Treaty of Lausanne in return for national rights, found that they became the victims of a programme of dispersal and assimilation. Two Kurdish rebellions in 1925 and 1929 started to raise public awareness of Kurdish issues in the context of Eastern Turkey, but they were quickly quashed.<sup>8</sup>

The effect of these population movements was that when the new Turkish Republic was formed in 1922, over ninety per cent of the population was Muslim, and most of it had migrated within the previous half century from various parts of Eastern

---

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed analysis of population figures and developments, see: Karpat, H. Kemal, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914 : Demographic and social Characteristics*, and Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Ottoman Anatolia at the End of the Empire*.

<sup>8</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Society and the Modern State : Ethnic Nationalism Versus Nation Building*, 26, 36, 45.

Europe and Central Asia. The majority were Turkic peoples speaking similar languages, but many were Caucasian, Laz, Balkan, Kurdish or Arab.

During the first twenty five years of the republic, collective effort was made to push through the Kemalist reforms. It was not until the fifties when the multi-party system acknowledged the validity of alternative policies that serious political questions started to be asked on a substantial scale. From the sixties onwards there was a sustained increase of wealth in the cities and Western Anatolia, and a gradual spread of industrialisation. The pitiful lack of progress in South Eastern Anatolia became more apparent as the gap between developed and undeveloped regions widened. Politically active members of the considerable Kurdish element in this area used this neglect as justification for reviving their nationalist struggle. The terrorist campaigns which followed were to hinder, or provide an excuse for delaying, the implementation of measures that could diffuse the situation. Thus, the Kurdish movement continued to expand and began to attract new sympathy within and outside Turkey.

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought the ethnic diversity of Eastern Europe and Central Asia into the international public arena as one after another of its regions broke away forming independent nation states. In Turkey, public awareness of ethnic issues was allowed to develop through press and media debate during a period of government tolerance towards these matters. However it provoked great unease among those who remembered the destruction caused by break away nationalism at the end of the previous century.

Traditionally cities and towns had been divided into separate religio-cultural communities or *millets*. There were distinct Greek, Armenian and Jewish quarters which had almost no contact with each other on a daily basis other than for trade and business, street festivals and entertainments, and through the employment of non-Muslims as servants in Muslim households.

The Greek community or *millet-i Rum* was always the largest and most powerful of the non-Muslim groups, largely because of the strong influence of the Greek Patriarchate. Although usually used as a reference to Greek inhabitants, the term

was sometimes used as a generic term for all Orthodox Christians including Serbs, Rumanians, Bulgarian, Vlachs, Albanians and Arabs in addition to Turkish speaking Greeks (*Karamanlı*) and Greek speaking Greeks. Members of the Greek community were traditionally involved in commerce and shipping, but the poorer Greeks in provincial areas worked as peasants and fishermen.

The Jewish community was made up of Romanoit Jews who had inhabited Anatolia since before Ottoman times, Ashkenazi Jews from Germany and France, and the progressive Sephardic and Crypto Jews from Spain. Although Hebrew was their language of religion, in daily life they used the language of their respective countries of origin. The absence of an officially recognised post for a high-ranking religious leader responsible for all Jewish citizens meant that the Jewish *millet* was never as cohesive or powerful as its Greek counterpart. Most Jews lived in Istanbul where they had some notable successes as doctors, dentists, businessmen and financiers.

The Armenian *millet* was fragmented until the end of the nineteenth century, not least because of its division into Orthodox and Catholic communities. Most Anatolian Armenians were peasants while in the cities they succeeded in commerce, finance and property development. The Muslim minorities, including Kurds, were not officially recognised as separate *millets* and often no distinction was made between them in official records.

After the establishment of the Turkish republic little attention was paid to the multi-ethnic backgrounds of its citizens. The 'troublesome' indigenous minorities, that is Greeks and Armenians, had disappeared almost entirely from Anatolia through massacre, expulsion and forced and voluntary migration. Those who remained in the cities recognised and accepted the inevitability of total assimilation. Likewise, Muslim immigrants to Turkey knew their best hopes for the future lay in becoming an integral part of the new state.

Ten years of war had left the government with few resources for building a nation and creating a new national identity. There was an unspoken acceptance that ethnic and cultural differences had to be set aside if the republic was to succeed. Failure

was no longer in the interests of anyone but the most reactionary religious zealots. So while everyone knew that the majority of Turkish citizens had an ancestry elsewhere, there was a collective effort to utilise shared interests for the benefit of the nation, and little desire to revive painful memories of separate ethnic or cultural roots.

In literature, various changes had been taking place since the influx of European ideas following the Tanzimat reforms of the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> The non-Muslim communities, which already had long-standing links with Europe, frequently served as channels through which European thought and literature reached the Ottoman intelligentsia. By the end of the century many non-Muslims were more fluent in spoken Turkish than in their own languages, which were increasingly being reserved for religious occasions. However, because of the difficulties in reading the Arabic script, numerous publications were produced in Turkish, but printed in the Armenian, Hebrew and Greek scripts.

By far the largest body of this literature is to be found in the Armenian script. According to Turgut Kut, between 1727 and 1931 the Armenians published over 1000 books, newspapers and journals including translations of over thirty five European authors, using Turkish language and Armenian script. Most of the foreign authors were French, but there were a few English authors, such as John Bunyan and Edward Young.<sup>10</sup> The Jewish community was relatively late in realising the need for literacy in Turkish, but by the end of the nineteenth century, as a result of *Alliance Israélite Universelle* educational policies,<sup>11</sup> Turkish was being taught with considerable success in Jewish schools and there was a demand for Turkish publications in Hebrew script. Turkish publications in Greek script were fewer in number and produced mainly for the Karamanlı Greek community.<sup>12</sup> One reason for the proliferation of these

---

<sup>9</sup> For information on the Tanzimat era, see Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey : A Modern History*, 53-74.

<sup>10</sup> Turgut Kut, "Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Telif ve Tercüme Konuları I " in *Tebliğler : II. Türk Edebiyatı Cilt 1* 195-197.

<sup>11</sup> The *Alliance Israélite Universelle* was founded in Paris in 1860. This organisation sought to regenerate backward Jewish communities by establishing modern secular schools.

<sup>12</sup> The Karamanlı community was comprised of Anatolian Greeks who had been producing literature in the Turkish language and in Greek script since the early eighteenth century. For more information on Karamanlı texts, see Miller Grimm, *The Karamanlı - Turkish Texts : The Historical Changes in their Script and Phonology*.

publications compared to those in Ottoman Turkish was that texts in non-Ottoman script were mostly spared from the strict censorship rules initiated by Sultan Abdülhamid II (1842-1918) in the 1880s. Publishers were relatively free to publish as they pleased in non-Ottoman scripts.

Popular theatre was an arena which embraced all cultural and social groups of the Ottoman Empire. Performers were drawn from different ethnic groups, and they played to multi-cultural audiences of all social levels. In a society that was designed to keep the population within strictly defined social parameters, these entertainments were both a proof of, and an expression of a shared culture enjoyed by the vast majority of inhabitants in Anatolia, Rumelia and Istanbul.

Dramatic presentations took various forms, and were performed by actors, dancers, mime-artists, story-tellers, and puppeteers (shadow puppets and marionettes). Until the mid-nineteenth century there were no real storylines but, within the framework of a few set scenarios, entertainers would improvise on topical issues according to the locality and social level of the audience. The shows would include characters which the audience recognised immediately from their costume, signature tune or dance. Each character would have stock phrases or mannerisms which they incorporated into the action. Many of the performers belonged to companies which had links with Ottoman institutions, including trade guilds and corporations, the army and Janissary divisions, religious orders, educational institutions, and the Court. The topic on which the entertainment was based often reflected in some way the institution to which the company was linked.

The art of the *meddah*, or storyteller, involved improvisation of a storyline, verbal wit, dramatic flair, an ability to impersonate different characters, and a knowledge of topical issues, both at government and local levels. The plots of Turkish puppet plays were mostly improvisory using certain stock characters including *Yabancı* (the foreigner), *Arnavut* (the Albanian), *Arap Şeyhi* (the Arab Sheikh), *Arap* (the Negro) and *Yahudi* (the Jew).<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Metin And, *The History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, 24-33.



The success and popularity of the shadow puppet theatre, known as *Karagöz*, lay in its particular brand of political satire, and its parodies of official and important personages. *Orta Oyunu*, which shared many features with *Karagöz*, was performed with actors rather than puppets. Its origins are uncertain, but attempts have been made to link it with ancient Greek mimes, through Byzantium or the *Commedia dell' Arte*. The earliest recorded performances date back to 1675, but it is probable that they were in existence much earlier. A traditional *Orta Oyunu* company would consist of up to thirty players, including dancers and musicians. In 1870 there were about ten companies that drew on a pool of around five hundred actors.<sup>14</sup>

*Karagöz* and *Orta Oyunu* consisted of three parts: the prologue (*Mukaddeme*), the dialogue (*Muhavere*), and the main plot (*Fasil*). Of these, the *fasil* incorporated a number of instantly recognisable characters with different costumes, manners and dialects including caricatures (*taklit*). The *taklit* were secondary characters, who were essential to the plot and were present on stage for much of the performance. Their characteristics, particularly their weaknesses, were exaggerated and stereotyped to a comic degree. Among the *taklit* characters there were professionals, provincials, non-Muslims, ethnic minority characters, foreigners, and colonials, as well as characters with physical and mental defects.

The minority representatives encountered amongst the *taklit* characters were a diverse group and included: Turk, Greek or Frank, Armenian, Jew, Laz, Rumeli or Muhacir (Immigrant), Albanian, Tartar, Kurd, Gypsy, Persian, and Arab. A very brief summary of the features which characterise these characters is given here.<sup>15</sup>

The Turk is a strong good-hearted wood-cutter from Anatolia. He is so tall that *Karagöz* sometimes climbs up a ladder in order to speak to him. He uses rough language, but is not provoked when teased. He is unsophisticated and ignorant of

---

<sup>14</sup> Metin And, *The History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, 34-44.

<sup>15</sup> Metin And gives detailed descriptions of *Karagöz* and *Orta Oyunu* characters in *The History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*, 44-48.

urban life, and frequently talks about his sweetheart in his home village. The Greek or Frank appears as a European or Levantine doctor, tailor, merchant or tavern owner. He speaks poor Turkish with a heavy accent and liberal use of Greek or French words, and his attempts at humour frequently misfire. The Armenian is a humourless rather slow-witted head of household, who works as a waiter or butler. Alternatively he may be a jeweller with an eye for fine objects. The Jew is a vulgar, cowardly and miserly money lender, dealer or pedlar. He makes malicious verbal attacks on Karagöz in his broken Turkish, but runs away from any physical action for fear of getting hurt.

The Laz comes from the Black Sea coast and is a boatman, a wool-beater or tin smith. His regional accent is very strong, and he talks very fast and nervously, and has difficulty in speaking coherently. He pays little attention to what others say to him, and he is quickly provoked to anger. Often his mouth has to be forcibly closed in order to let someone else speak. The Rumeli or Muhacir is a slow speaking Balkan immigrant who tries to appear intelligent. He is often portrayed as a wrestler which he likes to boast about, even though he rarely wins his matches. The Albanian is ignorant and boastful, and quick to threaten violence. He works as a gardener, game-keeper or cattle trader. His strong accent makes his attempts to use polite language appear comical. The Tatar is a minor character, mostly noted for the rolled "r" in his dialect.

The Kurd is the neighbourhood night watchman. He often uses Kurdish words in conversation. His expression is vacant, but his manner is haughty. The Gypsy is mainly noted for his or her appearance. The man wears a black outfit with knee breeches. The woman wears a blue robe and carries a basket of flowers. The Persian is a trader of soft goods or a money lender. He talks of big business transactions but his deals are usually very modest. He is easily irritated by jokes made at his expense but has a genuine love of poetry which he recites frequently. The Arab is sometimes a merchant or traveller, sometimes a beggar or street trader. He begins a prayer ritual whenever he is asked to pay for anything. Alternatively he may be a Negro eunuch. Both Arab types appear stupid in their use of language.

Most of these caricatures are cruel personifications which would not be allowed

on the modern stage. However they are mentioned here because of frequent literary references to minorities, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century. It will be seen later that many of these references are not supported by descriptions or any identifying detail, indicating that authors assumed their readers had a knowledge of these caricatures or stereotype characters.

At the start of the twentieth century, Ottoman, and later Turkish, fiction was drawing on European literature for its overall structure and content, but it still relied heavily on the traditional images, including characterisations and dialogue, of popular local entertainment. It will be seen that as memories of the departed minorities receded, the role of ethnic minorities in literature changed. For writers who turned away from light-hearted entertainment to pursue serious probing of the individual psyche, minorities evolved from being instantly recognisable caricatures to being personifications of the mysterious and intriguing facets of human nature. It will also be seen that there have been repeated attempts by authors to portray a Turkish society in which different ethnic groups and cultures live together and retain their individuality without provoking discord or conflict.

## Chapter One

### The End of the Ottoman Empire

and

### The New Turkish Republic

As the new century dawned, changes were surreptitiously taking place within Ottoman society. Outwardly few differences were yet apparent, but revolutionary thinking was rapidly gaining momentum among the educated classes. At the same time nationalist movements were threatening the Ottoman frontiers, while European powers and Russia waited to see how best to exploit the developing situation to their advantage. Although the discontent of minority citizens in the Ottoman empire was finding expression through nationalism, the concept of nationalism had hardly started to permeate Ottoman thinking.

Because the term 'Ottoman' was used for all the ethnic and religious minority components of the empire, the word 'Turk' was rarely used by Ottomans except as a derogatory term referring to 'backward' peasant communities of Turkic origin living in Anatolia. The word minority was reserved for non-Muslim communities, that is to say Christians and Jews. Because of the vast, albeit shrinking, size of the Ottoman empire it was normal to identify an Ottoman citizen by referring to his place of birth or ethnic origin. Thus an Ottoman barber might be described as *Rum berberi*, *Ermeni berberi*, or *Laz berberi* depending on whether he was an Ottoman Greek, Armenian or Laz. Such identifying labels made a distinction between Greeks from different areas: *Rum* (Ottoman Greek), *Karamanlı* (Central Anatolian Greek), *Yunanlı* (mainland Greek), whereas *Rumelili* was a rather vague term that referred to citizens from somewhere west of the Bosphorus. Muslims born in Anatolia were *Kürt* (Kurdish), *Arab* (Arab or African), or *Türk* (in which case they would be identified by their town or province), for instance *Bursalı Mehmet* or *Konyalı Necat*. Muslims who came to Istanbul or

Anatolia from the Balkans or beyond were referred to as *muhacir* meaning 'immigrant'. The only group to have no such identification was that of Ottoman Turks born and bred in Istanbul. Non-Muslim and Muslim minorities formed an essential element of Ottoman society as servants or service providers for middle-class households. They were not perceived as posing any serious threat to Ottoman society until the onset of the Balkan wars, when it became clear that the loyalty of Ottoman subjects could not be taken for granted.

The Turkish press was still tightly controlled under Abdülhamid II's censorship policy, yet intellectuals had not forgotten the progressive ideas that had produced the Tanzimat movement. Such ideas, while not openly voiced, continued to be exchanged indirectly, through humour, allegory and innuendo in conversation, drama and literature. Turkish fiction, though still in its infancy, was developing fast as writers responded to increasing popular demand. Writers of this time were cosmopolitan creatures. Almost without exception, they were born into Istanbul families, were well-educated, and they went on to study abroad. Some travelled to distant regions of the empire during childhood, and many visited the capitals of Europe in a professional capacity. Their various experiences helped to fuel the ongoing debate over the comparative merits of Western and Eastern cultural values.

Writers were increasingly seeking new forms of literary expression, and the mystical and legendary traditions of poetry and oral literature were being replaced by realism and naturalism. Authors who were steeped in the realism of nineteenth century French literature<sup>1</sup> chose to set their works in the familiar settings of Istanbul middle-class society, and it was quite natural for ethnic minority servants to be brought into these domestic scenes. They were usually portrayed as stereotypes in the *Karagöz* tradition, but writers soon began to find new roles for the minority women. Applying realism to fictional portrayals of male-female relationships in 'ordinary' Muslim Ottoman households proved to be severely limiting and writers therefore looked to non-Muslim women for fictional companions in their explorations of the kind of male/female

---

<sup>1</sup>French realist writers who were widely read in Turkey included Balzac, Flaubert, Zola and Daudet.

relationships so fashionable in nineteenth century French literature. Tales of immorality in the cosmopolitan setting of Beyoğlu were acceptable as long as any behaviour which did not come up to the ideal standards of Muslim womanhood could be projected onto *gavur* or infidel individuals. Thus it became a literary convention that brothel keepers and prostitutes were represented as Christian or Jewish. This association inevitably gave the impression that non-Muslim women had lower moral standards than their Muslim counterparts.

As authors overcame the moral obstacles of writing about male-female relationships, they began to explore the emotional aspects of a liaison. This was done with varying degrees of success, but it will be seen that in literature, when men seek sympathy for their personal problems it is frequently from European or non-Muslim women. The custom of employing European governesses contributed further to the perception of European women as trouble-makers. As educated women they refused to dress and behave like servants. Furthermore their presence at the heart of a household created feelings of unease which were fully exploited by writers.

The Balkan wars created real shock waves in Istanbul society. Not only was the action frighteningly close, but the uprising of the Balkan people was perceived as betrayal. In fiction, the appearance in Istanbul of Muslim immigrants from the Balkans is perceived with some suspicion. They are portrayed as shadowy, unfamiliar characters who are kept at a distance or treated with distrust. Immigrants who arrived from Russia after the Bolshevik revolution are ignored by writers of this period. Although they stayed in Istanbul, they did not become assimilated and most of them soon moved on to other countries. The campaigns in the east of Turkey which decimated the Armenian communities and dispersed thousands of Kurds across Anatolia were totally outside the experience of most Ottomans. The events involving population movements in Anatolia were ignored by writers of this time with the exception of Halide Edip Adıvar.

The First World War and the subsequent British occupation of Istanbul introduced new elements of resentment and mistrust towards Europe. The long-

standing hypothetical argument over the comparative merits of Eastern and Western culture was no longer merely a topic for drawing room intellectual debate. The stark and humiliating reality was that the West had proved to be not only the victor in war, but had shown it was willing to use its power to completely destroy what remained of Ottoman lands. The occupation of Izmir by mainland Greeks finally galvanised Ottomans into serious action, and every writer saw it as his duty to contribute to the emerging national cause in some way. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu [1889-1974] was especially prominent in this respect. Like Halide Edip, who is discussed later, his passions were inflamed by what he observed and experienced during those times. Apart from his regular journalistic articles he wrote a collection of short stories based on the experiences of Turkish war victims that were intended to shock and inflame. His novels, which have an air of authenticity because of their references to real political and military figures, were highly regarded by his contemporaries. However his rather dry style and his unsympathetic portrayal of rural Turks detract from their appeal to contemporary readers.

Once the War of Independence was over, writers were faced with a situation for which none of them were, or could have been, fully prepared. The country was in a state of exhaustion, its people physically and emotionally drained, and Ankara had replaced Istanbul as the centre of power and ideas. Authors responded in different ways; some tried to continue as before, some stopped writing altogether, and a few began to tackle the ideas envisaged by Atatürk for Turkey.

The writers chosen to represent this eventful period are Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar [1864-1944], Halide Edip Adıvar [1884-1964] and Reşat Nuri Güntekin [1889-1956]. Hüseyin Rahmi and Halide Edip were both publishing works before the wars began whereas Reşat Nuri started to publish at the end of the First World War. In their different ways they each wrote about the events or effects of the Balkan wars, the First World War and the War of Independence. After the wars were over Hüseyin Rahmi continued to write about Istanbul life until he went to Ankara as an MP after which he stopped writing, Halide Edip left the country and published her memoirs, and

Reşat Nuri applied himself to convincing his readership of the need for reform along the lines of Atatürk's ideas. In the following pages it will be seen how the attitudes of the three writers mentioned above were shaped by historical events and personal circumstances in the context of ethnic minority awareness.

### **Huseyin Rahmi Gürpınar**

Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar was born on 17 August 1864 in Istanbul where he was to spend most of his life until he died at his home on Heybeli Ada in 1944. His father and grandfather were military officers with records of bravery, but the family also had a tradition of scholarship and writing handed down from Hüseyin Rahmi's paternal great-grandfather, Kitabî Osman Efendi. Hüseyin Rahmi's mother was Ayşe Sıdıka Hanım, daughter of İbrahim Efendi who came from a family of merchants. She died of tuberculosis at the age of 22 when Hüseyin Rahmi was 3 or 4 years old. After her death, Hüseyin Rahmi's father remarried and Hüseyin Rahmi was sent to live with his maternal aunt and grandmother in Aksaray.

Hüseyin Rahmi attended Ağayokuşu district primary school, followed by Junior and Senior High School (*Mahmudiye Rüştiye* and *Mahrec-i Aklâm* respectively) and at the same time received private lessons in French. He went on to study at the School of Political Science (*Mekteb-i Mülkiye*), after which he had successive jobs as an official at the Judicial Penal Affairs Office, as a probationary member of the Second Commercial court, and in the Public Translation Office. After the proclamation of constitutional monarchy in 1908, he stopped working for the state and began to support himself by his writing.

Hüseyin Rahmi wrote his first novel at the age of twelve, and his first play (*Gülbahar Hanım*) when he was at junior high school. His first published work was *İstanbul'da bir Frenk*, which appeared in the newspaper *Ceride-i Havadis* in 1888. The work which brought him to the attention of the public was his novel *Şık* [1888], the first part of which was written when he was at junior high school. On the recommendation of friends, he sent it to the renowned writer and critic, Ahmet Mithat. Two days later an announcement appeared in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* summoning the



author of *Şık* to the publication office. Ahmet Mithat refused to believe that the ‘child’ who responded to this summons could have written this work and, as a test, he sent Hüseyin Rahmi away to complete the novel. In fact Ahmet Mithat thought the second part of the novel to be better than the first and, claiming Hüseyin Rahmi as his adopted child, he began serialising *Şık* in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* on 23 February 1888.

From that time onwards Hüseyin Rahmi was publishing collections of translated articles, and translating murder stories for book-sellers. When the editor of *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, Ahmet Cevdet, left to start his own journal (*İkdam*) the salary passed to Hüseyin Rahmi who now began translating Maupassant, Anatole France and Zola. Later he joined Ahmet Cevdet at *İkdam*, where he continued to publish translations.

After a while, for a bet, he wrote *İffet* in a romantic style imitative of Vecihî’s novels<sup>2</sup> which were very popular at the time. This was serialised in 1897. He then returned to his own style, publishing *Mutallâka* and *Mürebbiye* in 1898, *Bir Muadele-i Sevda* and *Metres* in 1899, and *Nimentaş* in 1901. *Mürebbiye* in particular was widely acclaimed.

In 1908 Hüseyin Rahmi collaborated with Ahmet Rasim in producing a humorous magazine called *Boşboğaz*. Unfortunately the paper was received with disapproval by government authorities, and despite the editors being acquitted at the ensuing court case, the journal was banned. During this time, he became a friend and colleague of İbrahim Hilmi, a socialist thinker and publisher who collaborated on *Boşboğaz* and who published some of Hüseyin Rahmi’s novels. While there is no overt suggestion of socialist ideology in Hüseyin Rahmi’s fiction, he consistently attacked what he perceived to be social and economic injustices.

For the next thirteen years Hüseyin Rahmi continued to have successive novels serialised in newspapers such as *İkdam*, *Sabah*, *Ziya*, *Zaman*, *Vakit*, and *Cumhuriyet*. However the publication of *Ben Deli Miyim?* in 1925 led to another court case on the grounds that the book contained immoral material. Hüseyin Rahmi contended that the public needed to know about immoral practices in order to be able to avoid them. Again

---

<sup>2</sup> Vecihi (-1903) published a number of popular romantic novels between 1896 and 1899. See İsmail Habib, *Tanzimattanberi I : Edebiyat Tarihi*, 250.

he was acquitted.

In 1935 Hüseyin Rahmi became a member of parliament. He served as an MP until 1943, shortly before his death in 1944. Hüseyin Rahmi did not publish any new works after 1935. Perhaps he realised that his talent lay in writing fiction based on that with which he was most familiar, and that he did not feel capable of writing with the same depth and authenticity about his new experiences in Ankara and state politics.

Hüseyin Rahmi's novels dwell on social themes such as the exploitation and unjust treatment of the weak including women and children, the devastating effects of poverty on family life, the misguided attempts at imitating Western manners, the moral decline in middle-class Turkish society, the ensuing amorality that manifested itself in inappropriate male/female relationships and financial greed, and the comparison between popular myth and modern scientific philosophical thought. He chose to convey his ideas in the context of Naturalism, the selection of strands of real life presented in a form which is ordered by the author. To this school of writing, which was drawn from nineteenth century French literature, he added the Turkish traditions of story-telling (*meddah*) and folk theatre (*karagöz*) to create characters and situations which go beyond natural boundaries, and used exaggeration to convey points more forcefully than could be achieved through realism alone. Thus, while his use of realism gave his work modern authenticity, it was coloured by a type of exaggeration that was familiar, and therefore acceptable, to his readers.

The use of a popular literary style, particularly in dialogue, gave Hüseyin Rahmi's writing a widespread appeal that helped to mask the seriousness of the topics he introduced. There are differences of opinion as to how successful he was in blending narrative with what is often a slap-stick style of dialogue. However what is incontestable is that, at a time when language reform was still at the discussion stage, his use of such dialogue made his literature accessible to a new and expanding readership. Hüseyin Rahmi believed passionately that serious ideas could be conveyed to all sections of society if they were delivered with brevity and interspersed with entertainment. To this end, each work is an attempt to educate or improve the reader.

His intention was to achieve this without resorting to patronising attitudes and tedious sermons such as appeared in the literature of some of his predecessors and contemporaries.

The novels of Hüseyin Rahmi provide a social history of nearly half a century of Istanbul life. They contain accurate representations of the speech patterns and dialects of Istanbul Turks and ethnic minorities, as well as records of places and traditions that have now ceased to exist. Among the momentous changes that took place during this time was the adjustment of the different ethnic elements to social and political developments. Hüseyin Rahmi demonstrates how the social balance between the ethnic communities that had developed during centuries of Ottoman rule became disrupted by the effects of war, and how the breakdown of this balance created new suspicions and resentments. Although Hüseyin Rahmi falls short of joining the popular bandwagon of nationalist fervour that emerged in the 1920's, his approach towards minorities alters from one of magnanimous inclusiveness and gentle satire to one of bitter reproach, although it should be added that his reproaches are directed in equal measure at his Turkish compatriots. Towards the end of his writing career, he demonstrates an optimistic acceptance of minorities within a new social order in which differences are noted, at times ridiculed, but nevertheless accorded respect.

The plot of *Metres* revolves around Mamzel Parnas, a high class French prostitute who first came to Istanbul with a Greek businessman. Her legendary beauty is matched by intelligence and cultured sophistication yet counterbalanced by “a complete lack of morality and unlimited human baseness.”<sup>3</sup> Her presence in the novel resembles that of the governess in *Mürebbiye* in the way she remains aloof from the mayhem caused by her ambitious, often whimsical, material pursuits. Dazzled by the ostentation of Istanbul's Oriental past, she seeks to acquire the status and lifestyle of former royal concubines. To this end she uses her beauty and 'European' manners to unscrupulously manipulate and exploit any male she believes can provide the wherewithal for financing her insatiable fancies, with no thought for the damage she

---

<sup>3</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Metres*, 380.

does to the families of these men. While European characters like Parnas do not represent the recognised minority communities of Istanbul, they play important roles in Hüseyin Rahmi's work. There is a distinct suggestion that characters such as Parnas in *Metres*, Anjel in *Mürebbiye*, and later Savaro in *Billûr Kalb*, are intended to represent the shadowy hand of Europe and its involvement in intrigues that bring about the demise of the Ottoman Empire, and its exploitation of the disarray that follows.

### *Metres*

In *Metres* Hüseyin Rahmi portrays an extended domestic situation in which the functioning of a family, consisting of Hâmi Bey, his wife Saffet, his mother Firuze and his son Rıfkı, depends entirely upon a number of employees of various minority backgrounds. These employees consist of servants, a corsetier, a governess and teachers. In the tradition of *comedia del arte*, and indeed of *Karagöz*, these employees are seen to be quick-witted, intelligent, and more knowledgeable about the ways of the world than their employers who have little interest in changing the present order of society beyond being able to display a superficial knowledge of French culture.

Since the death of her husband, Firuze Hanım has had difficulty in maintaining her 'respectable' middle class household. She has had to sack most of her household staff, sell off family estates and items of value, and has pursued a number of financially advantageous amorous relationships. Throughout this process her one confidante has been Nedime. Nedime is partly Ethiopian and was originally employed as a nanny for Hâmi. For years she has been consulted by Firuze on all kinds of worldly matters and is regularly entrusted with the sale of family treasures in times of need. Nedime clearly has unlimited diplomacy and tact, but she is not beyond keeping a substantial percentage of the sales revenue for herself.<sup>4</sup>

Meryem Dudu, the Armenian maid of Saffet, plays a more protective role towards her mistress. Saffet is totally unequipped for surviving in the world. She cannot read or write, her youthful beauty is vanishing under folds of fat gained through lack of physical activity, and she has no knowledge of, and no opportunity to learn,

---

<sup>4</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Metres*, 51.

how to run a household. Firuze Hanım has accepted her as a bride for Hâmi in the knowledge that she would never have the wit to understand what really goes on in the family, nor to interfere with the relationship between mother and son. The only thing Saffet understands is that her husband has lost interest in her, but she does not know why this has happened. Meryem is a very good-natured woman of forty five years, with died hair, who admits to being no more than thirty nine. In contrast to Saffet, she is multi-lingual with a knowledge of Armenian, French and Turkish (which she speaks with a thick Armenian accent) but has difficulty reading Ottoman. She is constantly trying to avoid Revai Bey, the idle fifty year old son of a deceased retainer who has managed to remain in the household. Revai Bey has pretensions to being a philosopher and poet and, after a few drinks, has an embarrassing propensity for biting her. Meryem, though unwilling to complain to Firuze about this behaviour, has no qualms about spurning his overtures saying “Do you think I am a spoon that I belong in your mouth?”<sup>5</sup>

Meryem is a sympathetic audience for Saffet who relies on her for information about what goes on in the family and the world outside, and who turns to Meryem for comfort and help when the challenges of life become too much for her. Despite the fact that in many ways Meryem is superior to Saffet, she displays no sign of envy, nor of any wish to see her mistress humiliated. Meryem observes that Saffet and Hâmi Bey are growing apart because while Hâmi is espousing European ideas, Saffet remains bound by old social restrictions. In Meryem’s words “. . . they just don’t suit each other any more. The mistress follows the old way and the master sings opera.”<sup>6</sup> However she offers no suggestions as to how Saffet might change her current situation. Although, it is Meryem who first informs Saffet that she has a secret admirer, she also warns her of the dangers of allowing an intrigue to develop.

Saffet is introduced to the world of romantic affairs and intrigue at the beginning of the novel by her Armenian corsetier, Hezar Kürkçiyân. Hezar is accustomed to hearing about the intimate details of her clients’ secret liaisons, and she does not hesitate

---

<sup>5</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Metres*, 53.

<sup>6</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Metres*, 10.

to offer her opinion and advice. She educates Saffet in the signs of a husband's infidelity and the role of a mistress, and she encourages Saffet to look after her own interests and seek happiness outside marriage if need be. This appears to be the first time anyone has treated Saffet as anything other than an ignorant child, a marriageable commodity or a useless wife.

Meryem and Hezar continually use the Turkish language in a manner peculiar to Armenians at that time. Their use of the language is fluent but they speak with strong accents and considerable bending of grammatical rules. The misunderstandings that arise between Turks and Armenians are used in this and later novels as a source of amusement that harks back to *Karagöz* comic scenes. In one scene Firuze Hanım and Hâmi Bey enter while Saffet is being fitted for a corset and they insist on seeing 'the corset shown in the design' (*resmi ikasını*). Hezar misinterprets this as a request to see the back view (*resmi ensesi*) and her attempt to explain the difference between the back and front of a corset provokes patronising laughter from Firuze and her son. However despite their amusement at Hezar's expense, Firuze does not hesitate to ask her to recommend a governess for Saffet's son.

The arrival of a new Armenian governess, Madam Krike, provides a new focus for the interests of Revai Bey. Despite the severity of her appearance and her humourlessly earnest attitude to life, this middle-aged spinster intrigues Revai. For the first time in his life he finds someone who is prepared to discuss philosophy. A long comic discussion about ancient Greek philosophers takes place in which they have to revert to Turkish since Revai is unable to sustain a complex conversation in French, and in which Revai is repeatedly shown up as being ignorant and misinformed. As Madam Krike becomes more and more exasperated with Revai, he becomes increasingly excited by her.

The three Armenian and one Ethiopian women in this novel are sufficiently intelligent and knowledgeable to see through the facade of domestic respectability and cosmopolitan culture that this Turkish household presents to the outside world. However, while they are not afraid to engage in repartee or to give direct negative

answers, they maintain a level of diplomacy that ensures their continued employment.

The male minority characters in this novel are tutors who were engaged to give language tuition to Hâmi Bey when he was a child. Firuze had tried out at least eight of these tutors before she found what she wanted:

A number of tutors were engaged to teach Hâmi Bey. But because of his mother's worries over his weak and puny physique, she insisted that rather than the student paying attention to his teachers, the tutors had to find a way of teaching in accordance with the young boy's will.<sup>7</sup>

In practice this meant applauding any answer Hâmi chose to give, whether right or wrong. Eventually Firuze found tutors who were prepared to accept this challenge, and whom she kept happy with a constant and excessive supply of culinary delights. However the arrival of Mösyö Jan, a Frenchman new to Turkey and with no knowledge of Turkish, provided sport for young Hâmi and amusement for the other tutors. An argument between tutor and student over a basic point of French grammar resulted in Hâmi having a tantrum on the floor, whereupon Firuze persuaded Jan to apologise to the child and acknowledge his 'mistake'. In despair Mösyö Jan joined the other tutors in the garden where they were sitting under a tree overlooking the sea drinking coffee and smoking a water pipe. The Arabic teacher advised the young French tutor:

You can't teach properly in this household . . . . The child always gets his own way . . . . The food is good and plentiful, with beef and onion stew and wonderful cream desserts for me, turkey with saffron rice for Mürteza Efendi (pointing to the Persian teacher), and bouillon and tender beef for you. We should eat and then go to sit under the tree for our coffee and cigarette . . . . The only important thing to remember is that the child is master during lessons and he must never be contradicted. This needs to be recognised instantly. Look Monsieur, in this house it is the custom that after the first altercation with the boy they give you a

---

<sup>7</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Metres*, 37.

gold watch for encouragement. The second time they hand you ten lira and the third time they throw you out. Mürteza Efendi and I have had the gold watches and the money, so now we protect our quality of life by not offending the master.<sup>8</sup>

To this the Persian teacher adds:

I've never seen such a strange child. He pays no attention to lessons. But he is intelligent. The other day he wanted to annoy me in the lesson so he started claiming that "*amuhten* (meaning "learnt") was derived from "*armut* (meaning "pear") which gave the word very appealing associations. . . . I have the watch pinned on my chest, the money in my purse. I know that all that is left is for me to be thrown out. I didn't have the strength to deny his claim, so I replied: 'All right master, what you say is good. Very true. *Ahmute* comes from *armut*. When you are a bit older you will be an etymologist.' He liked this a lot. He sang my praises to his mother. The next day Madame called me and said: 'I am very pleased with your methods Mürteza Efendi, you are teaching the child well.' With this compliment she handed me five lira. I take the money, smoke the hookah, and have no need for anything more. Son of a bitch!!<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately Mösyö Jan is unable to compromise the rules of his language and Firuze replaces him with a Greek tutor named Nikolai Efendi who has no such loyalty to the purity of the French language. Nikolai exceeds even the Arabic and Persian teachers in his willingness to adopt the 'in house' education system. Despite his claimed excellence in both old and new languages, he has been hungry and penniless for a long time and is very happy to ignore grammar for the sake of regular tasty meals. He settles down to a routine of meeting his colleagues beneath the hazelnut tree in the evenings before dinner and exchanging stories about how many grammatical rules they have sacrificed that day in order to please young Hâmi.

---

<sup>8</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Metres*, 43-44

<sup>9</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Metres*, 44.



The long passages above have been quoted to demonstrate how the author presents the delicate social balance of Ottoman society, a balance which the Turkish family is trying to maintain at considerable cost, and in which the minorities are willing participants. These tutors are all prepared to 'play the game' in a way that ensures their own comfort while the Turkish family is squandering its assets in futile attempts to maintain its position in the dominant social class. There is no suggestion that one ethnic group is superior to another. They each have their talents which when pooled together constitute what is known as Ottoman society.

### ***Kuyruklu Yıldız Altında Bir İzdivaç***

Another, more negative, aspect of this interdependence is to be found in *Kuyruklu Yıldız Altında Bir İzdivaç* [1910], which was published after the euphoria of the constitutional changes in 1908 had subsided, at a time when an air of suspicion and mistrust was being exploited by the first Turkish nationalists. In this novel the people of Istanbul are seized by fear and panic because of rumours of impending havoc and destruction when Halley's comet passes over the earth. Some of these rumours are reported to come from reputable sources abroad, others are proclaimed by opportunists preying on people's fear of the unknown.

One voice calls out for people to unite in the face of this unknown, to forget past differences and to embrace their neighbours as friends. A comic scene ensues as this command is put into practice. Two much-maligned Greek servants are brought to tears when they are suddenly embraced by their employers. A Bulgarian dairyman admits to years of selling diluted milk and yogurt, while his Turkish customer confesses to intentionally withholding payments for months on end, resorting to every known trick for reducing the bill, and finally paying in the most worn and tattered notes he can find. Similar confessions are made in grocer and butcher shops about contaminated goods and under weighing:

In their confessions it was becoming apparent how selfish and malevolent everybody was to each other. It became clear how much ambition and egocentricity prevailed not just between different races, but

within the same (ethnic) communities, and even between members of the same family. Mankind seemed to be full of trickery. It appeared to be almost impossible to find two individuals that could be called friends, the word 'friend' had become meaningless. I was amazed how such hostile people had managed to live together for hundreds of years without destroying each other.<sup>10</sup>

### *Cadı*

In the same year *Cadı* [1912] was published. While this novel does not have ethnic minority characters, a new bitterness surfaces in the attitude of the Turkish people towards Europe. The author paints a sad picture of the Bosphorus, its shore strewn with refuse and its historical sites decaying through neglect. He laments the impression of the Turkish people such sights give to visiting Europeans. This is followed by a long bitter attack on the indifference of the Turkish municipal authorities who have allowed themselves to be exploited by the English (sic) with the result that the famed American Robert College was built on one of the prime geographical and historical sites overlooking the Bosphorus.<sup>11</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi continued his critical attacks on what he saw to be an increasing degeneration in Turkish society due to the effects of war and poverty in *Hakka Sığındık* and *Hayattan Sayfalar*, both published in 1919.

### *Kadınlar Vaizi*

Hüseyin Rahmi creates some neat caricatures that reflect his perception of the four main ethnic elements of Istanbul in the short story "Yankesiciler" (*Kadınlar Vaizi*, 1920]. The *yankesiciler* are four young pickpockets, Jewish Mişon, Turkish Mıstık, Greek Niko and Armenian Vartan who have found rich pickings among the ostentatious new war-rich of the Galata district of Istanbul at a time when unemployment is prevalent. After the armistice, poverty becomes even more widespread and the four thieves find they have to adopt new strategies in order to remain 'in business' and keep ahead of rivals.

---

<sup>10</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Kuyruklu Yıldız Altında Bir Evlenme*, 82-83.

<sup>11</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Cadı*, 73-78.

The author outlines briefly the background of the four lads. Mişon went to the Alliance school where he learnt all about business.<sup>12</sup> He is familiar with all the basic rules of thieving, confidence tricks, and looting. Mistik is ignorant and incompetent; his brief attendance at school was mostly spent playing truant, and his naive, foolish and macho nature is not suited to a life of petty crime. Niko is good-looking and a stylish dresser; he knows about everything and can turn his hand to anything. He has been to a Greek school and has a smattering of several languages. Vartan is hard-working but clumsy; his career as a pickpocket started when he was expelled from his Armenian school for stealing a teacher's silver topped walking stick.

The sharp-thinking Mişon regards the new situation as a challenge to which he wants to apply his business theories. He persuades the others to form a 'company' into which they pool their takings and from which they share the profits. Mistik and Vartan follow this plan to the letter, while Niko holds back half of his takings and Mişon puts in just twenty per cent of his. When Mistik and Vartan realise they have been conned, Mistik attacks Mişon so violently that Niko intervenes and suggests they seek the advice of a renowned European master confidence trickster as to the best way of redressing the injustice done to Mistik and Vartan.

The four find that the confidence trickster's headquarters in Kulekapı is a centre of complex hi-tech operations. After Niko explains the situation, the confidence trickster whispers lies to each of them in turn and then, after watching them fight for a few minutes, he throws them out. When they come to their senses they realise that they have each been robbed by the European confidence trickster during the fight.

Mişon is the first to realise exactly what has happened, and the story ends with his words:

Oh how stupid we are . . . Whenever any kind of trickery goes on between us, why do we go to a European to teach us what to do? What did he teach us . . . He emptied all our pockets. After this, if I get the chance, I shall hide something else on my person . . . What do you say

---

<sup>12</sup> This is a reference to schools founded by the Paris based *Alliance Israélite Universelle* after 1860, for the regeneration through education of backward and oppressed Jewish communities.

Mr. Mistik, do you understand?<sup>13</sup>

### *Eşkiya İninde*

*Eşkiya İninde* [1919], also places characters of different ethnic backgrounds together in a stressful context, this time emphasising their differing reactions to life-threatening situations. It differs from Hüseyin Rahmi's other works in that it is set outside Istanbul in the mountains behind İzmit, and the main characters, who are being held to ransom by brigands, are kept in surroundings that are completely alien to them. The sense of being in 'alien' territory is emphasised in the opening pages by the absence of familiar urban characters who normally serve as targets of satire.

The brigands, among whom are Turks, Lazes, Kurds, Albanians and Greeks, have no sense of traditional loyalties. They form and reform into gangs according to which leader appears to be strongest at any one time. The author repeatedly compares these gang leaders to the opportunist war-rich of Istanbul, suggesting that they are no more wicked or immoral than the city businessmen who exploit the plight of the poor and the weak.

The hostages include the narrator and his brother-in-law (Hikmet Enis), their Albanian minder (Murtaza), an Armenian mother and daughter (Madam Araksi Altinyan and Virjini). Later they are joined by two Jewish brothers (Samoel and Hayim Durani), Salonican Ferhad and a building contractor (Hacı Fikir).

As the plot progresses, the narrator and Hikmet Enis develop an increasing respect for their elderly Albanian retainer Murtaza. Previously they had taken his loyal steadfastness for granted, but now they come to see him as a proud individual who is prepared to risk his life rather than succumb to the will of the brigands. Insults to his Albanian pride, followed by a brigand's comment that ethnic roots count for nothing, provoke a stream of threats from Murtaza. His decision to escape in order to seek help, and the subsequent belief of the others that he is dead, leaves the Turks and Armenians feeling abandoned and aware of the extent to which they have depended on him both mentally and physically. Later, when he reappears, they are overawed by his tale of

---

<sup>13</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, "Yankesiciler", *Kadınlar Vaizi*, 74.

how he overcame his own fears, acquired a pistol and enlisted the support of one of the brigands. Eventually it is Murtaza who kills Karabelâ Mustafa, the leader of the brigands.

When Madam Araksi Altınyan and her daughter Virjini enter the novel, there is an immediate sense that the author is back on familiar territory as he ridicules these spoilt women who have more money than sense. The dialogue cleverly reflects their heavy accents and mannered conversational style that is half French, half Turkish. These two women are accustomed to living in surroundings which, if not magnificent, are luxurious, with servants constantly at their beck and call. At first, Madam Altınyan cries and wails about their predicament, expecting the mere sound of her voice to produce better living conditions. However when help does not materialise, she does not give in but finds the resources within herself to cope with the harsh conditions. Gradually her attention becomes diverted from frivolous demands to more serious matters, such as their ability to survive and the safety of her pretty daughter. She has no fear of arguing with their male companions and captors. She attempts to engage in philosophical discussions with the narrator and Hikmet Enis, and scolds the gang leader for killing his predecessor. Later she adopts business negotiating tactics with Karabelâ Mustafa in order to establish a realistic ransom price for herself and her daughter. This boldness, even when accompanied by real fear, is the characteristic that enables Madam Altınyan to survive. By the end of their captivity she and her daughters look like bedraggled Gypsies, yet they have earned the respect of their fellow hostages who now do everything they can to help the two women.

The Turkish and Armenian hostages are thrown into a cave with some other prisoners including Salonican Ferhad, a devout Muslim building contractor called Hacı Fikir, and two rich Jewish brothers. Left alone in the dark, the motley group are forced to become acquainted. Ferhad's ethnicity is presumably considered to be Turkish, but he is regarded as an outsider not only because he comes from Salonica, but because of his cynical philosophy that alienates him from everybody, even his own family. The tragedy of his subsequent death is compounded by his own view that it is a non-event

that merely signifies the end of a sad existence. By contrast, Hacı Fikir is taunted for his ceaseless praying because it appears to have no effect.

The Jewish brothers, Samoel and Haim Durani are portrayed with more humour. As with the Armenians, the author carefully reproduces their accents and speech patterns. Also like the Armenians, they have the resilience to tolerate what at first seems to be inedible food and impossible conditions. One of the brothers accepts a degree of responsibility for their predicament because they had ventured out of Istanbul in order to prospect for business. When their business proposals were rejected on the grounds of them being Jewish, they had set off to explore the area on horseback, and “What happened? We got caught up in a disaster. The disaster didn’t come to us. We set off and found the disaster ourselves.”<sup>14</sup>

With the group of prisoners now containing urban Armenians and Jews, the author is able to indulge in some humorous repartee over eating habits, table manners and, particularly in the case of Samoel and Hayim, over money and the stock market. When the gang leader tells the prisoners they are all heading for martyrdom if their families do not pay the ransom, Hayim immediately tries to bargain for a reduction of the price on their heads. He insists there is no point holding out for a high figure if the stock market cannot sustain it, and that they have no value if they are dead: “So kill us . . . What have you got to gain by killing us? Turks are treated like gentlemen in this world, and as martyrs in the next . . . How nice . . . It’s not the same for Jews . . .”<sup>15</sup> After a long philosophical speech by Ferhad on the insignificance of death, Samoel retorts that some Jewish scholars think in a similar way but that philosophy is meaningless when one’s life is at stake, because then the only thing that counts is money.<sup>16</sup> Later, after the death of Ferhad, Hayim remarks: “Jews never want to die or to kill. That is how nations become great.”<sup>17</sup> The author is unable to resist a last joke at the brothers’ expense. When the freed prisoners are dividing up the brigands’ loot at the end of the novel, Hayim both exasperates and amuses their companions by

---

<sup>14</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Eşkiya İminde*, 286.

<sup>15</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Eşkiya İminde*, 310.

<sup>16</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Eşkiya İminde*, 318.

<sup>17</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Eşkiya İminde*, 334.

pointing out that their share is half a lira short of the agreed amount and he insists on being paid the full amount.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the overall message that the author wished to convey in this novel is expressed in one short prayer. After the death of one of the brigands, as the prisoners and their captors grieve together, the narrator prays aloud: “Oh God, remove banditry and fighting from this earth. Remove conflict. Make people love one another. .”<sup>19</sup>

### ***Efsuncu Baba***

*Efsuncu Baba* [1924] returns to another of Hüseyin Rahmi’s favourite themes, that of two contrasting aspects of mankind, one that proclaims an idea (whether in good faith or not) and one that blindly believes. This theme first appeared in *Kuyruklu Yıldız Altında Bir İzdivaç*, followed by *Gülyabani* [1912] and *Cadı* which dealt with more traditional superstitions. *Efsuncu Baba* tackles the question of the role and behaviour of dervishes. This was a sensitive subject, not for government authorities who were in the process of passing secularisation laws which would close down the dervish lodges in 1925, but for those ordinary people for whom centuries of beliefs in dervish practices and powers could not easily be relinquished.

Hüseyin Rahmi chooses a traditional formula of *Karagöz*-type humour as a framework for presenting his ideas on this topic. The main characters are Ebülfazıl Enverî (the Efsuncu Baba) and two Armenian silk spinners, Kirkor and Ağop. The first two chapters are taken up with repartee between the Armenians which satirises their accents, their misuse of language, their pretensions to a level of culture that is belied by their misunderstanding of song lyrics, their subsequent invention of comically inappropriate words, and their amoral willingness to agree to anything that might improve their own well-being.

Enverî’s entry in the third chapter as a crazed eccentric seems a natural addition to the farcical scene. When Enverî is properly introduced in chapter four, he has already been so mocked and ridiculed by the ingenuous comments of the Armenians that he cannot be taken seriously by the reader. The author juxtaposes the Baba and the

<sup>18</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Eşkiya İminde*, 384.

<sup>19</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Eşkiya İminde*, 229.

Armenians, who have no traditional reasons to respect the 'holy' man, in order to expose the Baba's fraudulent intentions and the futility of practices such as the teaching of prayers in Arabic by rote:

The strange thing about this matter was that the Armenians were taught to recite prayers in Arabic. These poor creatures suffered a lot before they memorised these Arabic words which they were unable to understand and which were totally unsuited to their style of pronunciation. . .<sup>20</sup>

The context in which this comment is made is humorous because of the presence of the Armenians. If they had been Muslim Turks, such a scene might have been considered blasphemous by many readers.

Towards the end of the novel Hüseyin Rahmi makes some serious comments about the despair he feels for society, not only in Turkey but in Europe and the 'new world'. He blames war for destroying morality and impeding the philosophical and cultural progress of mankind, and accuses contemporary novelists of initiating an age of superstition validated by ancient myths and legends. The following quotation is an example of the author's attempts to grapple with international events:

Recently, an Israeli philosopher who is famous for his new theories, was sentenced to several months imprisonment by various countries as a result of his disrespect for religions with which he has no ties. Anyone with a conscience considered this sentence to be justified. If criticism is to be directed at religions, it should start with this Jewish philosopher's Judaism.

Einstein has become a philosopher while remaining a Jew. In his time, Voltaire did no such thing. He directed all his ridicule, clever writing and critical blows - he knew all the dogma and traditions as well as any priest - at Christianity.

Who says that the sons of Israel are not the dominant people of

---

<sup>20</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Eşkiya İhinde*, 77.



the world today.<sup>21</sup>

Nowadays such a view would be considered 'politically incorrect', yet in the context of the 1920's it is perhaps more easily understood. It may be inferred that the author thought the eighteenth century Voltaire to be more rational and progressive in outlook than Einstein, the great twentieth century scientist. By perceiving Einstein's espousal of his religion as having a political agenda, Hüseyin Rahmi reflects some of the bitterness felt at the time towards the anticipated success of Zionist aspirations for an Israeli state in Palestine.

### ***Meyhanede Hanımlar and Ben Deli Miyim?***

In *Meyhanede Hanımlar* [1924] a scuffle between a Greek and a Turk is followed by a harsh statement by the police that it is forbidden to make legal claims in the Greek language. There is also a heartfelt cry from an elderly character for literature that represents Turks and Turkish culture rather than the endless supply of pseudo-European works.

*Ben Deli Miyim?* [1925] is the most outspoken of all Hüseyin Rahmi's novels and, as previously mentioned, was initially banned from publication. It is written in the first person. The narrator is a man named Şadan Bey who refuses to adhere to any social convention that restricts his speech or behaviour in any way. He teams up with Nuri, a man of similar, but even more extreme, character. They encourage each other in all kinds of offensive behaviour which go beyond rudeness and depravity to realms of real evil.

The novel starts in a humorous vein with Şadan questioning his own sanity because his public displays of infantile behaviour have been considered to be sufficiently eccentric for him to need psychiatric treatment. When he insults his mother's appearance, her behaviour and aspirations, it is immediately clear that this is no jolly satire but a defence of man's need to mask harsh realities. Without it we revert to a level of existence which is bestial yet lacks the innocence of the animal world.

Having created Şadan as a character with undisputed intelligence but

---

<sup>21</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Eşkiya İninde*, 94.

questionable sanity, the author, without being seen as a proponent of such views, is able to use him as a mouthpiece for all kinds of unacceptable truths, half-truths and opinions which he directs at people of all classes, including members of minority groups. In a conversation between Şadan and his mother, she comments that whereas in the past men bowed only to great men, people are now so impoverished they are ready to grovel before anyone for the humblest of jobs. Şadan replies with a long bitter tirade saying that there are two keys to success: sycophancy and bribery. He accuses the Greeks, Armenians and Jews of being tricksters who resort to any methods that will make them into millionaires, while the streets are full of starving wounded Turkish war heroes and fatherless families. He complains that sycophancy and bribery have infiltrated every level of authority from the highest ranks of government down to local police stations. The betrayal of ordinary people's patriotism, justice, honesty and public spiritedness has broken too many hearts. Şadan maintains the only solution is the introduction of some sort of wealth-sharing programme, though he refuses such ideological labels as bolshevism, fascism or communism.<sup>22</sup>

After Şadan befriends Nuri, the two explore the vice dens of Istanbul. Their favourite haunt is run by a Madam Fedrona which caters for every conceivable vice and sexual perversion. After a visit to this house of sin, the two men's perception of people becomes dehumanised. They start to follow some Armenian women at whom they direct lewd comments. Suddenly Nuri makes a vulgar physical assault on the younger woman with his cigarette holder, but she is too embarrassed to call the police or retaliate in any way. The two men continue ogling her at the same time laughing at her discomfort and indulging in cruel speculation as to the effects of the assault.<sup>23</sup>

This aggressive scene of humiliation is followed by an incident, presented as farce, that nowadays would be considered to be overtly racist. Nuri, feeling a huge desire for ice-cream yet not having the money to pay for it, pushes his way into a group of "thick-necked, small-nosed, bull-dog faced" Jewish stockbrokers<sup>24</sup> who are sitting

---

<sup>22</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Ben Deli Miyim?*, 14-17.

<sup>23</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Ben Deli Miyim?*, 60-64.

<sup>24</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Ben Deli Miyim?*, 66.

in a cafe eating ice-cream. He orders one for himself, proceeds to sneeze all over everyone else's, and then taunts the stockbrokers about their fear of disease. When they get up to leave Nuri appropriates their ice creams, whereupon one of the stockbrokers remarks: "Son of a bitch . . . This man conned us. Can four Jews be duped all at the same time? He certainly managed it."<sup>25</sup> Nuri replies at length with a bitter tirade of hatred:

Don't worry, my countrymen. I know that you brothers of the son of Israel love the Turks very much. I thank you for your prayers. At the time of the armistice you were no less disparaging than the Greeks and the Armenians. You unfurled your flag and brought out your troops of boy scouts. You paraded through street after street. You made speeches. You wrote articles attacking us in your newspapers. You prepared to share the spoils of the Turkish dead. I believe your share was to be the middle lot. You were unable to get it. While the Armenians were dreaming up an imaginary Armenia from one end of Eastern Turkey to the other and the savage Greek troops were chewing over her innards, you wanted to create a Jewish government in Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital. In Spain you built palaces and stopped there. Look you're all spineless. You're terrified of illness and death. You exist as parasites in a country where you are better fed, and live in more comfort than its indigenous inhabitants. It is the Turk that dies of hunger, that contemplates suicide. Enjoy yourselves. Things will not carry on like this. We'll put an end to all the sources of intrigue that you currently have at your disposal. The owners are going to reclaim their property. You will become their servants. You will descend to your rightful level.<sup>26</sup>

There is no indication as to whether or not these words represent the feelings of the author, but there is little doubt that they were intended to reflect attitudes present in

---

<sup>25</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Ben Deli Miyim?*, 68.

<sup>26</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Ben Deli Miyim?*, 68-69.

society at the time.

### ***Billûr Kalb***

*Billûr Kalb* [1926] meaning “Heart of Crystal” is a title heavy with satire since almost every character is filled with mistrust and is exploiting others. As in the earlier novel *Metres*, the characters of different ethnic communities are dependent upon each other, but this time it is with a self-serving indifference to the needs or suffering of others.

The novel opens in a brothel, in which Madam Zorluyan and the prostitutes are Armenian, and the clients are Turkish. The girls are being abused and worked literally to the point of death. News of the birth of a baby girl to one of the prostitutes is greeted with indifference and mild surprise since every effort had been made to effect a miscarriage, and the mother had been made to work right up until the birth. The baby is regarded as a financial drain on the business until she is old enough to be signed on with the municipality as an additional prostitute.

Later there is a discussion between Madam Zorluyan and Vortik, one of her young male assistants, in which Vortik says he has heard of some foreign military officers who have asked for girls other than Greek, Armenian, French or Levantine. Madam can only think of providing Gypsy girls, but Vortik insists they are seeking Turkish girls. Madam says she has often passed her Greeks and Armenians off as Turks, that no-one can tell the difference with girls, but Vortik insists that Europeans can recognise a Turkish woman from her personal grooming and her ‘hot blood’. They ask İzzet Saim Bey, a Turkish client for his opinion. He replies that if he likes a woman it does not matter to him where she comes from. Vortik says he always puts profit first and does whatever he can to answer the needs of his customers. Madam Zorluyan comments: “Turkish women are OK, but Turkish men are downright barbarous. A Turk will sleep with women from any country, but if he hears that an infidel has been with a Turkish woman he reaches straight for his knife.”<sup>27</sup>

This brothel scene suggests a level of amoral exploitation that permeates the tone

---

<sup>27</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Billûr Kalp*, 14.

of the whole novel, it also establishes the cause for the main action of the plot. Because there is no ready supply of Turkish girls for the Europeans, a plan is implemented by Turkish businessmen which involves creating a business front, advertising for female workers, kidnapping the attractive applicants and training them as prostitutes. The current climate of change and unemployment means that there is no shortage of applicants. The 'successful' girls are taken to the 'hotel' of Madam Savaro, ostensibly to celebrate their new jobs, but in fact so that they can be plied with alcohol and seduced prior to their 'training'.

Madam Savaro is an Italian who has become assimilated into the Greek community. In her youth, known as Flora, she lived like a princess in Beyoglu and associated with high-ranking men in Sultan Hamid's court. At a time of paranoid secrecy among court and government officials, Flora was recruited as a spy and became a vehicle for information that was leaked out to the rest of Europe and finally, by other illicit means, back to Turkey. The author comments:

Despite the rigorous government bans, it was possible to convey all information to Istanbul through the foreign post and diplomatic bags. People, such as Greek and Armenian businessmen and book-sellers who were intent on exposing the deception they observed, competed with each other to illicitly distribute and publish information which the government regarded as harmful and wished to conceal . . . As a result, contrary to the government's wishes, its deception was exposed. A number of innocent Turks were blamed for the disaster and they (the Greek and Armenian businessmen) earned a lot of money by selling the illicitly imported newspapers, pamphlets and books at ten times their real value.<sup>28</sup>

Flora was deported because of her activities, but she missed Turkey and eventually returned to Istanbul where she opened her 'hotel' which was something between a respectable hotel and a brothel, an establishment in which unmarried couples

---

<sup>28</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Billûr Kalp*, 89.

could meet and enjoy themselves in the dance saloon, gambling room, and private rooms.

Madam Savaro thought that her line of work required a certain natural aptitude which the Turks did not possess: “The rough Turks, because of their backwardness in financial matters, always played the part of client in this delicate business.”<sup>29</sup> The author comments that it is a shame that despite all her knowledge of the Turkish people, Madam Savaro’s spoken Turkish was worse than any of the other languages she knew.<sup>30</sup>

The author gives an unusually detailed description of Montenegrin Marko who serves as the hotel’s watchman, a role for which Montenegrin were renowned in Turkey. In his prime Marko was a fine example of Montenegrin manhood. Now in his seventies, his round face has become shrivelled, his eyes dull, and his previously bushy moustaches hang raggedly down his face; Marko is now a caricature of the old role model:

Marko still had a silver-embroidered full-sleeved jacket, his gun rack, his embroidered gaiters, and his embroidered red woollen Montenegrin cap. Sometimes he would wear this outfit. He would put his guns in a row round his waist. When Madam Savaro went out he would walk in front of her like an ambassador’s guardsman. Those who did not know otherwise thought she was the wife of an ambassador . . . The hotel proprietress adored Oriental ostentation. She would try to create the appearance of a princess who has fallen on hard times . . . To foreigners who had heard of her famous adventures and came to observe her, she had a winning line . . . Many of them heard her say *‘J’ai couché avec S. M. Le Sultan . . .’*<sup>31</sup>

For years Marko has harboured a grudge against the Turks whom he regards as feckless spendthrifts. He believes the Turks may attack and loot the hotel at any time,

---

<sup>29</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Billûr Kalp*, 82.

<sup>30</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Billûr Kalp*, 90.

<sup>31</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Billûr Kalp*, 91.

and he promises to defend the place as his people defended their land against the Turks:

The government of Montenegro, which is smaller than the smallest of the Turkish provinces, stood up to these oppressors for years. The steep rocks and inaccessible frontiers of our country are red with Turkish blood. It's not a question of numbers but of spirit. A people's natural bravery comes from its noble blood.<sup>32</sup>

It is perhaps surprising that Hüseyin Rahmi was such a popular writer considering the frequency with which he attacks Turkish honour and morality. Having begun his writing career with gentle humorous exposures of human weaknesses, he goes on to attack all sections of society in his accounts of the devastating effects of the breakdown in social values. He continues to use stereotype ethnic minority characters but replaces traditional situations with an imaginative use of new contexts, such as the Armenian weavers colluding with the mystic, and Istanbul Armenians and Jews being held hostage in the mountains.

The nearest he gets to describing what was happening in Anatolia during this time is in his description of the mixed bands of deserters and criminals roaming the mountains. Here all ethnic and tribal loyalties have disappeared. Lone Greeks, Kurds, Lazes and Turks are fleeing unknown circumstances and joining forces under the leadership of whichever leader they believe to be the strongest at any one time. Such individuals are almost unknown in literature of this time, yet they are precursors of characters that appear in the works of later novelists such as Orhan Kemal and Yaşar Kemal.

Hüseyin Rahmi does not write about wartime front line experiences, but he does not shrink from voicing his disgust at the loss of self-respect, the depravity, and the opportunism which he perceives to be directly attributable to the effects of war. The European elements in Istanbul, represented by manipulative governesses, brothel-keepers and confidence trickster, are shadowy distant figures compared to the Armenians, Greeks and Jews of Istanbul who, however unsavoury, constitute a

---

<sup>32</sup> Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Billûr Kalp*, 155.

familiar part of Ottoman society. Although Europeans and non-Muslims are often depicted in immoral or amoral episodes of his works, they function as service providers to Turkish society just as they had done under successive Ottoman regimes. Ethnic minority involvement in illegal and immoral practices takes place in Hüseyin Rahmi's literature because Turkish characters want, and are willing to pay for, the services they provide. The age-old Ottoman collusion continues in new settings in which the minorities are perceived to be the corrupters and the Turks the corrupted, though in the author's eyes both are equally culpable.

### Halide Edip

Halide Edip,<sup>33</sup> brought a completely new perspective to Turkish literature. She was a prominent female figure during the War of Independence and an active participant in events leading up to the establishment of the Turkish Republic. She became known as a journalist, author, educationalist and public speaker during times of momentous historical events. Having spent her childhood in the multicultural upper middle-class Ottoman society of Istanbul, she emerged as a young well-educated writer just after the Young Turk revolution of 1908. Her words, both written and spoken, inspired thousands of men and women to continue in the struggle for national independence. However, for her, supporting a national cause did not mean sacrificing individual identity which she encouraged in her readers through rejection of out-dated social traditions and engagement in educational pursuits. Outside Turkey, she became a well-known figure whose books aroused considerable interest in Europe and America where she was invited to speak at several international conferences. What follows is a summary of some of the episodes in her long and full life, and an appraisal of some of the minority characters she encountered during her lifetime.<sup>34</sup>

Halide Edip was born in 1884, in the Beşiktaş district of Istanbul, during Sultan Abdülhamid II's thirty year rule. The family had links with Eastern Anatolia, with the

---

<sup>33</sup> This spelling of Halide Edip's name is the standardised modern Turkish spelling but her name has frequently appeared as Halide Edib in Turkish and English publications.

<sup>34</sup> For comprehensive accounts of her life, see Halide Edip Adivar, *Memoirs of Halide Edip* [1926], later published in Turkish as *Mor Salkımlı Ev*, [1963], *The Turkish Ordeal* [1928] (later published in Turkish as *Türk'ün Ateşle İmtihanı* [1962]) and *Doktor Abdülhak Adivar*.



Jewish community in Salonica and with the Kurdish aristocracy. Her mother, Fatma Bedrifem, died when she was an infant, and her father, Edip Bey, worked in the Palace as First Secretary of the Privy Purse and later as an administrator for the Ottoman tobacco monopoly (*Reji müdürlükleri*) in towns such as Yanya, Bursa and Antalya. Her maternal grandfather was an Anatolian of limited education from Kemah, a small town lying to the west of Erzincan. He was an unrefined, but good natured man who had risen to the respected post of *kahvecibaşılığı* under Sultan Reşat. In contrast, her grandmother epitomised all that was considered best in Ottoman culture. She was dainty and refined, with a strong character and a taste for traditional values. Because of the premature death of her own daughter she was to play an important role in Halide Edip's upbringing, introducing her to the world of books and creative writing.

Apart from the Koran, Halide Edip's early experience of books was with tales of adventure, bravery and self-sacrifice. They included a volume of stories about explorations in Africa, a book of heavy religious foreboding that was to give her nightmares for years called *Serencan-ı Mevt* (Adventures of Death), and a collection of tales about the exploits of Battal Gazi, a Turkish hero who fought against the Greeks. Her childhood hero was Ali, the fourth caliph and son-in-law of the Prophet. He was a figure who faced great dangers, yet his high morals left him vulnerable to the human weaknesses of others. The author made a comparison between Ali and the Christ figure in Christianity, a religion about which she had thought seriously since childhood. Several of her own fictional heroes have such characteristics, including bravery, physical and mental stamina, and a willingness to sacrifice their life for a chosen cause.

Halide Edip's formal education was a mixture of progressive teaching at cosmopolitan foreign-run schools and private tuition under traditionally trained Turkish scholars. Her exposure to different languages and cultures during her formative years naturally enabled her to develop a sympathetic understanding of the ethnic, religious and cultural issues that she encountered later in life. At an early age Halide Edip was sent to the Kiria Eleni kindergarten, a school attended mostly by children of Greek and

Armenian palace dignitaries and where she learnt to speak Greek. At the age of five she was sent to a local school and also began having private tutoring. In 1893 Halide Edip entered the American College, then located in Scutari, where she was the first Turkish female student. She was able to study for one year before an order from the Sultan forbade the attendance of Turkish children at foreign schools. Her education continued under private tutors, including the renowned literary scholar Rıza Tevfik with whom she learnt Arabic and studied French literature, until she was allowed to re-enter the American College from which she graduated in 1901. Because her period of home education had left her weak in mathematics, her father engaged an eminent mathematician called Salih Zeki Bey to give her private coaching in her final year.

Immediately after graduation she married Salih Zeki Bey. However the combination of her youthful emotional temperament and his authoritative, logically-minded personality was not a success. The challenge of marrying an older man is a frequent topic in her novels. She had two sons in 1903 and 1905. Despite periods of physical and psychological illness she found motherhood a fulfilling if difficult experience. Reading and writing were helpful distractions for her at this time and she read popular works such as those of the French authors Zola and Daudet, and the English writer Conan Doyle. Her articles were beginning to appear in *Vakit*, *Akşam* and *Tanin* newspapers, and magazines such as *Yeni Mecmua*, *Musavvir Muhit* and *Şehbal*. Absorbed in her own problems, she was unaware of most of the events leading up to the revolution in 1908, but a realisation that an irrevocable change had taken place in government politics inspired her to take her role as a writer more seriously than before. Some of her articles, which recommended the education and emancipation of women, were severely criticised by theological establishments and the ensuing death threats forced her to leave Istanbul. She embarked on her first journey abroad, to Egypt and then London. Her experiences confirmed her belief in the need for women's collective and personal emancipation, a belief that was repeatedly reflected in her fiction.

The following year Halide Edip returned to Istanbul and, unable to accept his



decision to take another wife, she divorced Salih Zeki Bey in 1910. Soon after this she published her first novel (*Seviyye Talib* [1910]) into which she incorporated her experiences abroad and her struggle for domestic happiness. Divorce meant that she had to provide for her two sons and her grandmother. She was already receiving earnings from her articles and she now took a teaching position at the Women's Training College. During this time she founded the Association for the Advancement of Women.

Her work with the Association for the Advancement of Women brought her into contact with members of the newly formed Turkish Hearth (*Türk Ocağı*). This organisation was founded in 1912 as a classless non-political institution for the purpose of rediscovering and promoting Turkish culture among Turkish citizens in Istanbul and Anatolia. The following year Halide Edip was elected as its only female member. The association attracted men of different political ideals, including influential government officials, doctors, writers and students, who worked together with a spirit of equality. At the forefront of the organisation were Yusuf Akçura, and Ziya Gökalp. Akçura was a Central Asian Tatar, whose revolutionary Turanist ideas were taken up by Gökalp and adapted to his vision of a land of Turks living in Istanbul and Anatolia. Between them they influenced many of the finest minds of the era, including the renowned historian Fuad Köprülü and Mustafa Kemal Paşa. Halide Edip, being new to the world of active politics, was fascinated by the different ideas she encountered. While the education of most of her intellectual peers had been acquired in the academic circles of France or Germany, Halide Edip had grown up with the literature and culture of England and America. Her education and her modern feminine perspective enabled her to offer a fresh approach to many topics that were discussed.

For some time writers such as Ziya Gökalp, Ömer Seyfettin and Mehmet Emin Yurdakul had been trying to forge a new style of written Turkish that was suited to their modern ideas and understandable for all Turkish speaking people. They had been relatively successful in poetry, but in Halide Edip they found a prose writer whose lucid style of writing had an immediate popular appeal. As a result of the influence and

encouragement of her newly found colleagues in the Turkish Hearth she wrote *Yeni Turan*. This novel, set in an imaginary future state, embodies her view of the aspirations of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Halide Edip maintained a close intellectual friendship with Ziya Gökalp until 1915, when it became apparent to her that their ideas on education and politics were fundamentally different.<sup>35</sup>

Following her successful work for the Association for the Advancement of Women, Halide was approached by Cemal Paşa in 1916 with an invitation to visit Lebanon for the purpose of establishing schools. During her time away, she remarried by proxy at a ceremony in Bursa where her father represented her. She had met her second husband, Doctor Adnan Adıvar, when he attended her grandmother as family physician, but their personal relationship developed through his active involvement in the CUP.

A year later Halide Edip returned to Istanbul and immediately rejoined the Turkish Hearth where she became active in establishing the 'Rural' department. She also took up a post as lecturer in Western literature at Istanbul University. When the Greeks entered Izmir in 1919, she joined the underground movement, helping in the campaign to smuggle arms to Anatolia.

Halide Edip had been making public addresses since 1908, but in 1919 she was asked to speak at a series of public rallies culminating in the famous 6 June meeting in Sultan Ahmet Square which was attended by over 200,000 people. Her speech was an inspiration to those who heard her and her reputation as a mother figure to the Turkish people now spread far beyond the literate circles of Istanbul.

Because of her activities it became unsafe for her to stay in Istanbul so, in March 1920, she and her husband went to Ankara to join the team of nationalists led by Mustafa Kemal Paşa. They travelled in disguise as peasants as far as Geyve, and took the train for the final stretch of the journey, reaching Ankara on April 2nd 1920. At the railway station, she was greeted in person by Mustafa Kemal Paşa. On the fifth day

---

<sup>35</sup> For information on the role of the CUP and the ideas of Ziya Gökalp, see E. J. Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor : The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress*, and Ziya Gökalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilisation*.

after her arrival, Halide Edip began work at the headquarters at Kalaba. At her own request, she was given the task of setting up a news agency to check foreign coverage of the situation in Anatolia and Istanbul. She was included in the daily discussions that took place between Mustafa Kemal and his close circle of advisors, and was presented to the public as a role model for Turkish women.

On 23rd April 1920, while preparations were being made for the opening of the Great National Assembly in Ankara, the *Peyami Sabah* newspaper published a *fetva* or statement from a certain Mustafa Paşa in Istanbul. The *fetva* stated that it was the religious duty of the people to bring about the death of the rebel government in Ankara. Halide Edip and her husband Adnan Adıvar were both named. Undeterred, she expanded her work and visited wounded soldiers in Red Crescent hospitals at the military fronts of İnönü and Eskişehir. In 1921 she was elected as president of the Red Crescent.

After a period of time working in close proximity to Mustafa Kemal, Halide Edip became aware of fundamental political and strategic differences between the leader and herself. Realising that his determination and power to influence were even greater than her own, she withdrew from political life and embarked on writing her memoirs. Nevertheless as Greek forces approached Ankara, and after hearing Yusuf Akçura remark that competent administrators were desperately needed on the military front, Halide Edip volunteered for active service on 16 August 1921. Mustafa Kemal Paşa recognised the potential value of her presence among the fighting forces and he immediately sent her to the western front. Here she served as corporal under the command of İsmet Paşa in the famous battle of Sakarya. She took part in the victory march into Izmir on 30 August 1922 and was promoted to the rank of sergeant-major. After the Greek defeat, Halide Edip served on the Investigation Council for War Atrocities (*Tetkiki Mezalim*) which documented the war atrocities committed by the Greeks. Her novel *Ateşten Gömlek* [1923] and short story collection *Dağa Çıkan Kurt* [1922] record some of her experiences during this dramatic time.

Once the War of Independence was over and the republic of Turkey was

established with its new seat of government in Ankara, differences of opinion as to how the new nation should be governed began to emerge. Halide Edip's husband, who had been serving as vice-president of the National Assembly, decided he could no longer work alongside Mustafa Kemal Paşa. He and Halide Edip returned to Istanbul where they started an alternative political party, called the Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Partisi*) which advocated greater democratic freedom than was deemed acceptable by the Ankara administration. The party was soon closed down. At this point it became impossible for the Adıvars to remain in Turkey and in 1923 they embarked on a period of self-imposed exile which lasted until the death of Mustafa Kemal, by then known as Atatürk.

After spending four years in England, the Adıvars lived in France for a further ten years, during which time Halide Edip travelled extensively. In 1932 she visited Columbia, Yale, and Michigan universities in USA, lecturing and participating in conferences. In 1935 she was invited by Mahatma Ghandi to a professorship at Delhi university in order to research the social situation in India. During this period Halide Edip published several books in the English language that were later translated into Turkish.<sup>36</sup>

Halide Edip and her husband experienced severe bouts of depression and homesickness during their long exile, yet they managed to make the years productive both intellectually and socially. Refusal to compromise their commitment to free democracy for Turkey brought criticism, even from close friends. Despite this, Halide Edip remained loyal to her husband's unwavering beliefs, and indeed seems to have drawn strength from his integrity. Her novel *A Clown and His Daughter* [1935],<sup>37</sup> written a few years before her return to Turkey, demonstrates a maturity and objectivity not present in her earlier works. It is a story of life in the multicultural Sinekli Bakkal<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> *Memoirs of Halide Edip* [1926], *The Turkish Ordeal* [1928], *Turkey Faces West* [1930], *The Clown and his Daughter* [1935], and *Inside India* [1940].

<sup>37</sup> This novel was originally written in English and first published in England in 1935. Its publication in Turkish as *Sinekli Bakkal* did not take place until after the author's return from exile in 1939. The work was not translated by the author herself, but by students in her department at Istanbul University.

<sup>38</sup> Sinekli Bakkal was the district of Istanbul in which Halide Edip's husband, Dr. Adnan Adıvar, spent his childhood. See Halide Edip Adıvar, *Doktor Abdülhak Adnan Adıvar*, 7.

district of Istanbul during the years of the author's childhood, and it conveys an optimistic belief that people of diverse backgrounds have the capacity to overcome differences and achieve a peaceful and harmonious lifestyle.

After returning to Turkey in 1939, Halide Edip was appointed to the post of professor of English literature at Istanbul University where she stayed for ten years until she was elected as an independent member of parliament for Izmir in the 1950 national elections. Four years later she abandoned politics and returned to Istanbul University. In July 1955 Adnan Adıvar died, after which she spent her time writing and struggling with her own ill-health until her death on January 9th 1964. Halide Edip was buried in the Merkezefendi graveyard in Istanbul.

Although Halide Edip had again taken an active part in Turkish life after her exile, she no longer had such widespread public appeal. The tremendous impact she had created in her young adulthood was a result of history, circumstance and her own personality. Because of the historical era in which she lived, an educated feminine perspective was greeted as novel and a valuable contribution to current debate. The cosmopolitan upbringing and education provided by her father gave her the opportunity to develop an unconventional and fresh approach to life. Finally, her personality was such that she would probably have attracted attention whenever and wherever she had lived. Referring to her ability to provoke action as a small child, she wrote: ". . . it was the symbol of the force of her desires in later years, the same uncontrollable passion for things, which she rarely wanted, but which once desired, must be obtained at all costs . . ."<sup>39</sup>

At the present time she is usually remembered as a writer of nationalist novels, and only one or two of her works command a wide readership. Despite the fact that her fiction now appears dated in content and style, the immediate success of her early works should not be minimised. After Hüseyin Rahmi, Halide Edip was one of the first populist writers to successfully bridge the gulf between the intellectual elite and the

---

<sup>39</sup> Halide Edip Adıvar, *Memoirs of Halide Edip*, 13. Subsequent quotations from Halide Edip's memoirs are also taken from her own English versions, *Memoirs of Halide Edib* and *The Turkish Ordeal*.

ordinary citizens of Turkish society. She was also the first female writer to explore the emotions and feelings of both sexes in domestic settings. Halide Edip developed a skill she had admired in the mathematical mind of her first husband, which was that of putting complex issues into clear and simple language. This ability, which she has used to portray fictional events during important and intricate episodes of recent Turkish history, has ensured her a significant place in twentieth century Turkish literature.

The household in which Halide Edip spent her early years was typically Ottoman in a number of ways. Certain family members had direct links with minority cultures and the servants and slaves were invariably of Greek, Armenian, Circassian or African origin, yet the overall administration of the household was conducted in a systematic manner within the parameters of Islamic beliefs that was essentially Ottoman. While there was a strong Turkish element in the family, it was only one of several in the colourful household in which she grew up.

Halide Edip claimed to know little about the background of her father, Mehmed Edib Bey. He was the son of a Jewish businessman living in Salonika. Raised and educated by the eminent Sheik Mahmud and his wife, Mehmed Edib converted to Islam and entered the Ottoman bureaucracy, initially in Salonica and later graduating to a position at the Sultan's palace. Although Edib Bey talked openly about his Jewish background with friends such as Rıza Tevfik, and Salih Zeki, Halide Edip is reputed to have denied any knowledge of it. This may have been a reaction to defamatory claims concerning her background that were circulated during her years of exile.<sup>40</sup> There is no mention of any Jewish characters in her memoirs, except for a description of a Jewish caricature in a *Karagöz* play.

Ali Şamil Paşa, the first husband of Halide Edip's mother and father of her elder step-sister Mahmure, was a son of a famous Kurdish chieftain, whose large family was supported by the government in return for the state acquisition of their vast property in Kurdistan. Halide Edip described his flamboyance and taste for noisy revelry with admiration and considerable affection. Later he acquired two wives, a fair Syrian lady

---

<sup>40</sup> See İnci Enginün, *Halide Edip Adivar'ın Eserlerinde Doğu ve Batı Meselesi*, 20 note 4.



and an Abyssinian. The Abyssinian had been a slave belonging to one of his deceased wives and he married her to ensure that she received a life pension. Ali Şamil Paşa used to hold festive family evenings at which all his sons, white and black, would dress in Kurdish costume. Halide Edip would join in with their dancing while Mahmure, played Kurdish music. Mahmure, who always held a special place in the affections of Halide Edip, was not intellectually inclined, but her mind had a vivacity and intensity that delighted the author. The morning that Halide Edip left Istanbul for Ankara, Mahmure's presence left an indelible impression on her:

I shall never forget Mahmoudé Abla's face that morning. She was sitting on my bed, her knees under her as if she were going to pray. Her thin pale face, the austere lines of the black veil surrounding it, looked strong and courageous. With her black eyes burning, and her hooked nose, she looked like a great Kurdish chief going to battle.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from family members, there were many other minority characters in the household. Her first wet nurse was Albanian and considered to be responsible for Halide Edip's sullen moods,<sup>42</sup> the second was thought to have been a gypsy and therefore blamed for any unconventional traits, and a third was a black slave who was supposedly responsible for all her good qualities. When Nilüfer, a younger sister, was born, a Kurdish nanny (*dadı*) was brought into the household. This much-loved *dadı* later became the model for Kurdish Zeyno in *Kalb Ağrısı* [1924] and *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* [1928]. As well as an Armenian servant named Rosa, there were two Circassian slaves, one of whom was a maid to Halide Edip's step-mother and the other was a male protégé who was being educated by Edip Bey. When Halide Edip was about twelve she was 'given' an Abyssinian slave with whom she eventually formed a deep and close relationship, and to whom she immediately gave a written declaration of liberation and a promise of fine clothes, a private room and her own servant.

In the early years of Halide Edip's life the family resided close to Yıldız Palace in a district that was mostly populated by Greeks and Armenians. When she started at

---

<sup>41</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Turkish Ordeal*, 67.

<sup>42</sup> It was thought that the milk of a wet-nurse affected the development of infants in her charge.

the Kiria Eleni kindergarten, she was the only Turk. Like many lonely small children, she created an imaginary playmate, to whom she gave the Greek name Alexi. Later, at the American College, she took a close interest in an Armenian girl from Anatolia, whose difficulties with English made her a target for mockery by other girls, but whose seriousness concerning religious matters, and whose quaint Anatolian Turkish made her attractive to Halide Edip. However the author states in her memoirs that the nationality that influenced her most was Bulgarian. In particular, she formed an attachment to a Bulgarian girl named Peşa Kalçef, whose ability to express thoughts intensely and dramatically in a clearly defined straightforward manner she greatly admired.

Halide Edip continued to make acquaintanceships and friendships with non-Turks in adulthood. When she had to leave the country in 1909, she was given a letter of introduction to some Armenian revolutionaries in Alexandria by an Armenian professor friend of Salih Zeki, and during her stay in Syria she worked equally hard for the Armenian, the Arab and the Kurdish children. In her account of friendship with Ziya Gökalp, Halide Edip refers to his family origins in Diyarbakır and to his work on the origins and grammar of the Kurdish language without acknowledging his ethnic roots. It is possible that, since they were both striving to create a new Turkish identity, between them they chose to ignore non-Turkish elements in their own backgrounds.

As the situation in Istanbul deteriorated, particularly after the British occupation, communities began to distrust each other. Every day encounters between different ethnic groups which had continued for centuries now became unpredictable occasions which often involved conflict. Halide Edip observed these happenings with distress. For example she noted how, after the occupation, ordinary Christian travellers expected the privileges of first class travel and claimed protection from foreign military officials when this was refused. Elsewhere she described how Armenian and Turkish authorities were appropriating orphan children regardless of their religion, and attempting to convert them to their own religions. She described the antagonism that developed between children of different communities with particular sorrow:

The feeling of hatred between the different races was almost phenomenal

in those days. It had gone so deep that the Turkish children and the Christian children could not pass each other's quarters without being stoned or beaten. Sometimes they fought singly, and sometimes in packs. When one side had a strong pack it wandered into the quarters of the enemies, stoned windows, even forced a pitched battle if it was strong enough, always running away before superior numbers. Allah knows how closely the miniature warfare resembled the World War.<sup>43</sup>

Halide Edip commented on how Circassians, so long admired for their handsome looks, were now people who could not be trusted. Indigenous Anatolians could not guess to whom the Circassians gave their true allegiance and the Circassians, having been welcomed into Anatolia by the Ottoman authorities, were fearful of supporting the seemingly anarchic bands of Turkish nationalists. At the same time the Circassians did not favour the heavy Islamic style of the Sultan's regime in Istanbul. Halide Edip summed up the feelings of a generation with the following outburst, which not only described the situation, but expressed the feelings of unfairness and misunderstanding experienced by Turks:

There was the Sultan's government preying on the people; there were the French occupying Cilicia and sending Armenian legions to persecute the people too; there were the Greeks around Smyrna massacring, burning, ravaging, and violating every human law; there were the Allies in Istanbul oppressing the Turks at their pleasure - there was the whole Western world with its everlasting "Down with the Turks!" There were Western statesmen insisting that the big stick should always be used with Orientals, with the unspeakable Turks; and amid it all, there were we, the Nationalists, fighting to free our people from all the alien oppressors. I realized then as I never realised before the ordeal of the Turkish people, walled in by the world's hatred, divided against themselves by internal strife.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Turkish Ordeal*, 53.

<sup>44</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Turkish Ordeal*, 160.

After the defeat of the Greeks, Halide Edip was present when Mustafa Kemal Paşa interrogated two high-ranking Greek generals on their past military strategies. She compared the plain uniforms of the Turkish generals with the "extraordinarily gilded and adorned" uniforms of their Greek counterparts, and the disciplined demeanour of the Turks with the petty argumentative nature of the Greeks. She observed that Mustafa Kemal Paşa appeared to be feeling like "a great international champion who had contested in the world's arena with a man who was not worthy of his prowess."<sup>45</sup>

During the war-torn years between 1912 and 1922, any individual or community that was not both Turkish and Muslim posed a potential threat to the Ottoman State, and later to the emerging Turkish Republic. Halide Edip had little time, and probably even less inclination, for developing relationships with anyone who was not furthering the Ottoman or nationalist causes. Yet throughout this time Halide Edip always wrote with affection about the Kurds she encountered. She enjoyed their colourful stylish clothes, and although she often disagreed with their ideas, she invariably found them sincere and warm-hearted.

The Istanbul to which Halide Edip returned after Atatürk's death was very different from the prewar city in which she had spent her childhood. Although her memoirs do not cover her later life, her fiction suggests a longing to live in an environment that included not only the multicultural elements of her childhood, but also friends and acquaintances from Europe and America.<sup>46</sup> Her ideal was a world in which all ethnic and religious groups could further their own development unhindered by oppression or poverty. She expressed her feelings in the following words:

As long as the world lasts, herd feeling will culminate in such ghastly and ugly deeds as recent history records, whenever it is stimulated and used by leading politicians to satisfy their greed and lust for power. But nothing they effect can be lasting; only the struggle to level all nations and classes, and men will never cease till man stands with man on a

---

<sup>45</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Turkish Ordeal*, 367.

<sup>46</sup> There is a considerable amount of autobiographical information in Halide Edip's book *Doktor Abdülhak Adnan Adivar*.

basis of equal dignity and justice.<sup>47</sup>

Halide Edip's fiction can be divided into three main groups: a) early works about married life, male/female relationships and cultural identity; b) prewar and postwar works expressing nationalist and patriotic views; c) later works in which she develops her personal philosophy. Although these categories develop chronologically, there are some overlaps. For instance *Handan* [1912] and *Yeni Turan* [1912] were both published in the same year yet the reader might easily assume they were written in different periods of the author's life or even by different writers.

### **Early Works - *Raik'in Annesi***

The early works consist of stories that focus on young women grappling with early adulthood, marriage and cultural matters.<sup>48</sup> These cultural matters are not concerned with minority issues, but with the changes in attitude resulting from modern, "European" style education. Debating the comparative merits of Eastern (Muslim) and Western (Christian) cultures was an intellectual game that had been conducted in Turkey since the early nineteenth century.

Although almost all the characters in Halide Edip's early novels would have had daily encounters with people from ethnic and religious minorities, *Raik'in Annesi* [1910] is the only one to mention any such characters. The story unfolds on one of the Princes' Islands, where most of the permanent inhabitants live in Greek fishing communities, and where the majority of the summer seasonal visitors consisted of wealthy Greek or Jewish families from Istanbul. However the non-Turkish nature of the islands is not at all obvious in the novel. Apart from a boatman named Yanko, who works efficiently without disturbing the narrator, and a brief mention of two flirtatious Greek ladies whose chatter and singing drives the narrator away from his hotel, there is just one other non-Turkish character named Ogustin. The narrator describes her in a condescending manner as a woman whose French is unbearably faulty, and who tells vulgar jokes in an ugly peasant accent. It is notable that, apart from the silent self-

---

<sup>47</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Turkish Ordeal*, 150.

<sup>48</sup> These works include: *Raik'in Annesi* [1908], *Heyula* [1909], *Seviye Talip* [1910], *Harap Mabetler* [1911], *Handan* [1912], *Son Eseri* [1912], and *Mev'ut Hükiim* [1918].

effacing boatman, minority characters are people whose presence is to be avoided rather than sought.

Despite the considerable amount of travel that takes place in the early novels to countries such as England, Egypt, France and Germany, the author pays scant attention to the inhabitants of these countries. The only use she makes of foreign settings is to develop relationships between Turkish men and women in ways that would have been improbable in their home surroundings. The author seemed really only interested in the psychological progress of her principal characters who reflected her own personal development. Other cultures had little concern for her until a much later stage, when she drew extensively on her many ethnic minority and foreign acquaintances.

### **Pre-war and Post-war Works**

Halide Edip's nationalist and patriotic works do not fall into a homogeneous group, but they do have certain factors in common. First and foremost their concern is the survival of a homeland for the Turkish people. Collectively the novels deal with the dangers of foreign aggression, infighting between Turkish factions, and the lack of esteem accorded to Turks by themselves and by other ethnic groups. However, whereas *Dağa Çıkan Kurt*, *Ateşten Gömlek* and *Vurun Kahpeye* [1926] were written after the war and draw on her real life experiences, *Yeni Turan* is a conjectural novel published in 1912 before the onset of war.

### ***Yeni Turan***

*Yeni Turan* was written while the author was involved in the Turkish Hearth. Together with Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura and other colleagues, she was attempting to forge an ideology that would salvage a sovereign state for the Turks from the remains of the crumbling Ottoman empire. It is a futuristic novel about a Turkish state set twenty years ahead in 1932. The author had so far had little experience of Turkish society outside her own privileged class. She knew more about the social structure of England than that of the Turkish hinterland. Nevertheless she bravely propounded ideals for a Utopian state, many details of which seem quaint and outdated today. However it is a serious attempt to address fundamental issues that are just as topical

now as they were then. The book presents the author's perception of the different arguments which were being voiced by Ottomanists and Turkists after the Balkan wars. In the novel the two sides are presented as "New Ottomanists" and "New Turanists". One of the most important issues to emerge is the problem of addressing the diverse aspirations of minority communities while promoting the urgent needs of the down-trodden Turks. Despite a certain amount of bias in the presentation of arguments, the format allows the airing of both ideologies and demonstrates that the author's grasp of the situation was thorough, but not absolute.

In the novel the principal reforms proposed by the New Turanists are: 1) the establishment of a confederacy similar to that of the USA; 2) the elevation of the social status of ethnic Turks; 3) the modernisation and reform of Islam in line with twentieth century social aspirations; 4) the inclusion of women in the rebuilding of the nation. The third and fourth points, though important, are outside the scope of this study and therefore are only referred to briefly in as much as they affect or touch on minority issues.

The widespread influence of Yusuf Akçura<sup>49</sup> (a Tatar from Central Asia who injected nationalist and political ideas into the thinking of CUP members and other sections of Ottoman intelligentsia) can be recognised in the hero of *Yeni Turan* in which he is both a Tatar and the leader of the New Turanists. The author describes him as having grown up the son of a teacher in the Tatar community of Bursa, thereby giving him a good pedigree for his role in the novel. He has had access to education, and is Anatolian with direct ancestral links to the Turkic culture of Central Asia. Oğuz, like all Halide Edip's heroes, has a charismatic manly appearance.<sup>50</sup> He is thirty-five to forty, medium height, and broad-shouldered. He has an imposing head of grey hair and a heavily lined face with a strong bone structure and well-formed eyebrows. His slightly slanted, dark green eyes suggest a character that is determined and rebellious, yet gentle. Oğuz is presented as such a strong character at the start of the novel, there is hardly any scope for him to develop. Little more is learnt about him except that he is

---

<sup>49</sup> For a summary of Akçura's ideas, see E. J. Zürcher, *Turkey : A Modern History*, 133-134.

<sup>50</sup> Oğuz was the name of an ancient Turkic kingdom in Central Asia.

able to withstand physical and mental duress. Apart from a few deathbed reminiscences, his Tatar background is not explored; his character exists primarily as a mouthpiece for the views of the author.

The author draws on Tatar culture in other minor ways, although the rather vague pictures that emerge indicate that her knowledge is intellectual rather than experiential. Halide Edip, who uses western classical music as a medium of communication in many of her other works, draws on Tatar music as a means of binding a group together in this novel. She describes the juxtaposition of pious Sufi (*Mevlevî*) music and wild heroic Tatar music as having an entrancing and luring effect which is strong enough to make opposers of the New Turanists reconsider their ideas. The New Turanist women are also given Tatar attributes, including their uniform mode of dressing in grey coats, white head scarves and clumsy practical shoes, and their revival of an ancient practice allowing women to teach in mosques.

The author uses a long pre-election speech by Oğuz to promote her theories and ideals for a new Turanist state. In the speech she repeatedly emphasises the need to include religious and ethnic minorities in all political developments, particularly Greeks, Armenians and Kurds. Strangely, there is no mention of Jews at all. Whether this was because the Jews, who made no claim to territories in Istanbul and Anatolia, posed no threat to the Ottoman state, or whether her denial of her own Jewish links led her to ignore their presence is not known.

The speech opens with a proclamation that the ideology of the New Turan party is intended for the benefit of anybody whose forefathers inhabited Turkish soil, including Turks, Arabs, Armenians and Greeks. At the same time, a bias towards the 'true children of Turan', that is Turkic people, is acknowledged because of their need to rebuild a shield of cultural solidarity. After a condensed history of the Turks from their beginnings in Central Asia to the height of their powers as Ottoman rulers, the speech goes on to blame imperialist expansion and racial intermarriage for the decline of the Ottoman state. The multicultural nature of the empire is perceived to have become a problem when the Ottomans were confronted or compared with the homogeneous



European empires (sic). The Greeks, Bulgarians, Turks, Arabs and Armenians each have different ideas as to the meaning of national identity or sovereignty. There are also differences within these groups; certain minority factions wish to reunite with their mother countries in Europe, others want to remain under the umbrella of the Ottoman administration. The speech ends by stating the impossibility of returning to a "pure" society like that of the early Ottomans since a large and important component of the state is now non-Turkish. It is stressed that the time has come for the creation of a system of government which is a centre of common interests and which will inspire love among Turks, Arabs, Armenians and Greeks. It is also emphasised that non-Turks should refrain from showing hostility towards Turks who, for centuries, have sacrificed their lives and livelihoods for the Ottoman state by paying taxes and defending its frontiers, thereby leaving the ethnic minorities free to increase their numbers and grow rich from the land.

The New Ottoman counter-argument is that many of the minorities reject the idea of a "federation of states," and prefer to remain within a centralist state. The Kurds are cited as an example of a people who would never see themselves as "Turks" however much self-government they were given within a Turkish-ruled confederacy. The Ottomanists regard the continued existence of the Ottoman state and its rule over Turks, Armenians, Arabs and Greeks as being much more important than recreating Turkish identity.

The outcome of the election in this imaginary state is a large majority win for the New Turanists. They immediately introduce a twenty-year reform bill that gives priority to the revitalisation of the Turkish communities in Anatolia. This is to be achieved by concentrating resources on transport and education infrastructures in Anatolia, and by giving Turks special concessions regarding military service. The last measure is intended to encourage the participation of Turks in training programmes and to increase their population figures. The minorities are to live in self-governing communities under federal civil and military supervision. The New Ottoman response is to question how such privileged treatment of the Turks would be received by non-

Turks. They believe that although the minority factions appear to accept the idea of a confederacy, in reality they would use such a system to break away from the Ottoman state.

On the day of the parliamentary vote on this reform bill, the author describes the cabinet as "serious and Turkish." She attempts to convey 'Turkishness' as a national concept rather than ethnic by illustrating the multi-ethnic features of the Turkish representatives in the assembly: the round gentle Anatolian Turkish face of the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; the Minister for Public works, with his intelligent and determined Slavic face; the honourable, self-sacrificing and brave Minister of Agriculture who represents another aspect of Anatolia; the young Greek Post Master General; the honest young Arab face of the Minister of Pious Foundations; another senior Islamic Arab representative; and finally the appealing young War Minister with his steely authoritative blue eyes and steady manner. In addition to this diverse group there are non-Turkish representatives. This is one of the few times in *Yeni Turan* that the author suggests that Turkish identity includes all Muslim minorities. Her views on this matter are not clearly expressed, and the reader is left with a confused picture of who is and who is not a Turk. The confusion illustrates how Turkist ideology was open to different interpretations which ultimately proved too diverse for any practical application.

In a final attempt to prevent the passing of the reform bill, the New Ottomanist Minister of the Interior makes one last plea for members of parliament to reconsider the consequences of such a bill. Maintaining that the proposed New Turanist confederacy is doomed to failure, he warns that such failure would lead to minority communities becoming no more than adjuncts of other nations unsympathetic to Ottoman aspirations. The result would be that Turks were reduced to being a small backward tribe in Anatolia. His use of spurious arguments to prove that comparisons with America are not sustainable highlights the confusion about Turkish identity mentioned above.

The Turanists answer to accusations of single-minded nationalism is to insist that federalist ideology did not create nationalism. Nationalism or patriotism was a

spontaneous development of the nineteenth century, just as individualism was a twentieth century phenomenon. They maintain that the problems of multiculturalism are a legacy of Ottoman ignorance and apathy, arguing that if only the education of Muslims and non-Muslims had been conducted in the Turkish language centuries ago, a confederacy would have already been established and the recent nationalist rebellions would not have taken place. They believe that, given the present situation, a system that allows minority communities to have a controlled level of self-determination is preferable to one that attempts to hold on to absolute power while factions of Arabs, Kurds and Armenians foster further links with their respective mother lands. They also claim that the new Turkish dream has no irredentist ambitions. The fundamental aim is to build an enduring nation on sound principles by utilising the inherent administrative expertise, industriousness and perseverance of the Turkish people.

After the first flush of success, the work of the New Turanist government is made increasingly difficult by the attitudes and activities of certain parliamentary representatives who continue to promote reactionary or separatist ideas, and by others who have become disillusioned with the lack of progress. The situation, which is familiar in any progressive democracy, is too complex for the author to offer a political solution. She resolves the storyline problem by sacrificing the life of her hero, Oğuz, thus arousing sufficient public sentiment for the party to be saved.

This is the only fictional work of Halide Edip in which ideology completely dominates the storyline. The ideology reflects ideas that she held for a few years but, as her subsequent writings illustrate, did not retain for long. The novel was important at the time of its first publication because it presented highly complex issues of recent history in an accessible fictional framework. However its appeal is now limited, because although the minority question remains of topical interest, the subject matter is too heavy for readers of light fiction, yet its factual and ideological content is inadequate for readers with a serious interest in the movement.

The short stories and novels that comprise the post-war fiction group are based on historical events that took place between 1919-1922, that is during or immediately

after the War of Independence. Here the focus is on patriotic commitment and involvement rather than political ideology such as in *Yeni Turan*. Written almost a decade later, these works exhibit new types of characters and a greater variety of events and relationships than is found in the author's early novels. By now she had substantially developed her writing technique, enriched her vocabulary and improved her ability to write descriptive passages and dialogue. Not surprisingly, there is a marked difference in her treatment of minorities. Whereas in the early and pre-war novels she portrays attitudes ranging from indifference to warm affection, the post-war stories convey feelings of disbelief, mistrust, disgust and hatred, particularly towards Greeks.

The Greek invasion and occupation of Izmir were events that spurred the Turkish forces, already exhausted from years of fighting, to find within themselves the extra reserves necessary for winning the War of Independence. It was these events that had inspired Halide Edip to join the army and go to the front line. The scale of atrocities perpetrated by both Greeks and Turks reflected the dehumanising effects of prolonged warfare. In writing about this period, Halide Edip attempted to record its horrors and triumphs, and to convey the psychological state of participants and observers.

#### *Ateşten Gömlek and Dağa Çıkan Kurt*

A number of examples of the social disarray that prevailed in Istanbul during the English occupation are to be found in *Ateşten Gömlek*.<sup>51</sup> The author describes how during a raid "an old, white-haired Armenian woman stared with stony, open eyes. A Turkish porter with open hairy chest lay in blood beside her;"<sup>52</sup> how on the trams Turkish women are leered at by Greeks whose behaviour seemed to be condoned by the Armenian and Greek conductors under the protection of English soldiers; how, again under English protection, Greek and Armenian children throw stones at Ottoman military officers. There is a sense of incredulity that these incidents can really be

---

<sup>51</sup> Quotations from this novel are taken from Halide Edip's own translation into English entitled *The Shirt of Flame* [1924].

<sup>52</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Shirt of Flame*, 12.

happening. These examples of uncivilised and aggressive behaviour are being enacted by the very same people who have been the faceless, untroublesome, seemingly inferior servants in Halide Edip's earlier works.

Disbelief or blindness to reality are also evident in "Zeynebim. Zeynebim,"<sup>53</sup> a short story set in a provincial district outside Izmir. The story concerns the household of a landowner, Uzun Osman, who has fostered a friendship based on trust with his farm manager Yorgi, but who also assumes that all Greeks are second rate citizens. Uzun Osman is taken completely unawares when Yorgi and his wife, Kalyopi become embroiled in the schemes of local Greek separatists. Similarly, in "Efe'nin Hikâyesi" the fearless brigand Efe explains that local rumours of Greek atrocities did not seem real enough to warrant action until their own women were violated.<sup>54</sup>

The stunned incredulity of the Turks at the events taking place is seen to be mixed with feelings of hurt and being misunderstood. The narrator in *Shirt of Flame*, an Ottoman bureaucrat who becomes converted to the nationalist cause, senses that all Ottomans are regarded as assassins because of the Armenian question, and as barbarians because they had joined the Germans in the World War. Another time he observes bitterly how non-Muslims took advantage of English protection to level all kinds of false accusations against the Turks: "The uncleanest and deadliest poison flowed from the perfidious and insulting publications and deeds of the Native Christians who considered themselves the instrument chosen by the Allies to trample on the Turk."<sup>55</sup>

There are signs of wounded pride among Ottomans who, accustomed to assuming a dominant role in the empire, are rankled by the arrogant attitude of the English. Among the Ottomans, reactions are seen to differ according to whether or not they have been victims of, or taken part in, military action. For those whose only experience of war has been during parlour discussions, the enemy threat is not considered to be very real. In contrast, a Foreign Ministry official, whose wife and

---

<sup>53</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Dağa Çıkan Kurt*.

<sup>54</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Dağa Çıkan Kurt*.

<sup>55</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Shirt of Flame*, 32-33.

children were massacred by the Armenians, vows "an eternal enmity to the great powers who upheld the Armenians as 'a martyr race,'" and whose perception of all Greek and Armenian peddlers is that they are English spies.<sup>56</sup> A rather haughty feminine opinion is voiced by Ayşe, the heroine of *Shirt of Flame*, after some rough treatment by an Armenian interpreter when she states that she had always liked Armenians, even when they were rebelling against the Ottomans, but that "when he is the slave and servant of the English he is ridiculous."<sup>57</sup>

A simplistic attitude towards non-Muslim minorities is expressed by an Anatolian mercenary soldier. After years of experience in the Balkan Wars, he has an unshakeable belief that all Christians intend to exterminate Turks. In his own mind he divides Turks and Muslims into those who allow themselves to be persecuted and massacred by the Christian world, and those who, like himself, take to the mountains in order to plan a strategy for saving the Muslim world.<sup>58</sup>

In the wartime stories, the real villainy is reserved for the Greek invaders. Their military aggression and their raids on civilians are related with a bitterness that could only be expressed by someone who has witnessed these terrible events. As a participant in the Sakarya offensive, Halide Edip's accounts are understandably subjective. This is evident in the way that atrocities perpetrated by Greeks are repeatedly condemned as barbaric, while Turkish military actions are always held to be principled, virtuous and highly moral in their intention and execution. The only criticism of Turks is reserved for individuals or groups who operate against the interests of the nationalist cause such as caliphate troops, traitorous brigands, and scheming opportunist individuals. Her descriptions of Greek military leaders are examined in more detail below, but in general the Greek army is depicted as a collection of lewd, dirty and drunken savages.

There were of course several Muslim minority groups involved in the fighting in Anatolia, and the author makes frequent reference to them. They include migrant

---

<sup>56</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Shirt of Flame*, 69. The author adds a footnote in the English version stating that street pedlars were often employed as spies.

<sup>57</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Shirt of Flame*, 73.

<sup>58</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Shirt of Flame*, 119-120.

communities from the Caucasus and the Balkans who had been driven into Anatolia because of unbearable conditions in their homelands, and bands of Laz mercenaries from the Black Sea region. Of these minorities the Balkan and Laz are usually perceived as faithful nationalist supporters, while Circassian loyalties are unknown and therefore suspect.

In her descriptions of Anatolia, the author conveys some of the confusion existing in the provinces, where rural inhabitants switch their allegiance to whichever military force gives them the best treatment. In particular there is a scene in the Circassian districts near Adapazarı where Greeks, Armenians and Turks all join the Caliph's forces to fight the nationalists, and another in Adapazarı where the town is fought over hourly by Albanian, Circassian and Turkish bands of fighters, each of which win and lose control of the town in turn.

As mentioned earlier, the Circassians were perceived to be an unknown quantity among Turkish fighters. Although the aristocracy had been inter-breeding with Circassians for centuries, their settlements in the provinces were still considered new and foreign by Turkish speaking Anatolians. The author describes her first impressions of a Circassian village in her memoirs and in *The Shirt of Flame*. The charming white-washed houses, the handsome graceful inhabitants, and the unrestricted behaviour of females create a romantic scene that, in the novel, prompts the narrator to question why there is such hostility towards the Circassians: "Do they not beat in our veins, from the countless Circassian mothers their beauty, their poetry and many other virtues? How many famous chiefs and nameless heroes are there who were for us and with us through all these centuries?"<sup>59</sup>

A troop of Laz horsemen, known as the Black Shadows are depicted as a particularly courageous band of fighters, some of whose members have been chosen to form the guard for Mustafa Kemal Paşa in Ankara. They come from the Black Sea and wear the eye-catching dress of local boatmen: "long skin fitting tights, but pouched in the back - black shirt and a black cloth on the head arranged turban fashion. In the belt,

---

<sup>59</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Shirt of Flame*, 133.

a knife in a silver and ivory case."<sup>60</sup> They are led by a young officer, Ahmet Rıfkı, who is described as one of the most handsome and loyal soldiers of the nationalist forces. Ahmet Rıfkı is portrayed with great affection by the author as "crystal-hearted", brave, chivalrous and a martyr to the nationalist cause. It is interesting to note that in her next novel, *Vurun Kahpeye*, the author chose a *Karadenizli* for the principal role of nationalist hero.

### **Vurun Kahpeye**

For most Turks the word *Karadenizli* means 'from the Black Sea Coastal region', and is synonymous with Laz. Tosun, a young captain of nationalist troops, is described as having been raised in a Black Sea coastal district. Like Oğuz in *Yeni Turan*, he has arrestingly good looks. Tall, strong and handsome, with an eagle-like face, he is unflinching in his attacks on enemy forces and their collaborators. Realising that local people are confused, frightened, and easily swayed by threats of violence and plunder, he maintains high standards of openness and integrity in his dealings with villagers, showing particular kindness to those who have suffered enemy occupation. At the time, the only source of sustenance for troops such as Tosun's was to be found in local villages. This dependency was often abused, but in the case of Tosun, he insists on his men paying for their food, respecting village honour, and maintaining a respectful distance from local women at all times. In addition, he requests money only from those who can afford to pay. This causes considerable resentment among those village notables who are accustomed to exploiting their tenants and servants. Apart from his hero-like qualities, there are other parallels between Tosun and Oğuz. Both men have Muslim ethnic minority backgrounds, and both men risk their lives in their determination to save Anatolia from foreign domination. And they both fall in love with the respective heroine, whom they place at risk by using as decoys in the enemy camp.

While Turkish leaders are accorded all the positive attributes of manliness, Greek army leaders are portrayed as devils incarnate. The Greek captain in "Zeynebim Zeynebim" is described as "one-eyed, dark-faced, with a puny build but an enormous

---

<sup>60</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Shirt of Flame*, 89.



head"<sup>61</sup> while the appearance of Damyanos in *Vurun Kahpeye* is a caricature of evil: "When he was alone, he used to wander up and down, rubbing his hands, his glass eye motionless and his good eye rolling from right to left."<sup>62</sup>

The author recognised the potential for evil that exists in nationalism, but in her fiction this aspect is reserved for the Greek invaders. While she consistently condemns violence, Halide Edip's continual attribution of violent acts to non-Turks while glossing over the activities of Turkish military forces indicates a distinct bias in her attitude. Damyanos is presented as an example of extreme nationalism. He believes he has the right to kill and take the property of anyone not of his race, particularly non-Muslims, and is perceived to be harming his own people by helping to turn the Greeks into a nation of murderers and thieves. The perception of him as a corrupt nationalist is reinforced by learning of his plans to amass a fortune from his wartime activities that will enable him to spend the rest of his life in Paris. His strategy for achieving this aim is to stir up fear and distrust in a region, and then to procure a high reward from local notables in return for protection.

Although the strength of his leadership is never questioned, the negative characteristics which are attributed to Damyanos make him as improbable as the over-virtuous Turkish leaders. Like Tosun and Oğuz, he falls for the particular charms of the novel's heroine, but unlike them he is unable to control his obsession. Frustration at being thwarted in his desires drives him to excessive indulgence in alcohol and even the use of cocaine. Usually his cravings are no more than those of primitive lust, but faced with Aliye, he experiences disturbing new sensations. Finding that Aliye is determined to resist his advances and oppose his plans only intensifies his desire for her, and his military strategies become centred around plans to win her for himself. Thus we see the Greek effort dissipated and weakened by immoral intentions, while in contrast the Turkish troops under Tosun become strengthened by his single-minded resolve and his honourable behaviour. The author develops this situation to an

---

<sup>61</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Dağa Çıkan Kurt*, 17.

<sup>62</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, 46.

implausible degree until a scene is reached where Damyanos, claiming to be the richest, bravest and most bloodthirsty of the Greek military leaders in Turkey, offers to sacrifice his country's ambitions by halting the whole Greek campaign if Aliye will only submit herself to him. The scene ends with him crying like a child in front of her.

The overpowering nature of Damyanos's obsession is further intensified by the introduction of the Madonna as a comparison to Aliye. The reader is told that Aliye's spiritual beauty and the mesmerising effect of her eyes inspire in him an awe that is only equalled by his feelings in front of a picture of the Madonna. He tries to banish these feelings with alcohol and drugs, but the images only become more intense and confused:

Sometimes . . . he thought there was a power in those eyes, that came from beyond Christianity. He would cross himself and pray for deliverance from this Daughter of Satan. One day, he became excited while praying to the Lord before the picture of Mary that hung in his room, and invited the wrath of all Christian saints to be visited upon Aliye. The only candle in the room stood beneath the picture. Above the flickering candle, he saw the Virgin Mary shiver and stir. Maybe this was a sign of his salvation: He remained on his knees, his eyes glued to the picture, waiting hopefully. It was a strange Byzantine Madonna; her head was covered, her eyes looked straight ahead from her thin face, her long-fingered hands rested on her lap. The halo above the head of this Madonna seemed to be really luminous. The Madonna stirred, raised her head and suddenly opened her tired eyes. At that moment Damyanos, who was praying to be set free from his distress, let out a bitter cry and fell forward to the ground. As the breathing Madonna opened her eyelids he perceived Aliye's violet-coloured eyes.<sup>63</sup>

The association of this evil man with Christianity, with his suspicions of satanic

---

<sup>63</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, 81.

forces at play and his appeals to the 'Christian' God for assistance in his loathsome plans, taint the 'enemy religion' in a manner that panders to uninformed Islamic beliefs. Similarly in the final words of "Zeynebim Zeynebim", the author compounds the evil of the atrocities perpetrated by the Greeks by adding that "the local priest had accomplished his religious and patriotic duty."<sup>64</sup>

However, the author also expresses critical disapproval of bigoted orthodox Islamic attitudes through her portrayal of the local imam and his traitorous accomplices in *Vurun Kahpeye*. When Aliye asks one of these men for help in dealing with Damyanos, his refusal makes her cry out in frustration: "I came to you for help because whatever else you are, you're a Turk and a Muslim. But you're much worse than Damyanos and even more of an infidel!"<sup>65</sup> It is evident from her memoirs and later non-fiction works that the author thought deeply about several religions including Christianity although she finally regarded Islam as the most appropriate religion for herself. The extreme disgust with which the author depicts characters justifying their evil acts with religious dogma illustrates the abhorrence she felt towards the misuse of any religion, whether by Muslims or non-Muslims. She targets destructive reactionary attitudes through one of her heroes in *The Shirt of Flame*: "It is not enough to conquer an open enemy. The army must open a great war against the dark things, old prejudices, traditions which make our people so miserable and slaves to every tyrant, we must clean away those things."<sup>66</sup> This quote predicts a role which the army was to adopt on a number of occasions during the twentieth century.

### Later Works

After the wartime novels, Halide Edip returned to addressing personal and social relationships with a new breadth and depth that were not apparent in her early novels. The nationalistic zeal that had been pervading her works disappears. Ethnic minority characters begin to appear in a number of important roles, and the inclusion of foreigners, particularly Americans, adds a further dimension to her later works. It is

---

<sup>64</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Dağa Çıkan Kurt*, 18.

<sup>65</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Vurun Kahpeye*, 95.

<sup>66</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Shirt of Flame*, 145.

evident that she no longer believed ethnic minorities should suppress their identity in order to conform to a homogeneous Turkish stereotype, as she had partially suggested in *Yeni Turan*. She started writing about fictional environments in which people of all races, religions and classes could relate to one another, and learn from each other without losing their individual traits. Through social interplay, the author explores questions of genetic inheritance, education, class and racial prejudice.

### ***Kalb Ağrısı* and *Zeyno'nun Oğlu***

*Kalb Ağrısı* and *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* form a chronological sequence, with most of the main characters appearing in both novels. In their different ways, both works examine how nature and nurture contribute to the development of individual characters. In *Kalb Ağrısı* this theme and its repercussions are focused mainly on modern urban women. By contrast *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* takes the reader to the Kurdish South East of Turkey where Turks and Kurds live side by side, protected by either Turkish military forces or tribal chiefs. Here peasant culture exists in close proximity to sophisticated modern households.

*Kalb Ağrısı* is the story of a love triangle in which the male protagonist, Hasan, wavers between his desire for the archetypal feminine wife and his need for a more challenging passionate relationship. Azize, who represents the feminine archetype, is a product of Istanbul Ottoman society with her fair complexion and golden hair. Her delicate constitution, which needs constant care and attention, is the result of restrictive child care which has allowed her no opportunity for developing physical strength. Her obsession with beautiful clothes and luxury living is an outcome of a capable but under-educated mind with no serious challenges in life. Yet Azize, with her beauty, delicacy and dependency, is able to exercise a manipulative power equal to the attractions of the sensual and passionate women who threaten her happiness. This threat is personified in two characters, Zeyno and Dora, and also in a past memory of yet another Zeyno in Diyarbakır, known as Kurdish Zeyno.

Zeynep is given the Kurdish diminutive name *Zeyno*<sup>67</sup> by her father, because

---

<sup>67</sup> The practice of creating diminutives by shortening a name and putting "o" at the end is found throughout Turkey. However it is particularly common among Kurds where the diminutive constitutes

of the fiery, passionate nature she has inherited from her Kurdish maternal grandfather. Her love of competitive sports, her natural boyish appearance and her quick-witted conversation set her apart from most of her female contemporaries. With the help of her father's careful upbringing, Zeyno learns to control her headstrong qualities. She resists becoming embroiled in an illicit affair with Hasan, but as a result she suffers a lifetime of heart ache (*kalb ağrısı*).

Dora, who is not an Ottoman minority character, is included here firstly because the author develops the characters of Dora and Zeyno as alternatives to the Azize archetype, and secondly because she is the only example in Halide Edip's work of a Jewish woman. Dora is introduced as the daughter of an Austrian Jewish banker. She is a senior executive in her father's business and is at one point described as one of the most famous women in Europe. Despite her father's enormous wealth, she insists on earning her own living and, like Zeyno, she has a boyish haircut, wears plain clothes and dislikes extravagant living. Dora is presented as an example of modern European womanhood whose emancipation has given her the freedom to pursue extra-marital affairs for her own pleasure without fear of social repercussions. Her particular attraction to men lies in her eagerness to enjoy life, and her willingness and ability to discuss intimate topics normally avoided by both female and male colleagues. She develops caring relationships without being possessive. Through Dora, the author explores ideas for open marriage, in which both partners are free to engage in other relationships without jeopardising the marriage itself. However, there is no suggestion that Dora's lifestyle has brought her happiness. On the contrary, she is lonely and senses that loneliness is her destiny. Just like Azize and Zeyno, she is an unhappy product of her genetic heritage and her upbringing.

In *Kalb Ağrısı* the story is woven around characters coping with the effects of their different childhoods, but in *Zeyno'nun Oğlu*, more attention is paid to the actual processes by which nature and nurture combine to produce individual characters, in this case Haso, son of Kurdish Zeyno and Hasan. The author shows goodness triumphing

---

a vocative case that is used in the Kurdish language for addressing one another.

over evil through events in the life of the child Haso, together with utter condemnation of violence.

It can have been no accident that in the years immediately following the Sheik Said rebellion of 1925, Halide Edip, with her political awareness, chose to write *Zeyno'nun Ođlu* about Diyarbakır and its surrounding districts. Although there is no comment on the political situation, she writes with compassion about an area of Anatolia that was completely unknown to the majority of Turks at the time. As a setting she chooses a village inhabited by Turks and Kurds where both languages are spoken, and she takes care to reflect the dialect and accent of Kurds when the dialogue is in Turkish. The degree of Kurdishness in each character is carefully indicated. Kurdish Zeyno and her mother, Perihan, are of course Kurdish, while their family friend, Şaban, definitely regards himself as a Kemah Turk despite having Kurdish links on his maternal side. The Kurdish Sheik is a relic of an by-gone age that was both civilised and cruel, while Ramazan and Bayram, both Kurdish, evolve into symbols of evil and violence. Although the author suggests that the arrival of a Turkish military presence in Diyarbakır is an ominous sign for local inhabitants, she avoids any mention of Turkish aggression, just as she did in her wartime novels. All violent actions that take place in the novel are attributed to Kurdish individuals.

Kurdish Zeyno, who was little more than a shadow from the past in *Kalb Ağrısı*, becomes a central figure in *Zeyno'nun Ođlu*. She is a sensually beautiful Kurdish girl whose one sin is to succumb to her passionate feelings for Hasan on a single occasion. The result of this union is an illegitimate child and a life of tragedy. Kurdish Zeyno remains silent through most of the book, bowing to her destiny like the heroines of ancient Middle Eastern love stories. In fact at one point a direct comparison is made between her life and that of Aslı in the Middle Eastern tale of *Kerem ve Aslı*. Although Kurdish Zeyno's silence means that she rarely comes to the forefront of the storyline, the reader is constantly aware of her presence. Her refusal to blame or incriminate others and her acceptance of life's tribulations contrast with the efforts of the 'modern' female characters to engineer improvements to her life. Kurdish Zeyno

retains the earthy sensuality of her youth and is perceived as an archetypal earth mother, while Istanbul Zeyno, childless and intellectual, complements her through her role as protector and educator. It is here that the reason for their having the same name becomes clear. Together they constitute a whole that satisfies all the emotional needs of the child Haso and the father Hasan.

The novels *Yeni Turan* and *Ateşten Gömlek* introduced heroes who were already in their prime and ready to serve their countrymen. In *Kalb Ağrısı* and *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* the author traces the accidents of birth and fortune that create a man capable of such heroism. The child Haso is disadvantaged at birth by his illegitimate status and later becomes the victim of extreme violence. However he has innate qualities of physical and mental excellence that enable him to survive and overcome his tribulations, even at a very young age. The source of his strength is perceived to be his mixed Kurdish and Turkish parentage. His natural bravery and talent for learning is complemented by a radiant personality that draws people to him. As Haso progresses from one situation to another, his presence generates good fortune to those who give him the love and care that every child needs.

His early infancy is spent with a tough work-weary grandmother, his loving but subdued mother and Şaban, who becomes a devoted father figure. A sudden intrusion of evil into this warm, secure childhood appears in the guise of his step-father Ramazan, and later Bayram Ağa. As the forces of good and evil swirl about him, he suffers physical and emotional pain, but is always saved from permanent psychological damage by the timely arrival of a good force, usually in the form of Şaban or Istanbul Zeyno.

Haso's childhood education is undertaken by several individuals who each want to adopt him as their own, and who each have something specific to teach him. From his mother he learns to give and receive unquestioning love, and Şaban educates him in farming, wild life and outdoor pursuits. Later he spends time under the guardianship of a Kurdish Sheik, from whom he learns about religious tradition and self-discipline. At the age of nine, Haso comes into contact with Istanbul Zeyno from whom he learns to

analyse and rationalise his experiences. Soon afterwards he meets his natural father, Hasan, with whom he completes his physical and mental training. Since the novel ends when Haso is on the verge of young manhood, his story is incomplete. There is no indication of the purpose to which he will apply his talents. However in the context of this novel, his role is important as a saintly infant figure who, despite his own suffering, offers love and generates it in others, thereby enriching the lives of those around him.

### ***Sinekli Bakkal***

In *Sinekli Bakkal* [1936]<sup>68</sup> the author returns to the late Ottoman period, before the CUP revolution. Although arguments are presented for both the Ottomanists and the CUP through Selim Paşa and his son Hilmi respectively, both movements are discarded in favour of a mystical individualistic approach which is expounded through Vehbi Dede. The contrasting settings of aristocratic society and the humble district of Sinekli Bakkal are linked through a poor young *hafız* named Rabia,<sup>69</sup> whose talents as a vocal performer give her access to the highest levels of society. In the second part of the book, the upper classes are seen to crumble while Rabia and her motley collection of friends form an increasingly strong and cohesive group that has little interest in material wealth or political intrigue. A number of minority characters are woven into the plot, including a Circassian slave at the Sultan's court, a Gypsy entertainer, and a young ambitious Albanian Ottoman official. In each of these cases, the author demonstrates how it was possible for minority individuals of lowly birth to gain influence and power within the upper levels of Ottoman society.

Canary, the Circassian slave, is bought by Selim Paşa's wife who, like many upper class women of her time, enjoys selecting potentially good young slaves, educating them to serve as royal consorts, and selling them at a high profit. The scenes depicting females at social occasions in Selim Paşa's mansion and at a royal palace are both interesting and rare in that they are written by one of the few female writers to have

---

<sup>68</sup> The author originally wrote this novel in English under the title *The Clown and his Daughter* [1935]. Quotations are taken from the English version.

<sup>69</sup> A *hafız* is someone who can chant the Koran from memory. They were much in demand as performers in large households, especially on religious feast days.



actually witnessed such events. The author describes Canary in the following manner:

"She was a girl of broad shoulders, narrow, boyish hips, and a brilliant, satiny skin. Her eyes were blue. Her rose-coloured gown was simply made, and had a silver belt; her fair hair hung down her back in a long braid, ending in a large ribbon bow, as though she had been a very young girl."

Also noted are:

". . . the haughty lines of the arched eyebrows, one of which was higher than the other. This trick of the lifted eyebrow was one in which, for some unaccountable reason, all Circassian beauties indulged."<sup>70</sup>

There is a colourful description of the Sultan's wife sitting with her entourage of Circassian ladies waiting for the entertainments to begin at a special gala evening celebrating the sale and transfer of Canary. The reader is given a glimpse of life in the court harem where for centuries Circassian women have been regarded as prize possessions. The value they were accorded gave them a sense of their own worth and a dignity that belied their slave status:

The royal lady was seated on a gilt chair on a dais in the reception hall. The tiara of brilliants on her fair hair and the necklace of single diamonds scintillated, catching the light from the two tall candles behind her. A bodyguard of elderly women sat rigidly on chairs round the dais, and the younger ones stood or walked about the corridors. All wore long robes and carried trains thrown negligently over their left arms. They also wore tiny head-dresses made of flimsy, gauzy stuff and perilously perched over one ear. They spoke, in Circassian accents, a curious Turkish which sounded like the warbling of birds. They flashed a strange radiance about them, and were very much alike in their blonde beauty; they were, indeed, older or younger versions of Canary. They too raised one eyebrow in the same manner - costly precious dolls,

---

<sup>70</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Clown and His Daughter*, 33.

created *en série* by the same artist.<sup>71</sup>

When Canary enters the room, she performs a ritual dance before the assembled audience much as every Circassian lady present would have done in her youth:

. . . Canary floated into the room. She wore a purple-ruby fancy dress, with enormous trousers, embroidered in quaint designs with gold and silver sequins, and flimsy sleeves, flapping like wings over her long, snowy arms. Only the arms and the hands, with golden castenets (sic) attached to the tapering fingers, lived and moved. The youthful body squeezed into the tight, sleeveless bodice remained strangely erect, strangely aloof. The life of the dance was in the arms: rippling, trembling, whirling . . . . The straight, sunny hair lay on her back in shimmering, silky softness. Long, gleaming strands of hair caught at the white arms in their perpetual and ever-changing rhythmic motion. Canary's arms and her body seemed like two different beings.<sup>72</sup>

Later, when Canary reappears in the story she is no longer a slave but a princess. She has developed a regal grace and a quick mind, without losing her sense of humour. She mocks her own conformity to stereotype with the wry comment: "To be beautiful is expected of every Circassian woman."<sup>73</sup> Her anecdotes about court life indicate that she is totally aware that her function is to instil beauty and intelligence into a decadent royal lineage.

Pembe, the Gypsy dancer appears frequently throughout the book, hovering around the main characters like a good fairy. She protects them when they are in trouble, sees to their physical and emotional needs, and calls on pagan forces in ways that are out of the question for good Muslims or Christians. She is no intellectual, but her perception is acute and her intuition is reliable. She can entertain and comfort anybody from street artist to aristocrat. Her presence is particularly indispensable for

---

<sup>71</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Clown and His Daughter*, 50-51.

<sup>72</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Clown and His Daughter*, 51.

<sup>73</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *The Clown and His Daughter*, 234.

the Turkish women in the novel, whose disciplined lifestyles preclude any spontaneous deviation from accepted behaviour.

Pembe is charismatic rather than beautiful and, despite the disapproval of Sinekli Bakkal inhabitants, she is completely lacking in social inhibition. She mingles as easily with members of Selim Paşa's household as she does with Rabia's small group of friends who gather at the corner shop. Pembe brings colour and vitality into the austere life of Rabia, and adds a welcome theatrical quality to social gatherings at Selim Paşa's mansion. Her life, which is full of laughter and colour, is guided by intuition, impetuosity, ancient proverbs and superstitions. In her self-appointed role as guardian of other people's physical and emotional welfare, she is regularly on hand with a variety of alternative folk remedies. Pembe is always the first to notice signs of mutual attraction in others, and she makes herself an indispensable figure at wedding celebrations. She maintains a sceptical ignorance about traditional Islamic beliefs, preferring to call on a motley collection of spirits and saints when necessary. Pembe represents a pagan heritage that had almost disappeared from the consciousness of people with devout monotheistic religious beliefs.

Albanian Bilal is given a stylish introduction that is longer and more detailed than any of Halide Edip's wartime heroes, and is in fact somewhat out of proportion to his importance in the novel. Nevertheless the author clearly felt his character to be significant because, although she does not develop him much in this novel, he is referred to in *Tatarcık* [1939], and reappears in *Döner Ayna* [1954] as an elderly man.

Bilal is brought from his home town Monastir in Macedonia at the age of fifteen to be an assistant gardener at Selim Paşa's household. He has the athleticism and arresting good looks that characterise all Halide Edip's heroes but with notably cold blue eyes. His appearance and personality gain the attention of Selim Paşa who decides to educate him and groom him as a future member of his staff. However Bilal provokes hostile reactions among his contemporaries. The youths of Sinekli Bakkal tease him about his school uniform, his funny accent and his provincial manners, and Rabia, despite an initial physical attraction to him, finds his manner offensive. At first

there is no obvious reason for the young people's intuitive aversion to Bilal apart from his 'foreignness'. However it soon becomes clear that he has an unquenchable thirst for power and that he intends to exact revenge on all those who have insulted or snubbed him. There are good sides to Bilal's character but, as he develops from adolescence into young adulthood, ambition is seen to be the main driving force in his life. His willingness to flatter Selim Paşa and his wife for his own advancement and his marriage to their unappealing daughter attract criticism from other members of the household. Despite the detailed build-up to Bilal securing his future within the family of Selim Paşa, he disappears abruptly from the main plot.

In *Sinekli Bakkal*, Bilal had been fervently supporting Selim Paşa and the Ottomanist government, because this was the only way he could achieve the advancement he craved. However in *Döner Ayna* it transpires that he was involved in the revolution of 1908, and has subsequently occupied important government posts. There is of course an inconsistency here, since he is first described as someone prepared to adopt whatever political views are necessary for self-promotion, while later he is supposed to have maintained a constant loyalty to the original ideas of the CUP.

The elderly Bilal proves to have been a courageous and highly able administrator, whose career has been jeopardised by his enduring zeal for CUP policies. Now nearing seventy, he has kept himself youthful in mind and body and he wins the affection of the young heroine in the story. The discrepancies in the character of Bilal weaken his place among Halide Edip's fictional characters, yet it is clear that he was important to the author. Through him, she seems to have attempted a sympathetic rendering of her perception of Atatürk's character. Bilal's physical appearance described as "Still upright with the fire in his blue eyes unextinguished, his hair which still sometimes shone like gold was not yet completely white"<sup>74</sup> is just as the author might have envisaged Atatürk in old age, likewise his quick, active, argumentative mind and his extreme secular beliefs that err on the side of fanaticism.

The conventional view of Halide Edip as a "nationalist writer" is not totally

---

<sup>74</sup> Halide Edip Adivar, *Döner Ayna*, 178.

inaccurate, but it is simplistic and in any case only applicable to a few works written during a short period of her long writing career. Her so-called nationalist works are more an expression of outrage against foreign aggression and violence than vehicles for extreme nationalist views. At the same time there is a consistent bias towards the Turkish national cause. In her later works, the author broadened her vision to encompass all minority communities, particularly Muslim minorities. She revived traces of the Ottoman culture in which she had been raised, but with two fundamental differences. Firstly she firmly maintained the view that the Turkish nation should never capitulate to foreign powers, and secondly her attitude towards European culture and its influence on Turkish society became increasingly critical.

### **Reşat Nuri Güntekin**

Reşat Nuri Güntekin was born just seven years after Halide Edip. Like her, he was born in Istanbul and spent considerable time travelling in Anatolia, in his case as an inspector of schools. His literature mostly focuses on the turbulent years between 1908 and 1923, but his writing demonstrates a liberal and tolerant attitude that was far ahead of his time. It will be seen that he deliberately included ethnic minority individuals and communities in his works, and that his observations of their roles in society, both during and after the wars, show an attitude of compassion and inclusiveness.

Reşat Nuri was born on 26 November 1889 in Üsküdar, Istanbul, the son of a military doctor, Nuri Bey, and Lûtfiye Hanım.<sup>75</sup> He was a naughty uncontrollable child, and the despair of his *Lala*, Şakir Ağa.<sup>76</sup> When he started attending the local school in Selimiye his behaviour became even worse. His naughtiness was due to an over-active imagination and a thirst for excitement that rebelled against the constraints imposed on middle-class children at that time. Reşat Nuri's first childhood ambition

---

<sup>75</sup> Some sources give Reşat Nuri's birth date as 1892. He has also been quoted as saying he was born in 1893. The discrepancies appear to arise from the difference between the Greek *hicri* calendar and the Arabic. His birth is registered as 1889 by his uncle Tevfik Paşa, father of Ruşen Eşref which is born out by his retirement in 1954 at the age of 65. See Muzaffer Uyguner, *Reşat Nuri Güntekin : Hayatı Sanatı Eserleri*, 3.

<sup>76</sup> A *Lala* was a male family servant entrusted with the care of a child both inside and outside the home.

was to become a member of the flamboyant fire-fighting teams that were so essential in fire-prone Istanbul. Then, at the age of ten, he aspired to be a high wire artist and worked hard at perfecting this skill until a bad fall finally deterred him. Later, after seeing a performance of *Karagöz ve Hacivat* he announced a desire to work in the theatre.

In 1900 the family moved to Çanakkale where Reşat Nuri again went to a local school until he was old enough to attend Galatasaray school in Istanbul. However after one year he left Galatasaray to go to a Catholic school (*Frerler Okulu*) run by monks in Izmir where he completed his secondary education. Despite the edict banning Muslims from attending 'foreign' schools that had disrupted Halide Edip's education, Reşat Nuri was allowed to continue at this school for some unexplained reason. He went on to graduate from the Faculty of Literature at Istanbul University in 1912 after which he began teaching at Bursa High School. He was subsequently employed as a teacher of literature and later headmaster at Vefa (Istanbul), Istanbul Boys', Çamlıca, Kabataş, Galatasaray and Erenköy high schools.

In 1927 Reşat Nuri was made a schools inspector for the Ministry of Education. In this job he travelled all over Anatolia for twelve years until 1939 when he was elected as MP for Çanakkale. After four years in parliament he returned to being an education inspector, later becoming chief inspector. During this time he was sent as UNESCO representative to Paris, a post which he held until his retirement. After retiring in 1954 he served on the Literary Committee of the Istanbul City Theatre. The onset of lung cancer resulted in his going to London for treatment where he died on 7 December 1956. He was buried in Karacaahmed cemetery in Istanbul six days later.

During his childhood Reşat Nuri's literary inclinations were stimulated in a number of ways. According to his own account, his love of stories began with *Lala Şakir* telling him folk tales, particularly one about three brothers who hunted for gazelles. A taste for literature began to develop during a year of home tutoring in Çanakkale when his teacher, Naci, made him memorise four lines of *Tuhfe-i Vehbi* <sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Vehbi was an early nineteenth century Ottoman poet.

every day. He was also impressed by *Udi*, a novel by Aliye Hanım, which he found among the books his mother's friends collected for amusement during the summer months. However it was not until he read the works of Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil (1866-1945) and Tevfik Fikret (1867-1915)<sup>78</sup> that Reşat Nuri was inspired to write his own stories.<sup>79</sup>

Reşat Nuri never ceased to wonder at the richness of the library acquired by his father who was just an ordinary '*alaturka*' graduate from the military hospital. In this library Reşat Nuri was to discover the best of Turkish and Persian Divan poetry, the *Mesnevi*, Hafız's commentaries, all of the *Edebiyat-i Cedide* and the earlier works which had inspired it. There was also a comprehensive collection of French literature including Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Balzac, Flaubert, Lola, and Daudet, Taine, Renan, and Felix Alcan. Although Reşat Nuri was not allowed to enter this treasure trove, he used to creep in when his father was away, cut out pictures and colour them. Remembering the punishment he received for doing this, he is quoted as saying: "That is why in my long working life as a teacher I always say to those around me 'Leave the children alone, let them play with the books. Never mind about the cost.'"<sup>80</sup>

Reşat Nuri had begun to experiment with writing before going to university, and during World War 1 he wrote literary articles in *La Pensée Turque*, and theatrical criticism under the heading "Temaşa Haftaları" in *Zaman* newspaper. His first publication of original fiction was the short story "Eski Ahbap" which appeared in the journal *Diken* in 1917. This was followed by a serialisation of *Harabelerin Çiçeği* in *Zaman* during 1918 under the pen-name of Cemil Nimet. In 1919 *Gizli El* began serialisation in *Dersaadet* newspaper but was censored after the first instalment and only published in book form three years later. His play *Istanbul Kızı* was performed at Istanbul City Theatre, and later turned into the novel *Çalılıkusu*, [1922] which was

---

<sup>78</sup> Uşaklıgil was one of the first Western style Turkish novelists. He was known for his romantic novels which avoided contentious political issues, see Robert Finn, *The Early Turkish Novel 1972-1900*, 93-114, and Herkül Millas, *Türk Romanı ve "Öteki"*, 24-26. Tevfik Fikret was one of the best known poets of the *Servet-i Funun* literary movement, see Atilla Özkırımlı, *Tevfik Fikret*.

<sup>79</sup> Birol Emil, *Reşat Nuri Güntekin*, 2.

<sup>80</sup> Yaşar Nabi Nayır, *Edebiyatçılarımız Konuşuyor, İstanbul 1953*, as quoted in Birol Emil, *Reşat Nuri Güntekin*, 4.

serialised in *Vakit* newspaper. The same year this novel was published in book form to immediate popular acclaim. *Çalığışu* launched Reşat Nuri's writing career and he quickly became one of Turkey's best loved novelists with a readership that ranged from clerks to government ministers.<sup>81</sup>

The author continued to write novels, stories, plays, travel notes, articles, humorous articles, poetry, and completed a number of translations and adaptations. On 12 April 1924 he began publishing a weekly humorous magazine called *Kelebek* with Mahmut Yesari, the artist Münif Fehim, and İbnürrefik Ahmet Nuri. In this publication he wrote under the pseudonyms of Ateşböceği (Firefly) and Ağustosböceği (Cicada). In 1947 he launched a daily newspaper called *Memleket* in which he set out to defend republican ideology and reforms, but soon transferred it to someone else and gave up journalism for good. Between 1918 and 1955 he wrote in numerous literary journals including: *İnci, Edebî Mecmua, Büyük Mecmua, Nedim, Şair, Hayat, Güneş, Muhit, Yeni Türk, Ana Yurt, Ayda Bir, Akbaba, Yedigün, Aile, Varlık, Türk Dili, Türk Yurdu, Temaşa Mecmuası, Yeni Mecmua, Darülbedayi Mecmuası, Türk Tiyatrosu Mecmuası,* and *Devlet Tiyatrosu Mecmuası.*

Reşat Nuri liked to live quietly and he enjoyed solitude. He would often start writing after midnight and continue working until four or five o'clock in the morning. His colleague, Hakkı Süha, described him as a warm attractive man with bright eyes creased at the corners from continual smiling, short hair combed towards his forehead, and a cigarette always dangling from his lips. His complexion was darkish, his build slight, and his movements had an infant-like quality. He spoke with a courteous sweet voice that compelled listeners to believe whatever he said.<sup>82</sup>

The library at his home gave Reşat Nuri access to the best of Ottoman and Turkish literature, and to much of nineteenth century French literature. His education enabled him to not only read but comprehend the mentality of European works. In his writing he succeeded in synthesising the cultures of East and West. Unlike most of his

---

<sup>81</sup> An English translation of *Çalığışu* by Wyndham Deedes has been published under the title *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl.*

<sup>82</sup> Hakkı Süha, *Yeni Mecmua* [23/02/1940], as quoted in Muzaffer Uyguner, *Reşat Nuri Güntekin*, 4.



contemporaries, his non-Turkish characters are neither alien nor hostile. Apart from a few short stories, he rarely uses minorities to illustrate a sense of the alienation in his works. His critical comments and satirical scenes, which are particularly directed at reactionary intolerance and religious zealotry, are designed to expose shortcomings which exist in mankind as a whole. Generally speaking he does not use minorities as examples of human defects or weaknesses. He makes no attempt to ridicule the traits of minority characters in the way that Hüseyin Rahmi did, nor does he vilify or demonise them like Halide Edip. There is also a notable lack of 'loose' women among his non-Turkish characters. Professor Birol Emil writes about Reşat Nuri:

This great Turkish novelist was very much like ordinary men. There were no censorious, stormy or neurotic aspects to his character. His temperament and personality were as humble as his physique. The passions, complexes, and frenzies which affected the Western novelists that he knew so well did not exist in him. He did not have Tolstoy's spiritual crisis of faith, Dostoyevski's mad frenzies, Balzac's disgust with mankind, nor Camus' internal anguish and sense of uselessness.<sup>83</sup>

While the comments in the above quotation are mostly accurate, Reşat Nuri was no ordinary man. He had an exceptional talent for educating. Throughout his literary works he attempts to enlighten his readers by demonstrating the practical benefits of maintaining an open mind, and by showing how narrow-minded prejudice can cause hurt and harm to fellow human beings. He achieves this without lectures and negative criticism, but with stories of human experience that have relevance and appeal to all levels of society.

### ***Olağan İşler and Leylâ ile Mecnun***

Reşat Nuri wrote scores of short stories, many of them no more than two or three pages long. Some of these are in letter form and a number are really miniature one-act plays. These formats allowed him to write in a conversational style that was not yet fully accepted in literature. Other stories clearly demonstrate his progress as a

---

<sup>83</sup> Birol Emil, *Reşat Nuri Güntekin*, 4.

writer of prose fiction. Minority characters occur only occasionally in these stories. They usually appear as stereotypes, particularly in the humorous tales, but sometimes he adds a surprise element by making them behave contrary to expectations. He uses stereotypes as literary tools for creating ready-made characters in short stories.

The stereotype characters include: a Greek worker at the local tobacco factory and his Albanian friend who together con the owner of a restaurant into throwing a party for all their friends (“Bahçeli Lokanta”, *Olağan İşler* [1930]); a Jewish tinsmith and a brash young man who attempt to outwit each other (“Papağan Yumurtası”, *Leyla ile Mecnun* [1928]); and a Jewish man who takes advantage of neighbouring family disputes to obtain their broken antiques which he expertly repairs and then sells (“Geçim Dünyası”, *Olağan İşler*).

In the following stories, the author increases the impact of humour or pathos by introducing characters who do not behave as the reader expects. In “Bir Gümrük Kaçakçılığı” (*Leylâ ile Mecnun*) Artin Sergizyan, an Armenian expatriate living in Marseilles, is called upon to assist a French Customs official in deciding whether or not the narrator’s carpet is a prayer mat. The narrator is offended by this, but when Sergizyan arrives he relaxes and comments: “He was a typical Istanbul Armenian. In our country our Armenian citizens often look as if they are sick of us. But when we come across each other in foreign lands they seem to feel a closeness towards us.” Sergizyan colludes with the narrator by privately suggesting in Turkish that he include a somersault in his ritual prayer movement in order to use up the full length of the carpet, and thus convince the official that it is a genuine prayer mat.<sup>84</sup>

In “Mukaddes Hatıra” (*Leylâ ile Mecnun* and *Olağan İşler*), an acquaintance of the narrator insists that he has to avoid the main shopping street because of a ‘sacred memory’ associated with it. It transpires that this memory is a long-standing debt to an honest hard-working Armenian printer. In “Kirazlar” (*Leylâ ile Mecnun*) the narrator discovers his preconception that a reclusive, elderly immigrant Balkan couple are mean and miserly to be totally wrong. He learns that the reason they allow none of the

---

<sup>84</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, “Bir Gümrük Kaçakçılığı”, *Leylâ ile Mecnun*, 78-79.

villagers to pick the cherries in their orchard is that their only surviving grandchild had died after falling from one of the trees and is buried there.

Although the above stories were not necessarily written earlier than some of his novels, they are written in a style closer to the traditions of *Karagöz* with their formula of familiarity infused with a surprise element. When Reşat Nuri embarked on writing novels, he immediately began forging a new style of writing in which individuals and relationships do not conform to any prescribed set of norms, but develop as if they are the inevitable outcome of individual childhood experiences.

### ***Harabelerin Çiçeği***

In his early work *Harabelerin Çiçeği*, Reşat Nuri creates a situation whereby a romantic relationship develops between Süleyman, a reclusive wealthy Turkish eye specialist, and Maryanti, a blind Greek girl living in almost total destitution. The relationship begins when Süleyman, who has suffered bad facial disfigurement from burns in a war incident, finds peace of mind in the company of blind Maryanti, who in turn laps up the attentions of an intelligent man. Süleyman terminates the relationship at the point when he is about to restore her sight and cannot face her shock at seeing his disfigured appearance. The author seems to be emphasising the triviality of class and culture differences compared to the burden of living with serious physical afflictions.

Before meeting Maryanti, Süleyman finds some solace in the company of Bijut, a French prostitute. They offer each other compassion without adopting conventional attitudes of pity for their individual problems.

### ***Boyunduruk***

In the short novel *Boyunduruk*, Professor Celil Hıvzı, having been driven out of his home by his wife, finds companionship with an Armenian landlady Nazık dudu. The author points out that Celil Hıvzı tries living in Beyoğlu but, finding the 'alafranga' lifestyle too alien, he opts to stay with Nazık dudu in Samatya. The reason for his choice, apart from the peace and quiet, is that he feels comfortable in Nazık dudu's 'alaturka' household where he can wander about in the manner to which he is

accustomed.<sup>85</sup> While he is in the company of Nazık dudu and her friends, Celil Hıvzı is finally able to determine the reason for his misery, which is not the rejection of his wife but the loss of his son. Having sorted out his priorities, he is able to do what is necessary to reclaim and care for his son.

### **Çalığışu**

When *Çalığışu* appeared in 1922, Turkish readers were more than ready for a new type of fiction.<sup>86</sup> In this novel Reşat Nuri creates principle characters who are far removed from old stereotypes, and he puts them into situations which educate his readers about life in the new republic outside the confines of Istanbul. He also injects a sense of fun and adventure into the novel without minimising the difficulties and tragedies that occur. Like most of his novels the whole plot is bound together with a romantic theme. The heroine, Feride, is orphaned at a young age, raised in a wealthy extended family household and educated by nuns at a French boarding school. Her confused emotions are dominated by love and hate, which she directs at an older cousin.

Feride has little sense of belonging anywhere, having spent her infancy travelling in Ottoman lands with her father and her school years at a French speaking school. Early in the novel there are references to her being unable to understand Turkish and to her learning new Turkish words from local children.<sup>87</sup> It is not made clear whether she had hitherto been speaking a language other than Turkish, or whether she was merely accustomed to a different dialect. But there is no doubt that she feels a stranger in every respect when she joins her aunt's household. Likewise, she is a misfit at school where most of the other students are Armenians whose female flirtation rites are totally alien to her. However she wins the respect of students and teachers by exploiting her colleagues' lack of Turkish and playing out a touching charade to prove that she is loved.

Feride decides to carve a life for herself as a teacher in Anatolia, but she realises

---

<sup>85</sup> Reşat Nuri Gürpınar, "Boyunduruk", *Harabelerin Çiçeği : Eski Ahbap : Boyunduruk*, 165.

<sup>86</sup> There is an excellent English translation of this novel by Wyndham Deedes entitled *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*.

<sup>87</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Çalığışu*, 14, 16.

she is totally unequipped for living without the assistance of maids and servants. When she prepares to leave Istanbul she seeks help from Gülmisal Kalfa<sup>88</sup>, a former nurse of her mother's. Gülmisal is a Circassian who has no formal education, yet she is able to educate Feride in the practical aspects of living. She teaches her how to buy and prepare food for herself and how to wash and look after her clothes. Just as importantly for Feride, Gülmisal openly acknowledges her grief over the death of Feride's mother. This gives Feride an opportunity to ask questions about her mother and to express her own pent up emotions.

Hacı Kalfa is a protective comforting figure in Feride's bleak existence at her first posting in the unspecified province of B. He works as a porter at the hotel in which Feride is lodging, but he also assumes the role of protector and guardian of her welfare. They have an easy comfortable relationship in which Feride teases him, and he chides her for neglecting her physical and emotional needs. However the fact that he is Armenian is not mentioned until nearly forty pages after he first appears in the novel when Feride is invited to Hacı Kalfa's house to meet his family.<sup>89</sup> His wife, Nevrik Hanım, is a kind-hearted woman from Samatya, who greets Feride emotionally because she "smells" of Istanbul. The couple, though uneducated, are making a great effort to see that their children are educated and well prepared for life. The son, Mirat, is so named in order that his name may easily be converted to the Ottoman (sic) name of Murat. Hacı Kalfa jokes that when Mirat is naughty he is called neither Mirat nor Murat, but Meret (meaning "Cursed One")<sup>90</sup>. The plan is for Mirat to attend a succession of schools which teach in different languages, for two years at a time until he has mastered French, German, English, Italian, Armenian and Ottoman Turkish.

The author introduces the fact that the family is Armenian in his description of the daughter, Hayganuş: "She was a shy and clumsy Armenian girl with heavy eyebrows and beetroot red colouring. Her red cheeks were full of large pimples as if

---

<sup>88</sup> Kalfa was used as a form of address for respected servants in senior supervisory positions.

<sup>89</sup> Deedes defines Hacı Kalfa as an Armenian much earlier in his translation, see *Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, 121-122.

<sup>90</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Çalığışu*, 146.

she had chicken pox.”<sup>91</sup> Despite her unpromising appearance, or perhaps because of it, Hacı Kalfa and Nevrik Hanım consider the education of Hayganuş at the Armenian Catholic School to be just as important as that of her brother, and her father pays serious attention to her progress. When Hayganuş is preparing for an examination it emerges that Feride has a detailed knowledge of Christianity after which the family embrace her into their midst even more warmly than before. When Feride leaves B. the Armenian family give her an elaborate send off as if she were one of their own family.

Feride spends some time at an unspecified place referred to as Ç. which is on the coast near to some straits, and where everybody, local or otherwise, has a relative in the army.<sup>92</sup> Feride enjoys the friendship of a pretty young Circassian wife who is married to a lecherous old regimental *İmam*, and there is a single reference to an old Armenian woman who plays the concertina in return for a few coins at these simple celebrations. There is also a brief reference to the feast of *hidrellez*<sup>93</sup> which the whole community celebrates while she is in Ç. Apart from this, Feride has no further significant encounters with minority characters.

The final stage of Feride’s wanderings are spent in Kuşadası at the outbreak of war. After finding her school turned into a military hospital, she becomes involved in nursing the wounded. In reality Feride’s experiences at the hospital would have been comparable to those of Ayşe in Halide Edip’s *Ateşten Gömlek*, but the tone in *Çalığışu* is totally different. In Reşat Nuri’s work the passion and verve are focused on the personal problems of Feride and her patients, with the war serving merely as a backdrop. There is no mention of who the enemy is, or why fighting has begun. Feride acknowledges the sense of excitement when war is declared, and the overwhelming sadness when casualties start to arrive. However she almost dismisses the war as a nuisance which interferes with her plans for the school.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Çalığışu*, 146. Deedes provides a neater translation than that given above (see *Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, 132). My translation is more literal for the purpose of this work.

<sup>92</sup> The place referred to as Ç is probably meant to represent Çanakkale, situated on the Dardanelles.

<sup>93</sup> See note 112 in this chapter.

<sup>94</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Çalığışu*, 318.

## *Akşam Güneşi*

The immediate and widespread success of *Çalığışu* was not easy for the author to repeat. Two years elapsed before the publication of his next book, *Damga* [1924], and another two years before *Akşam Güneşi* [1926].<sup>95</sup> In the second of these novels the author deliberately creates a multi-cultural setting for his plot which is about the blossoming relationship between an elderly man and his young niece. It is set in late Ottoman times on Meis, an island just off the Mediterranean coast near to Kaş. The reader is introduced to Meis when a new Government Doctor is shown round the island by a local gendarme. On the first page there is a reference to a Christian woman who has such great respect for the hero of the novel, Nazmi, that she keeps his picture next to that of Christ. There is also mention of the Doctor's predecessor, Ilya, whose ethnicity the gendarme cannot remember, "I don't know now that he is dead, whether he was a Christian or an old Jew; all I know is that he was better than a whole host of Moslems are."<sup>96</sup> On this island festivals are celebrated by everybody irrespective of their ethnicity, and the people are bound together by their island traditions and folklore. The Doctor remarks that the Muslim farming communities in the mountains get on very well with the Greek fishermen living along the shores. The lack of ambition in the island people means they can live in friendly coexistence without fear of losing either their livelihood or their cultural identity.

*Afternoon Sun* relates the story of Nazmi, now an old man, who came to Meis from Istanbul after being injured badly in the Balkan war. Nazmi's childhood is similar in many ways to that of Feride in *Çalığışu*. They are both orphaned, brought up by wealthy relatives, educated in French speaking schools where they are loved by their teachers despite their naughty behaviour. After spells of wanting to be a fireman and a muezzin Nazmi finally decides to become a soldier. He throws himself into the adventures of being a soldier with an enthusiasm that compares with Feride's determination to succeed in her career as a teacher.

---

<sup>95</sup> This novel has been translated by Deedes and published under the title *Afternoon Sun*. The following quotation is taken from this translation.

<sup>96</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, trans. Deedes. *Afternoon Sun*, 4.

Reşat Nuri touches on the question of nationalist feelings when Nazmi goes to Paris to finish his military education. There he encounters Balkan and Greek officers who, he realises for the first time, share a hatred of the Turks. He witnesses a Bulgarian former school friend joining other cadet officers in bar-room jibes that deride the Sultan and Ottoman officers. The experience strengthens Nazmi's resolve to do the best that he can for his country, but no attack is made on the characters of these Balkan officers.

The author devotes two chapters to Nazmi's role in the Balkan war. Nazmi gives up the chance of a diplomatic career in order to support the Turkish national cause and to become an active fighter in one of the guerrilla forces. The excitement and tension of these chapters shows that Reşat Nuri was more than capable of writing a nationalist war novel had he chosen to do so. There are repeated references to the fact that the enemy consists of Serbian and Bulgarian troops but, as before, the author maintains a degree of objectivity by not denigrating the Serbs and Bulgarians. The author gives the impression that he has little real interest in war, that in war the enemy has to be fought, but that this has little to do with ordinary people. Eventually Nazmi is badly wounded and pensioned out of the army. With no career prospects ahead of him, he retreats to his father's farm on the island of Meis.

Nazmi discovers that the family home on Meis was once a Greek monastery. He immediately feels at home in the gloomy surroundings, but his wife, Şükran, who has had a much more traditional Istanbul Turkish upbringing, finds the atmosphere oppressive and has difficulty adjusting to their new home. They soon encounter two orphaned children, abandoned first by their Greek mother who could not stand the poverty in which she lived, and later by their Turkish father who left in order to hunt down and kill his wife's lover. Halim Ağa, Nazmi's manservant, relates these events. While Halim Ağa acknowledges that the Greek wife's actions were wrong, he expresses sympathy for her plight without a hint of condemnation for her actions. In the meantime the children have been left to fend for themselves because local people were reluctant to take in the children of a murderer. Their mixed parentage is not a



factor. Nazmi decides to adopt the children and brings them up as his own.

The heroine, Julide, is yet another of Reşat Nuri's bright sensitive adolescents whose childhood has been unsettled and starved of parental love. Because of her experiences in various European schools during her travels with her diplomat father, Julide is even more a product of mixed cultures than Feride or Nazmi. The combination of intelligence, sensitivity, loss of parents and lack of a stable home life are by now familiar elements in Reşat Nuri's writing. Like Feride and Nazmi, Julide maintains a defensive pride, runs wild, and has to contend with strong and confused emotions. Also like the other two, Julide eventually grows into a lovable well-adjusted young adult. Although these characters have similar traits, they are so new in Turkish literature that they each appear refreshingly individual. The apparent authenticity in the emotional struggles of these three characters strongly suggests that the author is drawing on his own experiences of adolescence.

After losing her parents, Julide is forced to go to Meis to live with her guardian Nazmi. Julide finds life on the island monotonous and restricted. She misses the variety and sociability of her life in Europe. Nazmi first realises the strength of Julide's 'European' influence when he discovers her playing her violin to some Greek girls. She is wearing a short dress and teaching the girls new dances in celebration of her name-day, a day which she used to celebrate in Europe. It also becomes evident that Nazmi's adopted daughter, Ayşe, has been affected by Julide's attitudes when she indicates that her expectations of marriage now amount to more than acceptance of a life of poverty and servility. Julide, realising that Ayşe has neither the courage nor the vocabulary to articulate her feelings, gives a dismal account of what an impoverished Turkish girl is expected to endure in married life. Nazmi finds himself in the uncomfortable position of defending the traditional ways, not because he believes in them, but because they make him feel secure. His manservant Halim Ağa also shows his disapproval of women leading an emancipated lifestyle after Julide makes him go to the Casino with her to listen to music. He complains that they had to sit with a lot of infidel Greeks and cunning Jews.

The first significant difference between the Turkish (Muslim) community and the rest of the island is observed during an annual party held by M. Grégoire, the most senior member of the French colony on the island. Julide is not expected to participate so she is taken to the library from where she can watch the dancing in the ballroom. By now she is learning to compromise her own desires in order to please her elders, and she accepts that she will not join in the dancing. As a half-way gesture, Nazmi asks her to dance in the library. The scene of them dancing in the dark above the brightly lit ballroom is romantic and intimate, with the added *frisson* of wondering whether a seduction scene is to follow, or whether the two will join the European-style celebration downstairs. In fact neither of these happens. Both Nazmi and Julide treasure the moment of closeness, but they retreat to acting out their roles as guardian and protege in the conventional manner.

### ***Yeşil Gece***

Two years later, Reşat Nuri published a completely different type of novel. *Yeşil Gece* [1928] is often regarded as his contribution to the Nationalist literature (*Milli Edebiyat*) movement. It is certainly a serious patriotic work, but the internal destructive forces are even more a target of the author's criticism than the external enemy. There are two strands to the plot, one is the emergence of Turkish society from the stranglehold of reactionary religious zealots, the other is the Greek occupation of Western Turkey during the War of Independence. The author creates serious dialogues between characters representing different factions of the time. These characters are easily recognised as composites of dignitaries and officials found in any provincial town, which in this case is Sariova. Basically the centre of local power is split between the Islamists, the Unionists and the reactionaries. The Islamists wish to reform Islamic identity and expand it across national boundaries into a force strong enough to halt the steady infiltration of European ideas and practices into Turkish life. The Unionists are depicted as having similar aspirations, but draw on the strength of nationalist sentiments to stop the spread of European power. The reactionaries wish to exercise control over society by preventing any change whatsoever.

Although the author allows various points of view to be aired during the course of the novel, he leaves the reader in no doubt that his own sympathies lie with none of these groups. His attitude is expressed through Şahin, a moderate young theologian and teacher who reluctantly becomes embroiled in local politics as he struggles to reform the primary education of local children. Later his efforts are directed at helping men escape to join the armies that are fighting for independence. The first part, which is nearly two hundred pages, is devoted to the struggle against religious bigotry whereas the second part, which focuses on the Greek occupation, is less than forty pages. This suggests that the author thought the struggles of internal reform were worthy of lengthy discussion whereas war against invaders simply had to be fought to win, and there was little to discuss.

There is no love theme in this story, but it is not short on passion. The passion and emotion is spent in helping the weak to emerge from the oppression of religious zealots and the Greek occupation, and in planning and rebuilding the town on the basis of disinterested ideals. Although the author makes his abhorrence of war clear, he refrains from creating monsters out of enemy figures.

The novel starts a few years after the constitutional reforms of 1908, and ends with the beginning of the new republic after the defeat of the Greek invasion in 1922. The new Islamist movement, which sought to modernise Islam in order to provide a tenable alternative to Western ideology, is represented by Zühtü Efendi, who is regarded as a man of great intellect, while the Unionists are represented by the semi-educated opportunistic Cabir Bey. Both men wield power because of their inherent intelligence and strength of personality, but neither have really gained the support of the reactionary majority among local officials. Cabir Bey's first speech is a graphic list of atrocities perpetrated by Balkan enemy forces against the Ottomans:

The tyrannical enemy has ruined our country. He has turned Rumeli<sup>97</sup> into a human slaughterhouse . . . He has cut off the arms, the legs of white-bearded old men, put out their eyes with red-hot skewers . . . He

---

<sup>97</sup> Rumeli is the name given to the parts of the Ottoman Empire on the European side of the Bosphorus.

has poured molten lead into the mouths of Muslim scholars. He has cut off the breasts of women, cut open their bellies and removed the semi-formed embryos . . . He has impaled the innocent Muslim babes on his skewers . . . He has grilled them over flames like lamb kebabs . . . The smell of burning human flesh has filled the air. It was impossible to go anywhere without stepping on heads, livers, intestines . . . They would burn the farms, hang the young men from the trees, seduce our innocent young girls. They would light their pipes and enjoy themselves . . . Muslim blood would gush forth from the rivers . . .”<sup>98</sup>

This sickening parody of nationalist sentiments is followed by a cry for Islamists to support the Unionists against the Christian enemy. And it shows that Reşat Nuri is capable of matching his nationalist contemporaries at writing in a jingoistic style. However, he quickly makes it clear that he does not subscribe to these sentiments through Şahin, who regards such talk as dangerous as the tales of Hell told by bigoted theologians.<sup>99</sup> Şahin’s belief is that there is little difference between those who call themselves Reformists (here he means reformed Islamists) or Nationalists, since both divide the world into Muslims and non-Muslims. He thinks both groups are either deceived or intend to deceive, and his fear is that everyone will come to believe that this is what reform and nationhood stand for.<sup>100</sup> Once again the author acknowledges the confusion of loyalties that exist in many peoples minds through Şahin who finds it impossible to answer the hypothetical question: “Two armies come face to face. One is comprised of non-Turkish Muslims and the other of non-Muslim Turks. Which would you support?”<sup>101</sup> The obvious inference is that to support the first means one is an Islamist, and to support the second means one is a Nationalist. However Şahin dismisses such simplistic argument as irrelevant to the lives of ordinary people.

When it finally becomes clear that the Greek invasion will reach Sariova, the

---

<sup>98</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yeşil Gece*, 55-56.

<sup>99</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yeşil Gece*, 94.

<sup>100</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yeşil Gece*, 60.

<sup>101</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yeşil Gece*, 94-95.

town is thrown into panic. Those with a means of transport, or the strength to walk, escape to the mountains. This includes local leaders such as Zühtü Bey and Çabir Bey. But the old, the sick and some of the very young are unable to leave. Şahin decides to remain in the town to help protect those who have stayed behind. At this stage the enemy has not yet reached the town and is an unknown quantity. The fear affects everybody in equal measure: “The people, whether Muslim or Christian, were afraid to light lamps in their houses. That night Sariova was ungoverned. Anyone could do whatever they wished.”<sup>102</sup> This tells the reader that the Greek army was just as alien to the local Christian community as to the Muslims.

During that night the murder of two Muslims by local Greeks<sup>103</sup> starts a rumour that local Greeks have armed themselves and are preparing to launch an attack on the Muslims. Şahin reasons that the very small local Greek community is unlikely to venture outside their homes. However the Muslim inhabitants are by now fully roused with fear and they attack the home of an elderly local Greek pharmacist, who is a lifelong neighbour to many of them. In order to avert a disaster Şahin dons a turban and calls out to the people in the traditional manner of theologians. After a few conventional words and phrases, he explains to them that the local leaders have fled, and only the aged and weak remain. Any disturbance between Christians and Muslims will result in the imprisonment of innocent people when the enemy arrives in two hours time. He adds that, far from attacking Muslims, the local Greeks were hiding behind their doors in fear. His speech ends with a rallying cry:

Brother Muslims! We are about to begin a time of enslavement worse than death. For the safety of our families, our children, our sick and our aged let’s suffer patiently. As we have remained in the town, let’s refrain from any kind of action. The invaders cannot all be monsters. Left to themselves they would not interfere with anybody.<sup>104</sup>

This call for the adoption of a pacifist stance is followed by an apology by Şahin

---

<sup>102</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yeşil Gece*, 195.

<sup>103</sup> The author always distinguishes between Greeks indigenous to Anatolia (*Rumlar*), and those from mainland Greece (*Yunanlılar*).

<sup>104</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yeşil Gece*, 200.

to the Greek pharmacist and a promise to repair the property damage with mosque funds. Using Şahin as an example, the author suggests that if only government leaders were to adopt conciliatory attitudes, they could control the religious or nationalist passions of their people.

Eventually the occupation of Sariova becomes apparent, not from any mass display of military power, but with the appearance of two armed Greek soldiers walking slowly up and down the street with a single Turkish policeman. Apart from these two soldiers the only mention of a Greek individual is when Şahin is summoned before a Greek officer who seeks his help in exercising control over the townspeople. This officer is described as dark, short and plump. There is no further description of his appearance or character. He remains a faceless anonymous individual. This is in sharp contrast to the vivid descriptions in Halide Edip's war novels. However Reşat Nuri at no time adopts a friendly attitude towards the invading enemy.

Reşat Nuri introduces an interesting character through whom he empathises with those who do not participate in active military service. Necip Bey is the local architect, and is regarded as an eccentric. When the town becomes occupied, instead of planning his escape or increasing his home security, Necip becomes engrossed in planning a new library and museum in Sariova for all the books that lie in the mausoleums, the religious schools and the mosques. When Şahin asks him why he is doing this work while the town is under occupation, Necip replies that, since he is not a soldier, he can do nothing honourable to save Sariova, and it is unrealistic to think of staging a revolt from within the town. He believes that Sariova has no importance either in military terms or as a bargaining tool in future negotiations, which means that the Greeks simply want this land for themselves. He adds that the war is not between two armies but between two nations, and that sooner or later the Greeks will pack up their things and go. He explains further that the outcome depends on which country has the greater supply of arms. He believes that there are two ways of supporting the struggle:

Either we set out and try to take back the occupied town by force and

attack, or we stay inside during the disturbance and work to protect our countrymen, institutions, language, even our own existence. I prefer to remain inside. From now on I shall confine myself to professional matters.<sup>105</sup>

Necip Bey becomes more and more of a recluse. His plans become increasingly ambitious and now include government buildings, municipal offices, courts of justice, banks, hospitals, schools, parks and even cinemas and theatres. He believes that when the Greeks depart they will raze every building to the ground, but instead of inflicting harm “. . . unknowingly they will do us a great service. . . Because, in place of the buildings and streets that remind us of the middle ages, we shall build a brand new beautiful city.”<sup>106</sup> Necip Bey is convinced that his radical plans will become reality because the Sultanate and religious zealots, who have obstructed progress and encouraged the Greek invasion, will surrender. Necip Bey admits that his actions are less rational than his thoughts:

I find it natural for Greeks to wander about Sarıova waving their hands and arms about and for them to be ill-mannered. I even say that “for now they have earned that right by the sword. There is no doubt that the day will come when we too will claim our rights by the sword.” But I cannot stand seeing their faces. The truth is that, as you say, I am an unbalanced man . . . my ideas do not always match my actions . . . leave me to stay at home. It is better that way.<sup>107</sup>

Poor Necip’s intuition proves to be right because on his first subsequent venture outside, his life ends abruptly and violently when he attempts to avoid the humiliation of a routine search by Greek soldiers.

After Necip’s death Şahin finds himself feeling lonely and useless. No news reaches the town about the progress of the war. The only indicator they have is whether or not the Greek quarter is lit up and lively. When the district is in darkness

---

<sup>105</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yeşil Gece*, 206.

<sup>106</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yeşil Gece*, 212.

<sup>107</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yeşil Gece*, 213.

they know that the Turkish war effort is going well and vice versa. Şahin makes his contribution to the cause by using his privileges as a religious speaker to assist young men in their escape to join the fighting. In contrast to Reşat Nuri's usual optimism this novel ends on a cynical note. After a considerable time of imprisonment in Greece, Şahin returns to Sarıova to find that most of the local dignitaries with whom he had struggled for so long are still in positions of influence. He resigns himself to the fact that he can do no more for the town and that "Revolution is not achieved in a day".<sup>108</sup>

This story has no glorious ending, there is little to celebrate. Throughout the book the author makes it clear that he regards the enemy within to be as dangerous as the enemy without. The foreign enemy is defeated at great cost, but there still much to do to make the dreamed-of future become a reality. *Yeşil Gece* demonstrates that Reşat Nuri could write with depth and passion about the national cause of the early 1920s, but he clearly had no wish to over-indulge in the nationalist sentiments that prevailed at that time. His interest lay in finding ways of improving community life by promoting tolerance, inclusiveness, and acceptance towards progress and education.

### ***Ateş Gecesi***

It can be no accident that Reşat Nuri returned to a provincial mixed cultural setting in Milâs, on the Aegean Coast, for his novel *Ateş Gecesi* [1942]. The events of this novel take place in the early twentieth century, around the time that Abdülhamit II restored the Constitution in 1908. By the time this novel was published, the Greek population had been gone for nearly two decades and the type of community about which he wrote no longer existed in Turkey.

The story evolves around Kemal, a young man of no particular political persuasion who is exiled to Milâs because of family links which are disapproved of by the Sultan. Within the town Kemal is free to live and work as he pleases, and he has the benefit of his personal possessions and a private income. The young Kemal therefore views this exile, not so much as a punishment, as an opportunity for adventure away from parental restrictions.

---

<sup>108</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yeşil Gece*, 223.



The local Governor assumes responsibility for Kemal and shows him round the various districts of Milâs. They enter the narrow twisted streets of the Hacilyas district with its run down gloomy houses where the Governor remarks that the owners are local men who have become rich by dubious means. Then they come to the Jewish quarter where, "Mostly the people are very stingy. Among them there are a number of very rich men whose appearance is so bedraggled you could mistake them for beggars."<sup>109</sup>

Finally they come to a church set in an attractive square surrounded by well-lit houses. Families sit outside open doorways watching children play, and young girls stroll about arm in arm. Cordial greetings are exchanged between the visitors and local residents. This is the Greek quarter, and Kemal learns that he is to lodge in the house of an Armenian lady in this district. The author paints a detailed and rather romantic picture of this area which must have been based on memory or imagination rather than observation. The lengthy quotation that follows is part of a unique description in Turkish literature of ordinary community life in the Greek district of a provincial town. Earlier writers had either not travelled far outside Istanbul; or their interest had been focused on other matters. By the time it was common for writers to travel and write about their observations, such communities had disappeared completely.

The Church District had a square which was a mud bath in winter and a hot dust bowl in summer, and which was surrounded by crooked rows of old fashioned houses. . . . .

During the day the older children would go to work, the younger ones would go the church school, and only the old folk and the women would remain behind.

Although the windows and curtains of the houses were closed, the doors were always open. In the frequently washed, shaded courtyards old women wearing baggy cotton trousers and hand-printed head scarves would do their weaving, children would play on swings, and bare-legged shabbily dressed women, their hair tied up in white

---

<sup>109</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Ateş Gecesi*, 15-16.

muslin, would sing as they did their washing.

But towards evening as the sun went down, the scene would suddenly change. The grey facades of the houses would take on strange colours, and slender vines, not noticeable during the day, would start to appear. The sills of the newly-opened windows would fill with pots of geraniums and sweet basil.

As the children, shouting and yelling, came spilling out of the door at the side of the church, life within the houses would gradually transfer onto the street.

All the visiting and entertaining would go on there, small financial and inheritance cases were resolved there, wedding and dowry negotiations were finalised there, culpable children were beaten there. The Church priest would set out on his evening walk, stopping to talk at each doorway, sometimes sitting in an armchair, which was ceremoniously brought out for his benefit, and drinking a coffee or a liqueur.<sup>110</sup>

This description resembles a theatrical set. Any unpleasant aspects of life are masked by the harmony of timing and movement. It depicts a community that is at ease with itself, that has no need to retreat behind closed doors for sorting out its minor problems. And there is no suggestion of the immorality so often associated with Greek women in Turkish literature.

Later when the author singles out female characters he depicts their adolescent girlish behaviour without making them appear to have loose morals. When Kemal settles into his lodgings, the landlady is soon besieged by local girls wanting to help in the house in order to satisfy their curiosity about the newcomer. A degree of rivalry develops between them in their attempts to gain the attention of Kemal, but it is made quite clear that, while their behaviour is different to that of Turkish girls, they adhere strictly to their own code of morals.

---

<sup>110</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Ateş Gecesi*, 32-33.

Stemulata is closest to the common stereotype with her free and easy flirtatious ways. But the author quickly indicates that this behaviour reflects a hunger for love which is the result of childhood neglect, and that she becomes uneasy and nervous if she is alone in the company of a man. Rina behaves coquettishly in front of Kemal and engineers 'chance' encounters in order to walk with him away from the other girls. She is not concerned about being seen together but insists she would be the subject of widespread gossip if anyone observed him carrying her basket. When he remonstrates that it is only natural for him, as her friend, to carry her basket, all she can say is "You're different . . ." <sup>111</sup> Mariyanti is a classic blonde beauty whose appearance and apparent aloofness mesmerise Kemal until he realises that interacting with other, less perfect, girls is more interesting than engaging in passive adoration. Elenica is a large baby-faced girl, well-intentioned but rather simple and naive, who becomes upset by the rivalries between her friends.

Kemal's study and comparison of these girls is portrayed in a manner that appears very natural, degrading for neither Kemal or the girls. Inevitably the reader compares this with a brief reference to Kemal's childhood sweetheart (Turkish), who at the age of thirteen had been made to wear a head scarf and black veil. After years of not seeing each other they had an unspoken agreement to 'accidentally' meet in the street on Saturday mornings: "My beloved's eyes would look at me tremblingly for a few seconds, and an uneasy smile would appear on her lips. In those days this counted as a great love affair and would provide us both with daydreams for a week." <sup>112</sup>

The relatively free way in which the Greek girls come and go in her house is observed carefully by Varvar dudu, Kemal's Armenian landlady. She makes no serious attempt to ban the girls, but exercises control over their activities. She bears little resemblance to the Greek and Armenian landladies in the fiction of Hüseyin Rahmi or indeed subsequent writers. Varvar dudu is a spinster in her fifties, whose fiancé died of pleurisy. She has retained her slender elegance, maintained her chastity, and she works hard at keeping her house clean and presentable. In her youth she had been

---

<sup>111</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Ateş Gecesi*, 38.

<sup>112</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Ateş Gecesi*, 32.

adored by Ottoman, Armenian, Greek and Jewish youth alike, to the extent that her mother had made her wear a veil like Muslim girls. She had rejected the advances of rich and handsome young men in favour of the unprepossessing Kegam, to whose memory, after his early death, she has devoted her whole life. Having reached a mature age and sure of her own high moral standard, she is able to converse freely, even intimately, with Kemal. They laugh together over the sight of him dressed in clothes she has lent to him, and they enjoy drinking liqueurs together. If there had not been such a large age gap between them their friendship would have caused a scandal. As it is, Varvar dudu has the chance to relive memories of her youth while Kemal learns about the workings of the female mind.

One evening Kemal arranges a dinner party at Varvar dudu's house to repay some of the hospitality shown to him since his arrival at Milâs. He invites the Governor, the local priest Father Hrisantos, the district mayor Lefter Efendi and Doctor Selim Bey. Kemal makes sure the Greek girls are present to help prepare and serve the food, and eventually manages to have them seated at a table next to the main party. Varvar dudu is delighted to have an opportunity to show off her entertaining talents to such exalted guests, though she has some reservations about them. She convinces herself that, since the Governor is the personal representative of the Sultan: "No-one other than God is superior to the Governor in Milâs."<sup>113</sup> Varvar dudu has her own motives for being pleased about inviting Father Hrisantos. She confides her reasons to Kemal:

I absolutely loathe the Greek Orthodox church. But there are no Armenians in Milâs other than me, so how can there be an Armenian church . . . While everybody goes to their mosque, synagogue or church according to their religion, am I supposed to sit at home like an atheist? As you know, even Muslims have the right to pray in a church if they cannot find a mosque. Anyway I already have one foot in the grave. One day, Almighty God will carry me away to be with Kegam .

---

<sup>113</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Ateş Gecesi*, 41.

. . Is my corpse supposed to be left in the street like a that of a dog? I am not smitten by Father Hrisantos's dark eyes. On the other hand when I die one day, I shall be in his hands. He will absolve me of my sins . . ."114

Varvar dudu's interest in Lefter Efendi is to do with local politics. He used to be an Ottoman official with influence in the government and in the courts of justice. Despite his sensitive spiritual appearance, he is an abrasive character. Varvar dudu says of him: "You know he is an angel-faced devil. Anyone who does not fear him, would have no fear of God."<sup>115</sup> Kemal confirms that there is good reason to fear Lefter Efendi, whose appearance of senility and ill-health deflect from his acerbic tongue:

There was no person, country or piece of state gossip he did not know about. What was really surprising was that even though his satirical attacks were merciless, he delivered them with very measured language using terms that would arouse no suspicion from the Governor and the Priest. Whenever he spoke out against someone of high authority he always started by uttering a few words of prayer or praise.<sup>116</sup>

Little more information is given about this character. The reader is left to wonder about his past life, his connections within and outside Turkey and his reasons for being in Milâs. It is difficult to imagine such an intriguing character being glossed over in Halide Edip's novels.

In the following chapter, the author describes the 'fire festival', commonly known in Turkey as *Hidrellez*.<sup>117</sup> There are a number of explanations about the origins of this festival. It appears that different traditions have become amalgamated into festivities which are celebrated throughout the Middle East, Anatolia and the

---

<sup>114</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Ateş Gecesi*, 41.

<sup>115</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Ateş Gecesi*, 42.

<sup>116</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Ateş Gecesi*, 55-56.

<sup>117</sup> The term *Hidrellez* comes from *Hızır-İlyas* referring to the saint known as Hızır, who is reputed to bring well-being to those who need it, and to Elias or Elijah of the Old Testament. The beliefs and traditions associated with *Hidrellez* have their origins in pre-Islamic and pre-Christian folk-lore and are concerned with nature and fertility. The festival is usually celebrated on 6 May, St George's day, by Christians and Muslims, particularly *Alevi* sects, all over Anatolia. For an account of the origins, beliefs and traditions of *hidrellez*, see Pertev Naili Boratav's entry, "Türklerde Hızır" in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 44. Cüz, 462-471.

Balkans. It has been adopted by Orthodox Christians, Alevis and Gypsies, but Jews and orthodox Sunnî Muslims have been welcome spectators, and encouraged to join in.

The author begins his description of this festival by stating that the number of people in the locality becomes swelled by the influx of Muslims and Jews from other parts of the town. He creates a festive and inclusive atmosphere by describing the sounds of people shouting and laughing as children, adolescents and old folk jump over the fires that are lit in the square and across the streets of the district. To this he adds a picture of the church with its great doors wide open and its bells ringing. A procession of local dignitaries, dressed in festive clothes, approaches and enters the open doors. They are followed by the ordinary folk, each of them lighting a candle as they enter the church. The doors are open to all regardless of their faith.

It is in this mixed cultural setting that the author chooses to introduce the heroine of this novel. She is a young woman of indeterminate age who appears to know no Turkish, who is obviously a friend of the Greek girls, and yet does not seem to be one of them. Eventually it transpires that she is called Afife and, like her brother Doctor Selim Bey, is a Muslim immigrant from Crete.

The focus of the novel moves to this family as Kemal becomes more and more obsessed by Afife. The family have a Greek surname, Sklavaki<sup>118</sup>, which was chosen by an ancestor who had escaped to the island of Crete from a life of slavery. There are several allusions to the Ottoman military action in Crete, including the bravery of certain individuals, and the subsequent suffering of refugees. However, rather than dwelling on details of the fighting, the author describes individual reactions to (unspecified) events that take place there. For instance, Selim Bey's preoccupation with a particular piece of bad news from Crete is expressed through excited remonstrations directed at the government. In contrast Afife's older sister, whose spoken Greek is far better than her halting Turkish, retreats into a world of hyperactive domesticity, making her preparations for winter:

With her head bound in a black cloth like a Greek peasant, the hem of

---

<sup>118</sup> Sklavaki means 'slave' in Greek and may be used with either affectionate or derisive overtones.

her skirts tucked into her waistband, her bare arms and legs looking as raw as carrots from the first cold, she kept going back and forth from house to garden cleaning stove pipes, and pressing pickled vine leaves and olives. She collected the last fruit from the trees and tied up rowan berries. She dried home-made macaroni, tomato pastes, and a sort of grape sweet called *mustalivra* (a bit like our walnut sweet) on wooden frames covered with fine muslin.<sup>119</sup>

This passage, together with the description of the *Hidrellez* festival, seems to embody the message that the author seeks to convey in this novel: that there are more important things in life than political intrigue, military campaigns and power struggles; that left to themselves, ordinary people simply want to maintain their households the best they can, and share simple pleasures with neighbours regardless of ethnic and religious differences.

### *Anadolu Notları*

It is interesting to note that culturally mixed societies such as those that appear in *Akşam Güneşi* (*Afternoon Sun*) and *Ateş Gecesi*, are totally absent from *Anadolu Notları* [1938], a book of travel notes written by Reşat Nuri during his tours of Anatolia as an Education Inspector in the 1930s. This is a book of observations and associated recollections from his childhood. Far from being an optimistic portrayal of warm inclusive societies such he creates in some of his fictional works, it is a record of the poverty and ignorance he encounters among drivers, hoteliers, fellow travellers and small traders in Anatolian towns.

In nearly three hundred pages of travel notes covering all parts of Anatolia, there is a mere handful of references to isolated ethnic minority characters, such as a Cretan driver, his *Rumelili* wet-nurse, an Armenian artiste named Şerif Dudu, some female singers who have exchanged their Greek names for Turkish in line with current attitudes, and a Jewish contemporary from his old school who has fallen on hard times.

He repeatedly comments on how, with time, memories of reality improve and

---

<sup>119</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Ateş Gecesi*, 102.

images blur. After a particularly uncomfortable journey he writes: "The events I wrote about happened yesterday. As I write, my body is still recovering from the jolts of the journey. But strangely, I am already mixing this experience with memories of the past and beginning to love it."<sup>120</sup> This is a further indication that many of the attractive multicultural scenes in his fictional works are expressions of wishful thinking rather than witnessed scenes drawn from experience. In *Anadolu Notları* there is little sign of the optimism that is present in his early works. The last section of the book was written in response to criticism of the fact that he wrote negative reports about the backward aspects of Anatolia instead of positive inspirational accounts of progress. Reşat Nuri's reply to this criticism is:

Just as when you love a person, there is more than one way of loving a country. There is a love that resembles ecstasy when the loved one is presented as the perfect ideal. Perhaps this is the most popular kind of love. There is also love which, like a night-watchman, is constantly ready for attack, remains suspicious, and expects the worst from the slightest noise or shadow.

But there is yet another kind of love that cannot bear to see any fault in the loved one. Rather than see the good, he tends to see and worry about the negative and backward aspects. . . . I probably belong to the last category . . ."<sup>121</sup>

Reşat Nuri displays an ability to override the class, ethnic, cultural, gender and geographical barriers that had proved to be seriously limiting factors for previous writers. In doing so he manages to overcome the problem of synthesising Eastern and Western values and brings modern and traditional, urban and provincial, Muslim and non-Muslim elements within the framework of the modern Turkish novel. In this respect Reşat Nuri paves the way for the next generation of writers, though few proved capable of matching his scope and inclusiveness.

Halide Edip and Reşat Nuri were the first major writers to have extensive

---

<sup>120</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Anadolu Notları*, 114.

<sup>121</sup> Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Anadolu Notları*, 287.



experience outside Istanbul. Their stories of life in Anatolia introduced new elements to Turkish fiction so that it was never again quite so reliant on the 'Europeanised' Istanbul experience. At the same time, demographic changes of the mid-1920s meant that even Istanbul Turks grew up with little first-hand experience of ethnic minority servants and acquaintances. In their own ways Hüseyin Rahmi, Halide Edip and Reşat Nuri each attempt to create fantasy communities in which different cultural groups live together in harmony, suggesting that they regret the demise of multi-cultural life in Turkey.

## Chapter Two

### The Early Cumhuriyet Era

The Cumhuriyet era was a period of recuperation after years of war and the subsequent struggles within the country to gain and maintain power. A peace treaty had been finalised between Greece and Turkey, and the Kurdish question had been temporarily contained with the crushing of the Kurdish rebellion in 1925. The Jewish community was aware that their situation in Turkey was significantly better than that of their European counterparts, and the Armenians remaining in Turkey were keeping a low profile. After the population exchanges and migrations of the preceding decade, over ninety-seven per cent of the population were now registered as Muslim Turks. Small rebellions taking place in the Kurdish areas of South Eastern Anatolia were quickly suppressed and the majority of Turkish citizens remained ignorant of the situation in that region.

Non-Muslim minority communities had been decimated by war and emigration, so that most of the remaining members were living in isolated family units. During the thirties a small but significant wave of Jewish immigrants arrived in Turkey seeking protection from anti-Semitic persecution in Europe. The government, recognising the value of their skills for a newly developing nation, offered them asylum and attractive professional posts.

The thirties were mainly devoted to the much-needed planning and revitalisation of the economy. The non-Muslim elements in Istanbul were intent on adjusting and rebuilding their lives within the new social order. Their previous business experience gave them certain advantages over ethnic Turks, who were comparatively new to the world of international finance and trade. The Constitution of 1924 had declared that all people living within the republic of Turkey were regarded as Turkish citizens with equal

status and rights, and the policy of populism proclaimed in 1931<sup>1</sup> confirmed the right of all citizens, regardless of origin, the right to live according to their own creed, religion or doctrine, but denied non-Muslims the special economic privileges to which they had been accustomed under Ottoman rule.

When the Wealth Tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) was introduced in 1942,<sup>2</sup> its effect was keenly felt by non-Muslim businessmen and entrepreneurs. Although on the whole they possessed more wealth than Turkish citizens, they were not accustomed to large tax demands. In addition to this, the conditions imposed on non-Muslims were crippling. Efforts to conceal true wealth frequently ended in authorities overestimating taxes, with the result that many Greeks and Armenians who had previously decided to stay in the country now fled to avoid bankruptcy.

During the late thirties and early forties, inspired by the apparent success of nationalists in Germany, there was a revival of extreme Turkish nationalism, but the movement was directed more against real and suspected socialist activists than against ethnic minorities. Some popular fiction exploiting the wave of nationalist sentiment appeared at this time but the majority of writers were concerned with political issues and events leading up to the first free elections in 1950 when the Democratic Party came into power with an overwhelming majority.<sup>3</sup>

The first ten years of the republic had been a period of intense innovation and reform. The cessation of war and the steady immigration from the Balkans and the Caucasus had resulted in a rapid population growth to between thirteen and fourteen million which had given rise to a multitude of economic, social and political problems. Land shortages, natural disasters and modern agricultural methods drove people off the land and into towns and cities, where they had neither the technical nor the social skills for easy assimilation into urban life. Liberal-minded intellectuals were torn between

---

<sup>1</sup> The six Kemalist principles (republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism, and reformism) were symbolised by six arrows in the emblem of the Republican Peoples' Party and incorporated into the Turkish Constitution in 1937. See Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey : A Modern History*, 189-190.

<sup>2</sup> See Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey : A Modern History*, 208.

<sup>3</sup> For an outline of the rise of multi-party democracy in Turkey from 1945 to 1950, see Roderic H. Davison, *Turkey : A Short History*, 148-150.

acknowledging the reality of the hardships they witnessed and believing in government pronouncements that they were seeing the start of a truly modern democratic age.

In literary terms, it was the start of a new wave. The rapid increase in the level of literacy following the Alphabet Reform<sup>4</sup> had produced a generation that was hungry for fresh ideas and new styles. They were eager for the proliferation of newspapers, journals and books that began to appear. The *Varlık Dergisi*, which at first attracted little attention, began to thrive, and was soon joined by other new literary journals. The first publication of the poetry of Orhan Veli (1914-1950) in 1936, and the subsequent proclamation by the "Garipler"<sup>5</sup> coincided with an equally radical revolution in prose literature initiated by Sait Faik [1906-1954], in which under-privileged characters were accorded new value and dignity as individuals. Earlier writers, such as Ziya Gökalp [1875-1924] and Ömer Seyfettin [1884-1920], had written short stories with clear structural divisions in a form which had become conventional in the wake of the Tanzimat era.<sup>6</sup> However it was not until Sait Faik that the short story was established as a Turkish literary genre in its own right.

Almost all literature written during this period presented Turkey as a nation with an ethnically homogeneous population. Many writers were concerned with exposing the corruption and injustice that surfaced during the struggle towards democracy and modernisation of the Turkish state. They emphasised the plight of the poor and down-trodden without differentiating between various ethnic groups. The cultural identity of minority communities and individuals in Turkey was largely forgotten or ignored. For example, the much-loved fictional literature of Aziz Nesin (1915 - 1996) contains very few minority characters. Nesin was never afraid of addressing controversial topics, and his excellent autobiographical works are peppered with numerous detailed portraits of ethnic minority neighbours and acquaintances. However in his fiction he chose the

---

<sup>4</sup> See Roderic H. Davison, *Turkey : A Short History*, 196-197.

<sup>5</sup> In 1941, Orhan Veli, Oktay Rıfat and Melih Cevdet published a volume of poetry entitled *Garip* with an introduction proclaiming their intention of making poetry more easily accessible to the ordinary man by breaking away from traditional style, content and language. They and their followers became known collectively as the "Garipler." See Orhan Veli: *Bütün Şiirleri*, [1951], 11.

<sup>6</sup> For an account of literary developments in the wake of the Tanzimat reforms, see Ismail Habib, *Tanzimattanberi : I Edebiyat Tarihi*, 262-318.

medium of satirical comedy to expose social injustices common to all and clearly saw little need to single out ethnic characters or issues. Faik Baysal (1919-), one of the first writers to aim at realism in the village literature (*köy romanı*) genre,<sup>7</sup> begins his novel, *Sarduvan*, with a statement that the setting is an old Greek town, but that “years ago” the Greeks had packed their valuables and fled. He then bluntly explains that he does not want to write about this issue and proceeds with a story which has no connection with the past.

### **Sabahattin Ali**

In the short story “Çirkince” (*Sirca Köşk* [1947]), Sabahattin Ali (1906 - 1948) also refers back to a time before the population exchange when the town in question had been a thriving community of Greeks and Turks. The departed Greeks have been replaced by demoralised migrants who live in disordered poverty. The narrator learns that of the families not forced to leave, only two or three chose to remain in the town, thus compounding the cultural decay. He compares the village to the nearby ruins of Ephesus and expresses his sadness at the loss of a civilisation. The story ends with the ironic comment that they have renamed the town “Şirince”, meaning “Pretty.”

In one of his early short stories, “Değirmen” [1929] (*Dağlar ve Ruzgâr*), Sabahattin Ali portrays the ill-fated lover of a miller’s daughter as an enigmatic Gypsy musician. In this short work the author uses every literary ploy to heighten the melodrama and emphasise the depth of emotions. The Gypsy narrator uses oral storytelling techniques to involve the reader and maintain a state of suspense. The water-mill setting provides a background of relentless creaking, grinding and gushing sounds, to which is added the dramatic effects of a thunderstorm and the passionate peals of the Gypsy clarinet. The handsome young Gypsy has spurned many romantic overtures, yet he finds himself suddenly smitten by the miller’s one-armed daughter. He realises that his offer of love will give her a hope of happiness which will make her even more aware of her affliction, and that this will make her life more unbearable than her present

---

<sup>7</sup> Village literature is discussed in Chapter Three.

lonely but stable existence with her father. Finally the Gypsy makes the ultimate sacrifice of amputating one of his arms without even knowing whether or not she will accept him. The heart-break of this tale is intensified by the 'mixed' (Turkish/Gypsy) relationship and the associated potential for stereotyped prejudice and inter-family conflict. Rather like the situation between Reşat Nuri's disfigured eye doctor and the blind girl, the problem is fundamental and irreversible and has nothing to do with ethnicity, class, or wealth. The reader is not only faced with what is seemingly an insoluble problem, but the narrator repeatedly asks the reader whether the depth of his own feelings would match that of the Gypsy lover.

Gypsy characters had attracted the attention of an earlier writer, named Salahattin Enis (1892 -1942) who was a consistent adherent of realism and naturalism. He wrote "Çingeneler" [1918] (*Bataklık Çiçeği* [1924]),<sup>8</sup> a short story in which Gypsy characters are used to expose his observations of filthy habits and disgusting behaviour in society. When he was taken to court for publishing inappropriately explicit material, he claimed that it was intended to be a warning to his readers.<sup>9</sup> Much more acceptable was a later novel entitled *Çingeneler* [1939], by Osman Cemal Kaygılı (1890 - 1945), which was first serialised in *Haber* newspaper in 1935, and which later received an award in the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* novel competition of 1942. Kaygılı spent much of his adult life living beyond the city walls of Istanbul where he became intimately acquainted with local communities including Gypsies. He had a variety of unskilled jobs, and supplemented his low income by writing articles and stories based on his experiences. The plot of *Çingeneler*, which had considerable popular appeal, concerns a young man who goes to live with the Gypsies in order to learn and participate in their music. The novel contains considerable detail about daily life in Gypsy communities with regard to music, language, food, and other cultural traditions. However in literary terms the work is poorly constructed and its central character (the narrator in the first half of the book) fails to progress mentally, spiritually

---

<sup>8</sup> For an excerpt from this short story, see Cevdet Kudret, *Türk Edebiyatında Hikâye ve Roman 1859-1959*, 218.

<sup>9</sup> Cevdet Kudret, *Türk Edebiyatında Hikâye ve Roman 1859 - 1959*, 206.

or emotionally after the initial thrill of learning to understand and play Gypsy music. The work falls between the genres of anthropological reporting and literary fiction, and is more suited to its original form as a serialised newspaper column. However it generated considerable interest at the time proving that, in literature, readers were ready to look beyond stereotypes.

### **Halikarnas Balıkcısı**

With the start of the publication of works by Halikarnas Balıkcısı [1890-1973] and Sait Faik in 1939, the scope of Turkish fiction immediately began to broaden. Although as writers and as characters they were very different from each other, both authors were individualists who rejected the social constrictions of the society into which they had been born. Halikarnas Balıkcısı found inspiration in the hitherto uncharted regions of South Western Anatolia, while Sait Faik investigated countless subtleties of the human condition in and around Istanbul. These two authors are of importance in Turkish literature in terms of literary merit, and because of their influence on subsequent writers.

Halikarnas Balıkcısı's aristocratic background, European education and his chosen lifestyle gave him a unique position in Turkish literary life. Unable to feel at ease in Turkish society, he sought companionship and inspiration among the sea-faring communities and peasants of South Western Anatolia. This was an area hitherto virtually unknown to the urban intelligentsia. It was not until after the publication of Halikarnas Balıkcısı's works that interest in Bodrum began to develop and the area became the fashionable retreat of later years.

Halikarnas Balıkcısı had intellectual acumen, a passionate forceful presence and a gentle love of mankind. Even at the age of seventeen, his appearance was displaying signs of a paradoxical nature. His younger sister described his face thus:

“I cannot say he was handsome. He had the oddest face. The upper part seemed to be crying, while the lower part looked as though it were

laughing. It was as if one had cut out the top part of a tragedy mask and had glued it to the bottom of a comedy mask.”<sup>10</sup>

Halikarnas Balıkcısı was born on 17 April 1890 to Mehmet Şakir Paşa (brother of Sadrazam Cevat Paşa) and İsmet Hanım. Because his mother dreamt about Jesus on the night of his birth, she named him Musa in addition to Şakir and Cevat (the name by which he was called at home). Şakir Paşa had served as an officer in the Ottoman army, and later as an ambassador of the Ottoman court. The first five years of young Cevat’s life were spent in Athens after which the family returned to Istanbul. Şakir Paşa established the family home on Büyükkada (Prinkipo Island) where Cevat attended the local school and also received private tuition. He showed early promise both as an artist and as a linguist. Because of his excellent knowledge of English he was accepted directly into the Robert College in Istanbul without the usual need for preparatory language courses, and was one of the first students to graduate from this school. Cevat resented the discipline of boarding-school and secretly yearned to become a seaman. However he succumbed to family pressure and at the age of sixteen went to Oxford University to read Modern History.

Cevat was not happy at Oxford where he found the Northern European climate depressing. Perhaps seeking compensation, he fell under the influence of a group of wealthy upper-class English students. Attracted by their easy-going and extravagant life-style, he developed a level of profligacy that offended and angered his father. Cevat’s visits to Istanbul were dominated by rows and arguments between father and son over his financial affairs. In his father’s eyes, Cevat’s lifestyle displayed a complete lack of personal responsibility. Eventually Şakir Paşa recalled his son from Oxford but, instead of returning straight home, Cevat went to Rome. There he enrolled in the Academy of Fine Arts where he claimed to be happy for the first time in his life. In Rome he fell in love with an artist’s model named Aniesi whom he married despite the inevitable opposition of his father. Finally in 1912, the young couple moved into

---

<sup>10</sup> Taken from Cevat’s mother’s diary, as quoted in Shirin Devrim, *A Turkish Tapestry*, 25.



the top floor of the family house on Büyükkada where their first daughter, Mutara, was born the same year.

During his time in Rome, Cevat had specialised in painting female nudes, but he returned home to find that his works were abhorrent to his parents who were not even used to women unveiling their faces in public. In an attempt to appease the family, Cevat refrained from pursuing his interest in nudes and turned to the less controversial study of miniatures at the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul. However, he was unable to earn a living from painting. Although he also wrote for various newspapers and magazines, published cartoons, and did illustrations for book covers, he was still heavily dependent on his father for the financial support of himself, his wife and child.

In the meantime, Şakir Paşa's own financial affairs had deteriorated rapidly following some unwise investments. This situation served to intensify the tension between father and son. In June 1914, in circumstances that have never been fully established, Şakir Paşa was shot dead in the family farm-house at Afyon Karahisar by his son Cevat.<sup>11</sup> Cevat was found guilty of the manslaughter of his father and sentenced to fourteen years imprisonment. After eight years he was released on grounds of ill-health having contracted tuberculosis, but his family did not see him again until he visited his mother on her deathbed in 1938.

After his release from prison, Cevat led a hand to mouth existence writing articles and doing illustrations. The publication on 13 April 1925 of his article written in defence of military deserters entitled *Hapishanede İdama Mahkûm Olanlar Bile Bile Asılmaya Nasıl Giderler?* resulted in another three year prison sentence. The first half of this sentence was served in Bodrum, the second half in Istanbul. On his release he returned to Bodrum where he continued to live for the next 25 years. Inspired by the *Karia çağı* (ancient history) of Bodrum, he adopted the pen-name

---

<sup>11</sup> One theory that has circulated, but which has never been verified, is that Cevat discovered that Şakir Paşa was having an affair with his wife Aniesi. Another theory, more favoured by the family and by a letter written by Cevat in 1957, is that the father and son had become embroiled in one of their frequent heated arguments. On this occasion, Şakir Paşa, who allegedly kept his study well-equipped with firearms to ward off surprise attacks, drew a gun on Cevat who responded by also grabbing a gun. Two shots ensued and Şakir Paşa was fatally wounded. See Shirin Devrim, *A Turkish Tapestry*, 31-35.

Halikarnas Balıkcısı, by which he has subsequently been known.<sup>12</sup> In 1947 he moved to Izmir for the sake of his children's high school education, and worked as a journalist, writer and tour guide. He died in Izmir on 13 October 1973 and was buried in Bodrum.

When Halikarnas Balıkcısı was exiled to Bodrum, the town and surrounding areas were almost unknown except to local inhabitants, a few seamen and the very occasional traveller. He absorbed himself in the natural elements of the land and sea, its geology, vegetation and animal life, as well as the people. His experience as a participant in local life complemented his ability to make the detached observations of a western intellectual. He developed a belief in the existence of a common Mediterranean culture that attached little importance to ethnic or political boundaries, and used to refer to the Mediterranean as the 'sixth continent.' He perceived the inhabitants of South Western Anatolia as the inevitable outcome of Mediterranean elements, and believed that it was only natural for them to have stronger cultural links with other peoples of the Mediterranean region than with the distant administrative centres of Ankara and Istanbul.

His fluency in French, Italian, Spanish and Greek enabled Halikarnas Balıkcısı to appreciate the similarities between the various ethnic groups of the Mediterranean coast without the usual hindrance of communication difficulties. This vision of cultural affinity appears in several of his written works, particularly the novels, and is illustrated in the following passage:

They say, 'People who speak in different tongues, who drink from different springs will never get used to each other.' But it is a lie! The lives of people who work together, who suffer hardship together, become so entwined that, despite the odd minor conflict, they form a bond of lifelong brotherhood.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı means 'the fisher of Halikarnas'. Halikarnas comes from Halikarnasus, the old Greek name for Bodrum.

<sup>13</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı, *Aganta Burina Burinata*, 114.

Halikarnas Balıkcısı took a particular interest in the history and mythology of the ancient Greeks that had inhabited South Western Anatolia. He wrote about these topics frequently, stressing his view that the ancient Greek civilisation was a local phenomena and a natural outcome of mankind living in this particular region, and that it had little in common with Hellenism. His attitude to modern Greeks was ambivalent. In his fiction he wrote with warmth about Greek characters who cooperated with Turks, but exhibited a deep resentment towards those Greeks who pursued business interests at the expense of Turks. However he went to some lengths in his fiction to demonstrate that ordinary Turks and Greeks could work together successfully if the powerful men of politics and business did not interfere.

Halikarnas Balıkcısı's rejection of conventional society drove him to seek alternative models to fit his ideals of humanity. He created several Gypsy characters through which he explored his personal philosophy. He suggested that their itinerant lifestyle, unhampered by personal possessions, was a reflection of high moral and ethical values, that their spontaneity of mood and emotion, untainted by jealousy or possessiveness, implied an ability to recognise and express love in all its forms, and that their ability to commune with nature indicated a true appreciation of the essentials of life.

Halikarnas Balıkcısı's fiction consists of five novels and seven anthologies of short stories, published between 1939 and 1973. His work introduces a gallery of characters who, at the time of writing, were totally outside the experience of most of the reading public in Turkey. While the short stories generally focus on a single character, in the novels the protagonists become involved in a succession of interactive situations through which their characters develop. Most of the events take place at sea or in the coastal districts of South Western Anatolia. Greeks appear in works connected with fishing, sea voyages, or life on the coast, while Gypsy characters are consistently land-based characters.

Four of Halikarnas Balıkcısı's five novels relate sea-faring adventures. They include the historical novel *Turgut Reis* [1966], and three novels with twentieth

century settings, *Aganta Burina Burinata* [1946], *Ötelerin Çocuğu* [1956] and *Deniz Gürbetçileri* [1969]. Each novel features ships that are manned by crews comprised mainly of Turks with a few Mediterraneans who give allegiance to their (Turkish) captain rather than to a national leader. While Spaniards, North Africans and Italians are mentioned in passing, the only minority characters to be portrayed in any depth are Greeks. They either appear as brave and virtuous, or contrastingly, as evil men of violence or greed.

### **Minorities and Turks in Working Relationships**

In *Turgut Reis*, which is set in the sixteenth century, Paho is a Greek islander of almost unbelievable cruelty. His evil is directed towards Sarı Hamdi with whom his daughter falls in love, and whom he imprisons and keeps alive for the sole purpose of inflicting daily torture. However Paho undergoes a transformation of character after being captured by Turgut Bey, a Turkish sea captain. He tells Turgut Bey how his wife and sons were killed, how he had been sentenced to death for supposedly helping the Turks, and how he had fled to sea and become a pirate captain. He maintains that his daughter was his only purpose for living and that since her death he has courted death for himself, which is the reason why he attacked Turgut's ship. After finishing his story, Paho begs to be allowed to convert to Islam and remain aboard as one of the crew, saying: "I am an Orthodox, but I am a son of your country. . . . Please do whatever is necessary for me to become a Muslim, it will be a blessing for me . . ." <sup>14</sup> The author reinforces this conversion theme by describing how Paho's crew initially reject Islam, but find themselves unable to manage without a strong leader so they return to Turgut Reis beseeching him to allow them also to convert to Islam.

While such conversions undoubtedly took place for reasons of pragmatism or fear, the tone of this episode confirms conventional stereotypes (from a Turkish perspective) of good, brave Muslims triumphing over infidels who are totally lacking in moral fibre. In contrast to Paho, Turgut represents all that is admirable in a Turkish Muslim hero. He commands his ship with a stern discipline yet he displays a just and

---

<sup>14</sup> Halikarnas Balıkçısı, *Turgut Reis*, 90-91.

generous spirit towards the newly converted members of his crew. From this point onwards Paho becomes Sessiz Mehmed, and he functions as one of the Turkish characters in the plot.

There are other instances of Turks forming successful working relationships with Greeks. In *Aganta Burina Burinata* the narrator comments on how in Bodrum he and his friends used to regard the Greeks as infidels, yet when he encounters *Bodrumlu* Pahos (Pahos of Bodrum) in foreign waters, they greet each other like brothers.<sup>15</sup> The short story “Yedi Adalardaki Balık Bankası” [1939]<sup>16</sup> tells of an impoverished grocer who uses his last few pounds to join a Greek fishing consortium. Despite his failure to catch any fish, he discovers that a share of the catch is anonymously credited to his name.

In *Deniz Gürbetçileri*, Greek and Turkish sponge-divers work and relax together. They share a dangerous lifestyle, a love-hate attitude towards the sea, and a compulsion that drives them to face the rigours of a seaman’s existence rather than settle for the relative predictability of life ashore. They also share a need to release tension before and after each voyage by eating, drinking and dancing together. The author describes Selim, Mecdi and Yunus exchanging stories with Barba Manol, Kandelyusa’lı Vasso, Tillos’lu Takkis, Stavro Vangel and Barba Paho. Despite being in the minority among the sponge-divers, the Turks are at ease with them. Their life is so tough and dangerous, they can only survive if there is mutual trust within the team. A tragic accident, in which Takkis dies, affects all the divers equally, whether Greek or Turkish. In the words of the author:

“The pain felt by the Turks over this death was not less than that of the Sömbeki men. For months these poor wretches had been struggling together to make enough money to live on. They had eaten from the same pot, broken the same rock-hard bread.”<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Halikarnas Balıkçısı: *Arganta Burina Burinata*, 133.

<sup>16</sup> This story appears in the collection *Ege Kıyılarından* [1939] which is published with other collections in *Ege'den Denize Bırakılmış*.

<sup>17</sup> Halikarnas Balıkçısı, *Deniz Gürbetçileri*, 228.

In contrast to these scenes of trust and concerned coexistence, the author's attack on political manipulators and profiteers, Greek and Turkish, is especially bitter. He writes with resentment about underhand deals made between the Greek sponge tycoons of Kalimnos and certain members of the Maritime Authorities in Ankara just after the First World War. These deals result in Greek boats flying the Turkish flag in order that their divers can clear the Turkish waters of valuable sponge ("Mediterranean Silk") which in turn gets traded as Greek sponge on the American market. Any Turk, however experienced, who joins one of these Greek boats is treated as a novice, while Turkish owned boats are forbidden to search for sponge along their own Turkish coastline.<sup>18</sup>

### **Greek Main Characters**

So far the examples of Greek characters have served to show how well or badly they interact with Turks. The following two characters feature as the principal characters in two short stories, namely "Barba Vangel" and "Leş Kargası" in *Gençlik Denizlerinde* [1973], as well as being incorporated into two novels. The first is an example of great goodness, while the other represents the worst kind of evil.

Barba Vangel appears in the short story bearing his name,<sup>19</sup> and in an episode of *Ötelerin Çocukları*. The character is essentially the same in both versions but, whereas in the novel he is a minor character who complements the almost legendary Turkish hero, Kerimoğlu, the short story focuses almost exclusively on Barba Vangel and his philosophy. Barba Vangel is introduced as a childless man with a big heart, who spends much of his time ashore befriending children and making toys for them. The main event of the story takes place where a myriad of islands are separated by narrow and perilous straits. In the darkness, Barba Vangel's vessel approaches a Turkish boat captained by Kerimoğlu (in the short story it is manned by the narrator). With no space to avoid a close encounter, and an awareness that the other is likely to be an enemy boat, tension mounts as both crews silently make routine preparations for

---

<sup>18</sup> Halikarnas Balıkçısı, *Deniz Gürbetçileri*, 230-232.

<sup>19</sup> Halikarnas Balıkçısı, "Barba Vangel," *Gençlik Denizlerinde*.

battle and mentally adjust themselves to impending death. Eventually the suspense is broken by a friendly greeting out of the darkness from Barba Vangel. Immediately the crews of both boats lay down their arms and celebrate their narrow escape from battle by embracing each other, creating bridges to each other's vessels with oars, and sharing their simple rations. In the words of the author, "There was a common understanding that no amount of political or diplomatic manoeuvre could have achieved."<sup>20</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı presents this as the ideal outcome for a type of situation that frequently ended in tragedy. He suggests is that if only leaders were brave enough to show their strength through peaceful and conciliatory approaches, many situations involving bloodshed could be avoided.

While Barba Vangel symbolises a very positive aspect of Greeks, Halikarnas Balıkcısı presents a contrasting picture through the character of Vasililiyos Zaharyadis in the short story "Leş Kargası" (*Gençlik Denizlerinde*), or Stavro Kolarides as he appears in *Ötelerin Çocukları*. Since the character is more developed in "Leş Kargası," he will be referred to here as Zaharyadis. Although there are differences of detail in the two versions, Zaharyadis and Kolarides are identical in character.

Zaharyadis, supposedly a distant descendant of Socrates, is a businessman in the Galata district of Istanbul where he makes a fortune retrieving salvage from shipwrecks. While captains and their crews are fighting for their lives in storms at sea, and while their relatives are anguishing over their destiny, Zaharyadis is drooling over the prospect of rich pickings from the seabed. He takes great satisfaction in the knowledge that he can accrue a fortune without leaving the safety of his office, and celebrates his successes by buying the company of women for pleasure. This is a man totally at odds with Halikarnas Balıkcısı's own ethical code. He preys on, and profits from the distress and vulnerability of others. The short story ends with a concluding paragraph, full of bitter irony, in which Zaharyadis is decorated and elevated to the rank of a titled aristocrat.

---

<sup>20</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı, "Barba Vangel," *Gençlik Denizlerinde*, 164.

Halikarnas Balıkçısı's final Greek character is Angeliki, daughter of Paho (the convert to Islam in *Turgut Reis* mentioned above) and the only Greek female with a prominent role. Halikarnas Balıkçısı introduces Angeliki as a tender and passionate young woman who saves the life of, and eventually and falls in love with, a young pirate seaman called Sarı Hamdi. Angeliki is a beautiful healthy young girl with natural elegance and poise, who sets aside her misgivings about the wisdom of tending an injured semi-naked Turkish seaman in order to help him survive. The moment at which she starts to become aware of her feelings for Sarı Hamdi is related in a delicate, understated manner such as is normally reserved for Turkish girls in literature:

“The girl paused at the mouth of the cave, thinking the youth had called her by her own name. . . . At that moment she had forgotten that he did not know her name. Angeliki turned back into the cave and stroked the young pirate's brow.”<sup>21</sup>

With no more than this slight and spontaneous gesture, it is made clear to the reader that Angeliki's future is now in the hands of fate.

As Sarı Hamdi begins to recover, their relationship develops with the use of gestures, facial expressions and actions, since neither can speak the other's language. By concentrating on the vision of Angeliki's beautiful face, Sarı Hamdi begins to understand her words, and the author goes on to describe the pleasure and fun of learning a foreign language from someone who is a contemporary and a friend. At this stage Angeliki's chastity is not in question. Soon however, the situation changes when her father goes to sea leaving her totally alone, “. . . free, like a married woman, to go wherever she wished.”<sup>22</sup> Left to themselves in this earthly paradise, the young couple consummate their love, immediately after which there are suggestions of impending tragedy: “It was as if their days of happiness were passing away with the setting sun.”<sup>23</sup> The nature of the tragedy soon becomes clear when they are confronted by Angeliki's enraged father. In the struggle that ensues, Sarı Hamdi is wounded and

---

<sup>21</sup> Halikarnas Balıkçı, *Turgut Reis*, 70.

<sup>22</sup> Halikarnas Balıkçısı, *Turgut Reis*, 72.

<sup>23</sup> Halikarnas Balıkçısı, *Turgut Reis*, 73.



Angeliki is so severely traumatised that she loses her will to live and dies within a short time.

Angeliki's character is depicted in a similar way to the romantic legendary heroines of Middle Eastern tales. She has all the characteristics of a traditional heroine: beauty, compassion, innocence, courage and a readiness to sacrifice her life for love. There is no suggestion of the vulgarity or lax morality so often associated with Greek females in Turkish literature.

### **Gypsy Characters**

There are few references to minorities in Halikarnas Balıkcısı's land-based stories. Apart from some tales about ancient Greek gods and demigods which have no direct links with modern Greek characters, the author's main interest in minorities living inland is with Gypsy characters. They are featured as individuals who are regarded sometimes with contempt and suspicion, sometimes with bewildered respect by the Turkish society on which they depend for their meagre livelihood. The author has considerable sympathy for these characters. He imbues them with an unworldly integrity and an almost mystical self-sufficiency that is intended to draw respect from the reader. His Gypsy characters appear in the short stories "Kancay" (*Merhaba Akdeniz*), "Çingene Ali" (*Ege'nin Dibi*), and "Cura" in (*Gülen Ada*) which are all in the collection entitled *Ege'den Denize Bırakılmış*, and in the novel *Ötelerin Çocukları* [1956].

The story "Kancay" relates the story of a Gypsy woman of that name. Born into the most humble circumstances, Kancay's natural talent for singing and dancing bring her wealth and adulation which she soon understands can give her no happiness, and which she rejects for a wandering existence which is free of material possessions and social support. The author perceives Kancay as an embodiment of freedom and liberty in the natural world:

Kancay never once uttered the word liberty, she would not even have known the meaning of the word. But Kancay's heart represented liberty itself. Since her only models were leopards, wild cats, eagles, sparrow

hawks and falcons, Kancay lived in a world of cruel freedom, among the many mountains and trees that assumed the role of brothers and sisters in her life!<sup>24</sup>

The author describes the birth of Kancay in words that contain images of pure poetry. The following passage is an example of the author's belief that people are created by their environment, and it acknowledges the legendary supernatural powers of the Gypsy. What might have been described as the most humble of births is presented as an almost magical happening:

One night about seventy years ago while walking alone in the mountains, Kancay's mother began to feel labour pains. Just at that moment the moon appeared naked from behind a rock! The darkness of the mountains was pared away, leaving the mountains bathed in a light as white as snow. The woman called out to the moon, "I think I'm about to give birth!" With her arms clutching two trees, she squatted, her knees resting on the earth. The mountains absorbed the screams emanating from the mother's lips and the sounds of the new-born child. Thus the mountain rocks became Kancay's birth-place and her cradle. The child was full of laughter and joy. As she grew she became a butterfly, a bird, a swallow. Just as the bird flies with wings, Kancay would fly with her songs. As her heart soared upwards and the music reached its dizzy heights, she would see into the unknown future. This was where her real world was to be found. A song was a joyful signal from this other world, because songs of the heart were her world.<sup>25</sup>

Just as Kancay is born a child of nature, her death is also portrayed as a natural event which is described with compassion but without sentimentality. When she realises her end is near, she chooses a moment when she can die alone with the sun

---

<sup>24</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı, "Kancay," *Merhaba Akdeniz* in *Ege'den Denize Bırakılmış*, 114.

<sup>25</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı, "Kancay," *Merhaba Akdeniz* in *Ege'den Denize Bırakılmış*, 115.

shining down upon her: "That is why, when she had taken her last breath her open eyes were bright with sunshine."<sup>26</sup>

The eponymous Gypsy youth in "*Çingene Ali*" is imbued with a similar unworldliness. Like Kancay, his survival depends on catering for the needs of people living in urban surroundings where he finds social rules and conventions to be abhorrent. One day he is arrested by local police and ordered to act as hangman, a task for which they pay him in gold. Having delegated this unsavoury task to a lowly Gypsy on the basis that he is a man of no conscience or religion, the community prepares for the occasion with relish. Just before the hanging is about to take place, Çingene Ali suddenly realises the seriousness and wickedness of what he is expected to do so he flees to the mountains. Surrounded by trees and fresh air he recovers his sense of identity and performs a wild uninhibited dance to celebrate his return to natural haven. As he does so he tosses away the gold piece which had been given to him. The sound of the coin tinkling on the rocks makes him laugh with triumph and cry with anguish. Thus, Çingene Ali, whom society regards as nothing better than a dirty itinerant, is elevated in the author's mind as a man of high principle in the face of temptation. His lack of material possessions and his refusal to compromise his beliefs are a saintly combination of purity and high moral fibre.

There are three separate female Gypsy characters named Cura. Although they may all be based on a single individual at different stages of life, there is nothing to suggest that they are intended to represent the same woman. The first Cura has a minor but significant role as the partner of Ali in "*Çingeni Ali*." After his harrowing experience described above, she welcomes him back when he finally returns to the encampment. She is able to read his mind and has no need to ask questions of him, so she immediately suggests that he plays for her while she dances for him. Her actions sum up the author's perception of Gypsies as people who have no need to dwell on the past, but live to enjoy the present and who look to the future for inspiration.

---

<sup>26</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı, "Kancay," *Merhaba Akdeniz*. in *Ege'den Denize Bırakılmış*, 121.

The second Cura appears in the novel *Ötelerin Çocukları*. She has the demeaning occupation of collecting the excrement of dogs, which she delivers to Haşmet Bey who sells it at considerable profit. This despicable character takes pleasure in the sense of power he feels when he observes the attractive Gypsy girl doing such degrading work for him. Lacking any natural charm, he is unable to gain the attention of the pampered town women and so he marvels at Cura's generous spirit when she dances for him in response to his command. Haşmet resolves to have an amorous adventure with Cura, but the possessive glint in his eyes immediately alarms her and she feels only disgust for the money he rattles at her. She is equally uninterested in his proposal of marriage, and merely shrugs him off, saying "How strange!"<sup>27</sup> Cura believes that all the material comfort his world has to offer is worthless compared to her own world where music is the source of all delights, the comfort of all miseries, the medium of all celebrations.

After this incident Cura disappears from the plot, but there is a reference to her in a later scene when Elif, the Turkish heroine, goes through a process of self-discovery by communing with nature:

On some nights the wind would blow down from the mountains. Then the wind would bring fragments of the Gypsy girl Cura's song . . . . from the distant mountains to the rocky slope where Karakız (Elif) sat. That song was wild. It contained hope, love, sorrow, anger, as well as snow, ice, and the terrible things associated with howling wolves on dark desolate winter mornings, also the wrath of destiny and a mysterious joy.<sup>28</sup>

The third Cura is featured in a short story entitled "Cura" (*Gülen Ada* in *Ege'den Bırakılmış Bir Çiçek*) which is related through an old man named Salih Efendi. Salih has never forgotten the impression she first made on him when he observed her collecting bits of coal dropped by a passing coal delivery truck. She

---

<sup>27</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı, *Ötelerin Çocukları*, 66.

<sup>28</sup> Halikarnas Balıkcısı, *Ötelerin Çocukları*, 156.

would wander through hostile urban streets, braving the raw elements of winter with no more than a few pennies to her name. Her incongruously joyful singing to the tempo of the percussive sounds made by the coal as she dropped it into her metal container used to remind him of his canary which, through the most violent and destructive of storms, would continue to sing as if in Paradise. Salih perceives a warmth and generosity in this poor girl which in his eyes elevate her far above the inhabitants of the apartment blocks around which she gleanes her meagre living. The feelings she arouses in him are protective and paternal, but his efforts to help her are proudly rejected. Her songs are not the common whinings of jealousy, nor complaints about destiny, but they radiate a joy that belies the grim reality of her life. Her songs make Salih imagine her collecting herbs on remote mountain sides under blue clear skies. Later, when she falls in love, Cura shows no conventional restraints and offers no subservience to her husband. She immediately abandons herself to her feelings, displaying her passion with a confidence found only in a truly liberated person.

It seems that Halikarnas Balıkcısı made no attempt to be realistic in his use of minorities. Several of his works are set in periods before the Greek/Turkish population exchange of 1923 and he must have been fully aware of the demographic history of South Western Anatolia. In spite of this there is a noticeable scarcity of Greek characters. The overall impression in his books is that there has always been a virtually homogeneous population into which a smattering of Greek and Gypsy individuals have strayed.

The presence of Greeks is tolerated, even warmly accepted if they show a willingness to support the Turks. A recurring theme in his work is that of individuals of different ethnic background working together under Turkish Islamic leadership. Despite the new provincial or maritime context, this approach hardly differs from that of other writers of the period. However two characters emerge as being different from the common perception of Greeks. One is Barba Vangel, a captain and therefore a leader in his own right, whose strong generous character serves to reflect similar attributes in his opposite Turkish number. The other is Angeliki, who is portrayed like a goddess of

ancient Greece. Her brief enjoyment of freedom and love is never perceived as degrading or immoral, but is celebrated as an experience of perfect happiness.

The appearance of solitary Gypsies suggests that their lives have no social structure, yet it is known that the manner in which they live, work and travel together is highly organised. The author presents the Gypsy as having a wandering lifestyle, a perceived disregard for material possessions (qualities more commonly associated with mystics or ascetics than with Gypsies) and a willingness to respond with spontaneity to emotional or physical needs. Their morals, in the author's opinion, are on a higher plain than those of ordinary so-called civilised communities. Halikarnas Balıkcısı uses his Gypsy characters as a focus for feelings and desires which he recognises as being essential elements of life, but which have no recognised place in Islamic society. This in itself is not new, but where Halikarnas Balıkcısı differs from his contemporaries is in his use of Gypsies as, not only a guide to human passions and emotions, but as a check on human morality.

While Halikarnas Balıkcısı was writing about life in Anatolia, Sait Faik and Haldun Taner were writing about life in and around Istanbul. Although these two writers were very different from each other in temperament and literary style, they both captured and savoured the remnants of a passing age by presenting character types that were soon to disappear totally from Istanbul life. Some of these characters were solitary remaining members of vanished minority communities, others endured such harsh living conditions that cultural differences were of little significance. Both writers experienced a comfortable home-life and good education but, whereas Haldun Taner usually wrote about middle-class bureaucrats and the privileged cosmopolitan society of Istanbul, Sait Faik searched for characters outside the social circle in which he had been raised, dwelling almost exclusively on the poor and under-privileged.

### **Sait Faik Abasıyanık**

Sait Faik's childhood years were spent in provinces where considerable immigrant resettlement had taken place, and his adult life was divided between the multicultural city of Istanbul and the Princes islands particularly favoured by Christian

and Jewish minorities. It therefore seems only natural that he should write about ethnic minorities. However, even in such cosmopolitan surroundings it was unusual for middle-class citizens to venture outside their own social and cultural milieu. Although high class Istanbul society had mixed socially and professionally for centuries, there was little social interactivity between middle class communities. Sait Faik was unique in his time for actively seeking out people of different ethnic backgrounds, particularly those living precariously at the bottom of the social ladder. In his literature he has provided a social history of the era in which he lived with his acute observations of Istanbul city life.

Sait Faik revealed the ethnic identity and social status of his characters without resorting to typecasting. He demonstrated to his readers that every human individual, however lowly or unfamiliar, possessed a full range of human emotions and feelings. While this might seem obvious to present day readers, at that time, people all over the world were still adjusting to such egalitarian attitudes. By keeping ethnic detail to the barest minimum, the author avoided any suspicion of condescending voyeurism or sentimentality. Instead of indulging in their differences, he drew the readers' attention to situations arising from the juxtaposition of different cultures. Whether these situations produced tension or harmony, the author focused on his characters' state of mind rather than issues of right and wrong.

Sait Faik's complex personality or state of mind is apparent in most of his numerous works. Therefore so that his use of minority characters may be fully appreciated, a biographical outline and a brief discussion of the persona of the narrator is given before a detailed examination of his work.

Sait Faik Abasıyanık<sup>29</sup> was born in 1906, two years before the Young Turk revolution, in the North Western Anatolian town of Adapazarı which is situated to the west of a mountainous area that was inhabited by numerous Circassian immigrant communities. His mother, Makbule Hanım remained an important figure to her son

---

<sup>29</sup> Sait Faik's real name was Mehmet Salih. The original family name was Abasızoğlu, indicating a person living in extreme poverty. When it became obligatory to register family surnames in 1934, Sait Faik altered the name to Abasıyanık, meaning "one afflicted by love."

throughout his life, and in fact outlived him by nine years, dying in 1963. His father, Mehmet Faik, was a timber merchant who had served as mayor, and had assisted the nationalist forces during the War of Independence. Sait Faik's blue eyes, fair colouring, and probably his temperament were inherited from his paternal grandfather, Sait (Seyit) Ağa. The family, while not excessively wealthy, lived in comfortable circumstances and the author grew up without first-hand experience of the hardships and food shortages that affected so much of the country during the Balkan and First World Wars. By 1923 Greek Nationalist forces had arrived in Adapazarı, and the family moved to Istanbul where they divided their time between an apartment in Şehzadebaşı and a summer residence on Burgaz, one of the Princes islands.

Sait Faik's parents sought a good education for their son who completed primary school and two years of secondary school in Adapazarı. After the move to Istanbul, he attended the Istanbul Boys' High School until tenth grade when a classroom prank resulted in expulsion after which he was sent as a boarder to Bursa Boys' High School from 1925 until he graduated in 1928. Here his writing ability was noticed for the first time by his literature teacher, Mümtaz Bey, who gave him both constructive criticism and encouragement.

After High School Sait Faik entered the literature department of the Faculty of Letters in Istanbul where he proved to be a rebellious and argumentative student, and from which he failed to graduate. He was subsequently sent by his father to study economics in Lausanne, but left after three weeks for Grenoble, where he spent three years attending literature courses on an informal basis.<sup>30</sup> Despite his undisciplined life-style, it was a time of artistic development for the budding author. Much of his new independence was spent in the narrow streets of the Italian quarter, where he began to frequent cinemas, cafes and bars. This was a lifestyle from which he sometimes escaped, but one which he never quite abandoned. As a foreign student, this was his first experience of being part of a minority community.

---

<sup>30</sup> There is a discrepancy over dates. Ünlü and Öcan state that he went abroad in 1930, see *20. Yüzyıl Türk Edebiyatı* 3, 377, while Muzaffer Uyguner states that he went in 1931, see *Sait Faik Abasıyanık*, 4.



By 1935 his father decided that his son had been idle for long enough, and recalled him to Turkey. An unsettled time followed while Sait Faik, still living with the recent memories of his life in France, tried to find a niche for himself in Istanbul. He taught Turkish for a short time at the Halıcıoğlu Armenian School for Orphans, but left following a disagreement over discipline. The life-style of a free-lance journalist appealed to him, and he embarked on a career in this field with enthusiasm but soon became disillusioned by the kind of material he was expected to produce. His father tried to establish him in business with an old family acquaintance but the venture proved unsuccessful.<sup>31</sup>

During this time the author began having his work published in *Varlık Dergisi*, and by 1939 had produced three volumes of short stories. Publication of the third volume was temporarily suspended when one of the stories was denounced as subversive, and a court case ensued.<sup>32</sup> The author found the experience harrowing and he subsequently endeavoured to avoid giving offence to the political establishment. In fact, it was several years before he submitted any more work for publication.

Apart from a short spell of journalism in 1942 and two attempts at novel writing, one of which again provoked trouble with government authorities, he lived in a state of semi-retreat from 1940 - 1948. In a newspaper article, the writer Oktay Akbal explained that Sait Faik felt that an author without freedom of expression was like a bird without wings, and that the cost, both financial and personal, of having his work denounced was not worth the risk involved.<sup>33</sup>

During this period three important developments took place in Sait Faik's life. Firstly, on 29 October 1939 the author's father died, although strangely there is not a single reference to this event in Sait Faik's works, nor are there signs of a reaction that

---

<sup>31</sup> For more information on the early life of Sait Faik, see Muzaffer Uyguner, *Sait Faik Abasıyanık : Hayatı, Sanatı, Eseri*, 3-9.

<sup>32</sup> The story in question was "Çelme" (*Şahmerden*), in which a group of starving people attack a picnic party .

<sup>33</sup> Cumhuriyet Gazetesi 11 Mayıs 1988, as quoted in Mahir Ünlü and Ömer Özcan, *20.Yüz Yılım Türk Edebiyatı* 3, 388.

could be attributed to it.<sup>34</sup> Secondly, having reached his mid-thirties, it was becoming apparent that the author was unlikely to marry. What had earlier appeared to be an adolescent interest in both sexes, was proving to be a definite preference for homosexual attachments. Thirdly, exacerbated by his bohemian lifestyle, his health was deteriorating and he was diagnosed as having cirrhosis of the liver in 1944.

For a few more years the author continued living on Burgaz Island, where he was sustained by his mother's energy, the family house, and his father's inheritance. Here he passed his time with fishing expeditions, reading, and writing poetry. His encounters with island fishermen, and his occasional journeys to Istanbul provided material for several of his later stories.

The author ended his state of semi-retreat with a story in which the narrator witnesses an incident which makes such an impression on him that he is prompted to say: "I was going to go crazy if I didn't start writing again."<sup>35</sup> He emerged more preoccupied than ever with his personal feelings, but appeared increasingly confident about expressing his complex persona. From this time onwards, the author's personality dominated the events and characters in most of his stories. Despite his failing health and his erratic life-style, it was a productive time for Sait Faik. He had an ability to create stories out of the most insignificant incidents or characters. His writing was now primarily based on adult experiences, and he almost always brought himself into the story. The quick succession of published volumes that followed seems to confirm a statement he made in "Yaşasın Edebiyat" (*Balıkçı'nın Ölümü : Yaşasın Demokrasi*) that he took pleasure in making collections of his stories.

Ever since his illness was diagnosed, Sait Faik had kept it under control by having regular medical check-ups, following a careful diet, and avoiding alcohol. By the end of 1950 however, partly as a result of spending more time away from his mother, his condition had worsened and on 31st January 1951 he went to Paris for medical treatment. When surgeons advised him that drastic surgery was his only option

---

<sup>34</sup> "Kriz," (*Kumpanya : Kayıp Aranyor*) may possibly be based on Sait Faik's relationship with his father.

<sup>35</sup> Sait Faik, "Haritada Bir Nokta," *Son Kuşlar*, 213.

he returned home immediately after which his health deteriorated rapidly, and his writing became noticeably more obsessive and less inhibited.

During the last few years of his life the author experimented with different literary forms and styles. In 1953 he produced his first and only volume of poetry, *Şimdi Sevişme Vakit*, which was well received. In the same year, Sait Faik was elected to the Mark Twain Society in USA in recognition of his contribution to modern literature. The final volume to be compiled by Sait Faik, *Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan* [1954] which is a collection of surrealist and obscure stories.

On 5th May Sait Faik was admitted to the Marmara Clinic where he died in the early hours of 11th May 1954, and was buried in *Yeni Mezarlık* (New Graveyard) on Burgaz Island. After his death his mother, who outlived him by nearly nine years, established the Sait Faik Museum in the family house on Burgaz. She died on 11th May 1964. The family estate, including income from royalties, was bequeathed to a high school for orphans in Istanbul (*Dariüşşafaka Lisesi*).

Most of Sait Faik's work is written either in the first person or through a narrator. Although the personality and mood of the narrator is entirely different in each story, a comprehensive reading of Sait Faik's works confirms that they are different aspects of a highly complex and temperamental persona that is a projection of the author's own character.

The author experienced loneliness throughout his life despite having a stable comfortable home life and many loving friends. His stories about childhood tend to be about lone or lonely children. As a young man, his failure to succeed in what he regarded as a respectable occupation, and an inability to establish conventional relationships with the opposite sex, induced in him a sense of exclusion from normal society. Although he was acknowledged as a writer of substance during his lifetime, he had little confidence in his own ability and he lacked self-esteem. Cheerful optimism alternated with cynical pessimism. Although his close friends tolerated these changeable moods, he was quick to take offence if his colleagues did not empathise with him.

Honesty, integrity and love were of utmost importance to Sait Faik, and the impossibility of openly expressing his romantic and sexual feelings weighs heavily in many of his stories. This inner conflict provided a strong motive for the author to frequent districts inhabited by social misfits who were often from ethnic minorities, where, unrestricted by normal conventions, he felt more at ease with his natural instincts. In his writing he sometimes got round the problem by creating tomboy heroines, or writing celebratory descriptions of his male characters. His work also features friendships with prostitutes whose hopes for romantic heterosexual relationships were no greater than his own. It was really only in his late works, using the cloak of surrealism, that the author came close to openly expressing his personal feelings. Vedat Günyol has written, in a veiled acknowledgement of the author's homosexual nature, that in his late stories he was able to release himself through surrealism into a world of dreams that were unacceptable in reality.<sup>36</sup>

During his lifetime Sait Faik compiled nine anthologies of short stories, and published two novels, two long stories, and a volume of poetry. A number of other articles and stories were published after his death. His first published work appeared in *Varlık Dergisi* after his return from Grenoble, and his first collection of fourteen stories (*Semaver*) was published in 1936. He was proud of this achievement despite having little faith in the book's success. *Semaver* was not received with enthusiasm. Peyami Sefa proclaimed it to be "the stammerings of a melancholy lovable child;"<sup>37</sup> Sadri Ertem disliked the literary style; Halit Ziya and F. Celâlettin thought he wrote in an old-fashioned style that was unlikely to influence the young generation of writers.<sup>38</sup> One reason for this cool reception was that, at a time when most Turkish writers were focusing on recent historical events and current political developments, the intensely personal nature of Sait Faik's stories and their isolated settings appeared far removed from current literary trends.

---

<sup>36</sup> Muzaffer Uyguner, *Sait Faik Abasıyanık : Hayatı, Sanatı, Eseri*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> *Varlık Dergisi*, June 1954, as quoted in Ahmet Miskioğlu, *Ana Remleriyle Sait Faik ve Yeni Türk Edebiyatı*, 11.

<sup>38</sup> As quoted in Şükran Kurdakul, *Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatı* 4, 50.

## An Overview of his Works

*Semaver* includes stories based on domestic childhood experiences and observations of life on the Princes' islands and in the back streets of Istanbul. In this volume minorities are rarely mentioned, with a few notable exceptions that include the Greek fisherman and his grandson in "Stelyanos Hristopulos Gemisi," a mixed group of train passengers in "Üçüncü Mevki," and some "westernised" girls in "Şehri Unutan Adam".

The second volume, *Sarnıç* (1939), is a collection of sixteen stories with a diversity of settings, over half of which have minority characters. In scenes of city life there are brief references, mainly to Greek and Jewish citizens, that are just enough to evoke images in readers' minds. The author relies on the readers' experience or knowledge of ethnic stereotypes to fill in details of appearance and behaviour. There are also stories about problems in the provinces between new immigrant Muslim communities and established Turkish communities. In the third volume, *Şahmerdan*, (1939) ethnic minorities appear in less than half of the stories, but new prominence is given to individual minority characters.

With these three volumes, Sait Faik launched himself as one of the new wave of Turkish writers. The literary critic, Şükran Kurdakul has noted that Sait Faik's contemporary approach to his characters, together with his respect for the individual, his knowledge and understanding of society, and the artistic nature of his writing had a considerable influence on subsequent writers.<sup>39</sup>

During his period of 'retreat', he worked briefly as a writer for the *Haber* newspaper from 28 April to 31 May 1942, and wrote twenty-six articles on court cases, which were published under the collective title *Mahkeme Kapısı* [1956].<sup>40</sup> In about half of these cases of petty crime and neighbourhood disputes, the defendants and witnesses come from ethnic minority families. As a collection, the articles constitute a multi-ethnic gallery of lower and middle class characters living on the edges of Istanbul

---

<sup>39</sup> Şükran Kurdakul, *Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatı* 4, 52.

<sup>40</sup> See Sait Faik, *Tüneldeki Çocuk : Mahkeme Kapısı*.

society. In fact, they are precisely the kind of characters that the author subsequently selected for his fictional writing.

*Medarı Maişet Motoru* [1944], was the author's first attempt at writing a novel.<sup>41</sup> It contains a number of well-written episodes, but lacks balance, discipline and continuity. It does however closely reflect the author's personal philosophy. Most of the action takes place on a multi-ethnic island, where island culture and tradition is perceived to be stronger than national sentiment. In this novel the author makes a rare attempt at giving a detailed background to a Greek character, namely Dimitri, who is the son of a high-ranking member of the Orthodox ecclesiastical community. The novel explores the possibilities of laying to rest past differences for the sake of a harmonious communal way of living in which each individual retains his or her cultural identity.

*Kumpanya* (1951), a short novel about a touring theatre company, contains colourful character observations, but the multicultural nature of theatre life is not fully explored and consequently the work does not really come to life.<sup>42</sup>

*Lüzümsüz Adam* [1948] is an collection of short stories written after his return to Istanbul, and it reflects the recent changes in the author's life. Still careful to avoid political or ideological topics, the author nevertheless continues to convey his sympathy and support for individuals living in the margins of society. There are several minority characters who, because of their beliefs or life-style, exist not only on the edge of mainstream society, but of their own cultural group.

Stories in the fourth collection, *Mahalle Kahvesi* [1950], contain examples of different attitudes towards and between minority characters, including outright admiration, romantic idealism, dislike, distrust, and mutual understanding. It is worth noting that in a story about a homogeneously Turkish neighbourhood, the author describes the uniformity of appearance among its inhabitants as dreary, even sinister.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> *Medarı Maişet Motoru* was published under the title *Birtakım İnsanlar* in 1952 and 1965, but has subsequently been published under its original name. Two episodes from this novel were previously published as short stories in *Şahmerdan*, under the titles "Kaşıkadası'nda" [1939] and "Krallık" [1939]. Only slight alterations were made to fit the storyline of *Medarı Maişet Motoru*.

<sup>42</sup> Sait Faik, *Kumpanya: Kayıp Aranyor*.

<sup>43</sup> Sait Faik, "Kaçamak, Papağan, Karabiber," *Lüzümsüz Adam*.

*Havada Bulut* [1951], which is sometimes regarded as a novel, is a collection of connected short stories about a middle-aged man's obsession with a young Greek prostitute. The central character is described unconvincingly as a Greek speaking European Turk *Rumelili*), but there is little doubt that in fact he represents the author. The stories roam through an obscure world of prostitution in the Greek quarter. Once again, the author portrays a marginalised community with little that can be identified as typically Greek, yet there are colourful cameos of eccentric Greek characters, male and female.

*Havuz Başı* [1952], the sixth collection, is mostly concerned with social progress and economic revival during the post-war years. There are graphic descriptions of the city, but stories involving minorities are few.

*Son Kuşlar* [1952) contains several lengthy portrayals of minority characters, all of whom are Greek except for two of uncertain ethnic identity. The author is mainly interested in the personal philosophies of these characters who, though mature in years, are functioning mentally and physically as if they are still in their prime of life. There is also an evocative story about a young boy from Imros.

The surrealist style of the stories in Sait Faik's final volume, *Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan* [1954], seems to have given the author a new freedom with which to express his personal feelings. Central to the themes in this volume are the appearance of a Greek alter-ego, and an unattainable romantic ideal of Greek manhood. One story is devoted entirely to the description of a multi-ethnic Istanbul neighbourhood which, like a masterful poet, the author evokes by tracing the sights, sounds and smells that reach his senses.<sup>44</sup>

Despite Sait Faik's reluctance to be drawn into political matters, his work exhibits a considerable degree of social realism through his perception of ordinary people's aspirations and emotions in their daily lives. Instead of dwelling on actions and events, he focuses on the positive and negative responses of his characters to their particular circumstances. He selects situations that concern or affect him personally and

---

<sup>44</sup> Sait Faik, "Dolapdere," *Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*.

then proceeds to relate the story in a manner that makes his own sympathies clear but without making judgments between right and wrong. Above all the author seems to delight in finding situations where cultural and ethnic diversity are not divisive elements, but features of Istanbul's multicultural heritage.

Apart from the well-known Greek characters in Sait Faik's works there are numerous representatives of other minorities including Armenian, Jewish, Kurdish, Laz, Balkan and Caucasian characters. Sometimes they merely provide background colour but frequently they have important roles. Drawn from social classes ranging from the very lowest to the comfortable middle class (with a notable absence of upper class), they include social outcasts, factory workers, street traders, small businessmen, artisans and fishermen. Ages range from the very young to octogenarians. Despite the large number of stories, there is virtually no repetition in the author's choice of scenario, character or situation. He does not stereotype his ethnic characters, nor does he divide them into separate groups. On the contrary, he brings ethnic characters into his own world of experience, and to illuminate what he has in common with them rather than looking for differences. Because of the large number of minority characters and the diversity in each volume of stories, the characters are discussed in groups or types rather than chronologically.

### **Background Colour**

In several of his stories Sait Faik creates colourful and evocative descriptions of cosmopolitan districts in Istanbul, not by describing its physical attributes, but by observing the inhabitants and their interactions. In "Kalorifer ve Bahar" (*Sarnıç*) he writes about a community of destitute children including Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews, who form bonds stronger than religious, ethnic or family ties. He admires the energy and talent of these children who use their inherent intelligence to learn each others' languages. Fully aware that Darwinian Law prevails in the harshest terms, they know that to survive this melting pot of humanity they have to be shrewd, intelligent, quick-witted and, most importantly, charming. Eventually some of these children are likely to find their way into the cafes and bars of Istanbul as featured in "Gece İşı,"



(*Sarnıç*) where ethnic and cultural traditions have no hold over the individuals who live on their wits in a volatile world of criminals, pimps and predators.

In *Medaret Medari Motoru* a condensed history of the Galata Tower is suggested by recalling the succession of local Genoese, Byzantine and Jewish communities, particularly the children, which have witnessed some of the darkest episodes of history.<sup>45</sup> Even more mixed is the street described in “Yorgiya’nın Mahallesi” (*Havada Bulut*) which heaves with small traders, entertainers, workmen, artisans of every religion and ethnic background, which the author lists as: Turkish, Russian, Armenian, Greek, Nestorian, Arab, Gypsy, French, Catholic, Levantine, Croatian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Persian, Afghan, Chinese, Tatar, Jew, Italian, and Maltese.<sup>46</sup> The author seems to find such environments, if not actually welcoming, somehow comfortable in their diversity. By contrast, in “Kaçamak, Papağan Karabiber,” where the inhabitants of a particular district are ethnically and culturally homogeneous, the uniformity is described as almost unnatural and somewhat sinister.

Perhaps the best example of the author’s ability to recreate the atmosphere of a district is “Dolapdere”. It is a mixture of fantasy and observation of the Dolapdere district, in which he muses on the images conjured up by its name of terraced vegetable gardens, a water mill, a gruff-voiced gardener and his dog, and pretty Albanian girls. This is followed by a picture of the reality, which consists of an assortment of huts, bare cafes, and naked children. It is a district that is alive with the constant sounds of people where girls look wonderful but smell terrible, where mud covers the streets, and walls smell of ammonia. Nearby is Vangelistra church, its candles and chandeliers creating the illusion of a sumptuous ballroom within its walls. This district is the training ground for Christian girls who work for local tailors, hairdressers, furriers, cinema and bar owners. It also teems with reformed pickpockets, recovering heroin addicts, fortune-tellers, pimps, alcoholics, flashily dressed knife-toting rogues and protection racketeers. The author continues to heap together diverse images such as the

---

<sup>45</sup> Sait Faik, *Medaret Medari Motoru*, 164-5.

<sup>46</sup> Sait Faik, “Yorgiya’nın Mahallesi”, *Havada Bulut*, 199.

aroma of lamb chops, pangs of hunger, the smell of rakı, love, lust, good and evil, whistled messages in the dark, and whispered Greek words of love.<sup>47</sup>

*Medarı Maişet Motoru* contains scenes of daily life in which there is social interaction between Turks, Greeks, Jews, Circassians, Laz and Bosnians. This novel, although in literary terms inferior to his short stories, is a brave attempt at presenting a contemporary picture of Istanbul, including its provinces and islands, by weaving the various cultural elements into a single framework.

The bleak tale in “Kimkime” (*Sarnıç*) presents a much more negative picture. It exposes the prejudice and hypocrisy of the mixed island people towards the summer influx of *Karadenizli* fishermen. Even more disturbing is the chilling indifference displayed towards a desperate and destitute newly-widowed Muslim mother.

### **Ethnic Minority Communities**

Observations of ethnic communities are coloured by the narrator’s own experience or mood, and range from warm enthusiasm to sickened distaste. In the description of a Gypsy encampment pitched on top of the city walls in “Sur Dışında Hayat,” (*Havuz Başı*) he takes great care to point out the organised social structure of the group in which every man woman and child is busy fulfilling their own particular role. In contrast, the group of Gypsy fish-dryers in “Beyaz Pantalon” (*Şahmerdan*) is portrayed as a group of unsavoury characters with little or no sense of trust or loyalty, that is only held together by the charisma of one young woman. “Lüzümsüz Adam” (*Lüzümsüz Adam*) features a lively bustling community comprised of poor Levantines and Jews, where the author finds the Jews particularly warm-hearted and generous. He is impressed by their linguistic talent, particularly the lady-owner of a local cafe who chats with equal ease in French and German. This talent for languages is observed less kindly in “Plaj İnsanları,” (*Sarnıç*) in which a young Jewish youth feigns a European background by conversing in German and other languages in order to be accepted into a set of young Istanbul socialites.

---

<sup>47</sup> Sait Faik, “Dolapdere,” *Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*, 94-96.

The fishing communities are predominantly, but not exclusively, Greek and they have an identity of their own. The author portrays both positive and negative aspects of the fishing fraternity. In “Bizim Köy Bir Balıkçı Köy” (*Lüzümsüz Adam*) the names of the fishermen, (Koço, Ahmet Muharrem, İstelyo, İbram, Hristo, Barba Niko) indicate a mixed crew. They banter continually to each other in Greek, remaining optimistic even after a poor catch. A contrasting situation is observed in “Yaşayacak” (*Son Kuşlar*) when the narrator is sickened by the boorish behaviour of fishermen after a successful catch, by their subsequent display of greed and by their callousness towards a hungry newcomer at the quay.

Stories about immigrant communities are mostly set in provincial districts. The tensions that develop within a Circassian community, as one faction struggles to acquire prominence and wealth at the expense of another, is portrayed in “Radyoaktiviteli, Röportajlı Hikaye” (*Son Kuşlar*). The author also refers to problems between this immigrant community and inhabitants of other local towns and villages. In particular, the friendly behaviour of the Circassian girls is perceived to be forward or ‘modern’, and therefore provocative and inviting to men of nearby districts: “This village has always been like this . . . Circassian villages are all the same. The women are very forward.”<sup>48</sup>

The tension between characters or communities of different cultures is always perceived to have underlying causes other than ethnic difference. Antagonism towards a Bulgarian suburb in a provincial town is suggested in “Lohusa,” (*Sarıç*). In this story a young Bulgarian wife is blamed for a family conflict over inheritance when her aged husband dies, although she barely speaks Turkish and appears to have nobody to support her case. It transpires that different factions within the family, which have been involved in a long-term dispute, find they can forget their differences and unite against this poor Bulgarian girl by accusing her of wilfully seducing an aging man into marriage and parenthood for the sake of his inheritance. The story ends in bitter violence.

---

<sup>48</sup> Sait Faik, “Radyoaktiviteli, Röportajlı Hikaye,” *Son Kuşlar*, 174.

Another situation that leads to violence occurs in “Sakarya Balıkçısı” (*Mahalle Kahvesi*) in which villagers resent the achievements of an immigrant settler named Muharrem, who has established a successful fishing business on the outskirts of the village. The locals dislike him because he is ‘foreign’, and because he draws the attention of local youths to whom he teaches his fishing skills.<sup>49</sup> Later when Muharrem falls on hard times and begins entertaining a rich local philanderer, the villagers immediately infer that Muharrem’s Rumanian wife is being offered as part of the hospitality. They chase the settlers out of the village, justifying their actions with the claim that the honour of the village had to be restored.

An unexplained anger simmers within the community in “Sarmaşıklı Ev” (*Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*). By merely hinting at past wrong-doings and grievances, the author creates a feeling of unease and tension that he makes no attempt to explain. The atmosphere of bewilderment and distrust constitutes the subject of the story which is further intensified by more disjointed references to past misunderstandings and violence among the complex mix of Greek, Anatolian Muslim, and Balkan immigrant inhabitants.

### **Minorities in Family Settings**

Sometimes the author picks out ethnic minority characters and places them in a family context. This exposes bonds, pressures and tensions through which, the author succeeds in capturing glimpses of age-old minority communities, which were fast disappearing. He makes no attempt to give historical accounts, but concentrates on the feelings experienced during a particular moment in time.

In “Menekşeli Vadi” (*Lüzümsüz Adam*) Bayram, an Albanian who has exhausted the pleasures of decadent living in Istanbul, decides to return to his family home. A cold and grim atmosphere pervades this three-generation household. There is no welcome for Bayram on his arrival and the evening meal, which is simple but sufficient, is eaten in silence. By contrast, the description of the garden outside is

---

<sup>49</sup> It is clear that the villagers have come to the area as immigrants themselves because, although they live near to the sea they know nothing about fishing.

revealed as a place where man and nature have created a sanctuary of fertility, abundance and orderliness. The author describes this household with a touch of nostalgia, yet he never questions why Bayram needs to escape from it. There is the suggestion that the family represents a once-flourishing culture that is now approaching its natural end.

“Bir Ev Sahibi” (*Havuz Başı*) explains the disappearance of many of the old Istanbul houses, including those such as the one mentioned in the story above. Set in the years after the Second World War when inflation was rampant, the story illustrates how property owners were forced to sell family real estate, and often became entangled in complex deals that benefited only the entrepreneurs. Kirkor, an Armenian speculator, represents numerous property developers who amassed fortunes in this way. He makes a huge profit by redeveloping the family house of an old family friend who is subsequently left penniless. While there is no suggestion that such speculators were necessarily Armenian, this story undoubtedly draws on the Armenian stereotypes of builder and entrepreneur.

### **Marginalised Minority Individuals**

The author portrays a number of ethnic minority working men who are marginalised by society because of communication difficulties, an unwillingness to conform, or a natural inclination for solitude. A prime example is Ramo, the Kurdish porter or *hamal*, in “Köye Gönderilen Eşek” (*Şahmerdan*), who arrives in Istanbul from a village on the Iranian border. Ramo is a healthy strong man, whose extreme loneliness stems from his limited Turkish vocabulary. His incomprehensible string of words are received with bemused indifference by the people he encounters in Istanbul. Because of his illiteracy, letters from home have no personal meaning for him. They are simply a catalogue of disasters and demands. The author seems to relate the loneliness of Ramo to his own feelings of estrangement from society.

The city is presented through Ramo’s eyes as a place of bewilderment. His wonder at how it is possible to keep warm while looking at snow through a glass window is an example of his inexperience, yet the author avoids adopting a patronising

tone by allowing Ramo to question each new experience and to reach his own conclusions. Ramo solves his problem of being an illiterate unskilled worker with family obligations by utilising his excellent physical and mental stamina and finding regular work as a porter. Much more difficult is coping with the humiliation he feels when his wife sends him a letter listing her woes, including the death of the family donkey, saying, "Do whatever you have to, but send us money. We can manage without a man, but not without a donkey."<sup>50</sup> Living as a single man, he has to devise a means of accommodating his natural physical desires without compromising his personal dignity and honour. The voyeurism in which Ramo indulges in order to deal with this problem is described compassionately and without moral judgment. Ramo's complex blend of naivete, virility, and morality are conveyed in a few sentences. The author describes how the pleasure of seeing a woman's bare legs at the beach is enough to give Ramo dreams to carry him through the night, and how the next morning he purges his body in the freezing waters of the Bosphorus. As time passes, Ramo begins to frequent the house of a Greek woman from whom he receives warmth and affection, and with whom he communicates using a combination of Greek words, animal-like sounds and sign language.

With this short story about a Kurdish porter, the author presents several issues that have a direct bearing on his own life. The man's physical strength and perseverance are openly admired by the author. There is a marked contrast between Ramo and the author's own inability to sustain any effort towards financial independence. At the same time other aspects of Ramo's life, such as his loneliness in the midst of other people, his depression brought about by low self-esteem, and his hunger for the comfort of human intimacy, are problems with which the author can empathise. He describes the problem of sexual desire for a lone man living outside the framework of conventional society with a delicacy which dispels any notion of lewdness. By the end of the story the reader is intimately acquainted with this stranger whose homeland is distant geographically, linguistically and culturally.

---

<sup>50</sup> Sait Faik, "Köye Gönderilen Eşek," *Şamerdan*, 77.

Two stories concern Gypsy characters who exist just within the Istanbul working men's fraternity, yet they are very different from each other. The first story, "Mürüvvet" (*Lüzümsüz Adam*) concerns preconceptions about gypsies. When a Gypsy worker, Hüseyin, loses an arm in an industrial accident, the narrator is racked by feelings of guilt over the tragedy and its repercussions on the family. However the factory boss dismisses the incident as insignificant, saying that the compensation will be enough to support him for sixty years. The narrator is repulsed by what he perceives to be a callous and prejudiced attitude. However, he later finds out that Hüseyin, like his father before him, had in fact brought about the accident in order to claim compensation so that he could give up factory work and buy a couple of mares. Thus, Osman's presumption of Hüseyin's innocence proves to be more flawed and prejudiced than the boss's harsh attitude.

The other Gypsy worker appears in "Gramafon ve Yazı Makinesi" (*Mahalle Kahvesi*). He is a hunch-backed Gypsy news vendor, who travels alone to Burgaz island every Sunday with his gramophone under his arm. On arrival he goes to the beach, strips off his clothes and whiles away his time smoking and listening to records of foxtrots and tangos. The narrator expects to see an ugly, hairy, oily body like Quasimodo, but instead sees that the body of this monkey-faced hunch-back has an unexpectedly refined and dignified quality. As in the case of Ramo, the author describes the narrator's perception of the Gypsy's soul as well as his physical appearance. The difference here is that, whereas Ramo cut a healthy handsome figure, the fine quality of the Gypsy's soul radiates through a deformed and ugly exterior shell

Sait Faik did not shrink from exploring darker aspects of Istanbul life. He brings to life the corrupt or criminal fraternity that other writers might dismiss as mere dregs of society in "Gece İşı" (*Sarıç*). They appear as a shifting tense multi-ethnic group which includes Greeks, Armenians, Turks, Arabs, a Persian and a *Karadenizli* youth. He demonstrates that they have a common instinct for survival that is stronger than any conventional moral code, and is not unlike that of the children's community mentioned earlier in "Kalorifer ve Bahar" (*Sarıç*). In fact the nocturnal world of "Gece

İşi,” in which much of the bawdy conversation is in Greek and Armenian, and which is full of sinister allusions to male prostitution, could easily be the final destination for some of the brighter boys in the earlier story.

“Barometre” (*Mahalle Kahvesi*) is a tale with a pathetically grim tone. For several days a mist envelops Istanbul and mutes the normal lively atmosphere of the Jewish quarter. At the same time it creates a sense of privacy which encourages people to discard their usual inhibitions. The narrator finds himself observing an incongruous group of men, including a greying middle-aged Greek, a soldier and a fireman. They stand together in front of a shop window gazing unashamedly at women’s corsetry and lusting after the mannequin in the window display.

The author felt no need to censure or judge the behaviour of the men in the previous two examples, however certain practices or attitudes did provoke the author to make critical attacks and ethnic minorities were not excluded. More than anything the author condemned hypocrisy, and exploitation of defenceless creatures.

“Son Kuşlar” (*Son Kuşlar*) is a bitter account of the practice of trapping migrant birds on the islands. One of these men is Konstantin efendi, a Karaman Greek grain-merchant. He lives most of his life as an unremarkable inoffensive businessman, but when autumn comes, he goes to the islands for the sole purpose of enticing returning migrating birds to their death. His appearance is described as monstrous, with a broad chest, thick hairy wrists, a nose covered with black-heads, flaring nostrils and wild hair. The author relates how Konstantin efendi sees the birds coming from a great distance, winks at any nearby acquaintance and points up to the sky saying: “The meat for our pilaf has arrived.” Then he entices the birds closer to his traps by deceiving them with his imitation bird sounds, and kills the birds with his teeth: “If you’d only seen the pleasure with which those shiny chrome teeth broke the necks of the birds, all for the sake of the pilaf he was going to make with the tiny scraps of meat found between the yellowy grey bones”<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Sait Faik, “Son Kuşlar,” *Son Kuşlar*, 147.



Throughout his life the author seemed to be searching for a way of life that would bring him fulfilment and happiness. When he encountered what he thought to be a good combination of characteristics in others, he wrote about it in a joyful celebratory manner. Of the seventeen or eighteen characters that come into this category, at least eleven are non-Turkish and three are European. They are all male characters of mature years who, despite poverty and misfortune, have used their ingenuity and applied their skills in such a way that they have been able to derive some pleasure and/or satisfaction from their lives. They are perceived as individuals whose existence has enriched the world for others. Their ethnicity is not always certain, yet the fact that they are ethnic minority characters is considered significant enough to be mentioned. In the eyes of the author, they are individuals who transcend their own communities to become representatives of Istanbul and the islands as they had been for centuries before the upheavals of the early twentieth century. Some of these characters are written about as if they are still alive, others are written about as if posthumously.

#### **Admired Male Minority Characters**

The first three include a beggar, an amateur scientist and a ferry searchlight operator. What they have in common is an ability to enrich their own lives without material wealth. Two of these characters are Levantine, or at least the second is said to be either Levantine or Italian. The first is a one-legged street beggar who inspires pity and compassion until the narrator discovers that begging is merely his morning occupation. At mid-day the beggar returns home to his beautiful Jewish wife, sleeps all afternoon, and then in the evenings they put on smart clothes and go out together. In his smart clothes even his artificial limb appears different so that, instead of limping like a cripple, he seems to have no more than a slightly skipping gait. The Levantine's situation is regarded as successful by the narrator and written about with a tinge of envy, contrasting as it does with the author's own lonely life and failure with women.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Sait Faik, "Bacaklar Olsaydı," *Lüzümsüz Adam*.

The other Levantine (the narrator is not sure if he is Levantine or Italian) is just as original in his way of coping with life's difficulties.<sup>53</sup> This elderly man has a passion for Archimedes' law and the law of gravity, but due to a lack of formal training his ideas are flawed and of no interest to professional scientists. Since adults ignore him, he visits the islands where children are prepared to listen to him, and are not inhibited about asking awkward questions. The narrator sees that curiosity and enthusiasm are keeping this old man youthful in mind and spirit, even though all his projects are doomed to failure.

The main character in "Projektörcü" (*Şahmerdan*) is not identified as Greek, but is described as: "hunchbacked like the philosopher Diogenes, with a torch in his hand, as if searching for someone in the streets of Athens."<sup>54</sup> He operates the searchlight on one of the Istanbul steamboats, but he also has a passion in life. He spends his working time observing life ashore with the aid of his searchlight, collecting ideas for stories to tell his son. The old man has never been able to afford an education for his son, but his skill of creating good stories out of ordinary situations has generated a love of reading in his son. Once again, there is a tinge of envy in the description of the warm relationship between father and son which remains undiminished by their impoverished circumstances.

"Stelyanos Hristopulos Gemisi" (*Semaver*) is a sad brooding story about an old man, Stelyanos, and his grandson Trifon, who live a lonely existence in dire poverty on one of the islands. The disaster that destroyed this family is not explained, but there are oblique references to earlier political troubles with Greece, and allusions to past times when Stelyanos's daughter was alive and brought beauty and laughter into their lives. The reader senses that the old man has lived through so much tragedy he has no real desire to carry on living except for his grandson. Stelyanos sees traces of his beloved daughter in the sensitive imagination of this child, and he uses all his energy and love to nurture and educate Trifon to the best of his ability. Stelyanos

---

<sup>53</sup> Sait Faik, "Bulamayın," *Son Kuşlar*, 160.

<sup>54</sup> Sait Faik, "Projektörcü," *Şahmerdan*, 53.

understands the difficulties that lie ahead for his grandson and knows that he is unable to alter destiny, but still he perseveres. Despite all his efforts, he is unable to protect Trifon from unprovoked attacks and assaults by other children. Trifon's unique qualities, so carefully nurtured by the old man, prove to be the cause of jealousy in other children whose lives are comfortable in a material sense but impoverished emotionally and spiritually.

In "Yaşayacak" (*Son Kuşlar*) there is a portrayal of a Greek fisherman from Imroz who, at fifty years or more, is older than Ramo and the Gypsy mentioned above but who, despite his balding head and undistinguished build, is still in his prime. The author was about the same age when this story was written, but his own health and physical condition were by then very poor. In a lengthy appreciation of this character, the author compares him to the demigods of ancient Greek legends, and comments with disbelief on the fisherman's apparent ability to defeat the aging process. Reflecting on how most people of this age are becoming lazy, slow, confused and ugly, the author records in detail how the fisherman, wearing only a vest despite the cold, regains a youthful appearance as he flexes his muscles while he works. He sees the vigour with which this middle-aged man works as symbolic of life itself, as if he is new to the human race, has only just discovered the joy and satisfaction of human endeavour, and is capable of continuing for another thousand years.

Another Greek fisherman named Barba Yakamoz appears in "İki Kişiyeye Bir Hikâye" (*Mahalle Kahvesi*), a story that was lost for several years. In the meantime the author rewrote the story as "Ermeni Balıkçı ile Topal Martı" (*Mahalle Kahvesi*) in which the fisherman, Varbet, is Armenian. The character in both versions is essentially the same. The fact that his ethnic background was altered has no bearing on either the character or the storyline. The difference between the two stories lies in the amount of detail, the original being longer and more specific than the second version. Since childhood Barba Yakamoz has only felt comfortable at sea. His mother having died in his infancy, home was merely a place where he was abandoned when his father went out fishing. As an adult, he finds human relationships neither easy nor satisfying but

he discovers companionship with a sea-gull that follows his boat on fishing expeditions. This real or imagined relationship has developed to such an extent that if the gull is not nearby Yakamoz is uneasy. After the gull dies, the tough old fisherman is observed to be wearing a black neck tie, although he is reluctant to admit that it has any connection with the gull. Yakamoz, who has always lived alone, is unable to discuss his grief or his feelings, but in a conversation at sea with the narrator, he philosophises about how life at sea affects character development. Without doctors or priests to give aid and advice, each individual has to learn self-reliance. He maintains that true medicinal or emotional solace is to be found only in alcohol. Eventually he reveals his fundamental belief that the mind ages and dies before the body, and that the heart continues to live right to the very end.

Barba Vasili in "Bir Kaya Parçası Gibi" (*Son Kuşlar*) iterates no such words of wisdom, but he impresses the author with his faith, confidence, determination and acceptance of destiny. When their boat becomes enveloped in a heavy mist as they are rowing from one island to another the narrator, knowing what dangers lie beneath the sea, feels they should turn back and wait for the mist to clear. Barba Vasili, on the other hand, never once hesitates in his resolve to continue the journey. He knows that one day he will die at sea, and when that time comes, turning back will not save him. His philosophy in life is that man must continue going forwards and never turn backwards.

The remaining stories in this category are written almost as obituaries or tributes to men whose lives the author admired and thought worthy of recording for posterity. These men include a Greek priest, a wool-beater from the Black Sea region, an Armenian maker of shoe-shine boxes, a Greek lobster hunter, and a Greek builder. Outwardly these men lead lives that are very different from each other. What they have in common is personal integrity and, despite their mature years, a vigour born of a drive to maintain the highest standards in their occupations. There is no suggestion that these men are saintly, but their human weaknesses are perceived to be no more than idiosyncrasies. The priest's predilection for wine and young girls and the wool-

beater's terror of death are accepted without censure, as are the lobster-hunter's squalid living conditions and the builder's taciturn nature.

There is recognition of the value of a humble man like the *Karadenizli* wool-beater in "Hallaç" (*Mahalle Kahvesi*) who has worked hard all his life knowing neither ill-health nor fatigue until his death at the age of seventy-eight. The narrator observes the grief of the family, and interprets their decision to continue in the old man's trade as a gesture of love and respect which gives a dignity to the old man's life.

Apostol Efendi, the Greek lobster hunter in "Ağıt" (*Son Kuşlar*), dies completely alone, having spent most of his seventy-five years putting foul-smelling goat meat into lobster nets in order to attract a catch. Although his occupation is considered lowly, he always executed his tasks in a manner that was both efficient and in harmony with nature. He had told the narrator that he thought a fisherman's shroud should be his nets, and he died wrapped in his own lobster nets. The narrator writes with regret that Apostol's relatives ignored the old man's wishes by removing the nets and making conventional arrangements for his funeral.

The next two characters were craftsmen who had developed their skills to a level of true artistry. In "Gün Ola Harman Ola" (*Son Kuşlar*) the author is uncertain as to whether it was Mercan Usta or his wife who was Armenian, but stipulates firmly that whatever his ethnic background he was an Istanbul Turk who spoke the Turkish language well. He is described as a man with the gruff manner of one who was confident in his art, and had a heart of gold. Like Apostol efendi, his existence was in tune with the natural environment. He decorated his shoe-shine boxes so exquisitely that they were individual works of art. When a young lad asked to have a scene of nature and the words "Let there be day and let there be forests" (*Gün Ola Orman Ola*) painted on his box, Mercan Usta carefully positioned the words in a place where they would never be obliterated by a human shoe.

"Barba Antimos" (*Son Kuşlar*) was a builder on one of the Princes' islands who lived well into his eighties. The narrator muses on the idea that Barba Antimos had built his life-story into walls, houses, and cisterns all over the island. His walls were

not fancy in style, but “modest like those of two thousand years ago which were built around a simple philosophy, a love story, a Greek God, or built as protection for a hero fighting against injustice. Every wall he built immediately assumed an appearance of antiquity.”<sup>55</sup> When he was suddenly taken ill and had to stop working, the people of the island gradually forgot the important role he had in the building of their lives. As his life neared its end he seemed to develop an understanding of what it all meant. The narrator hints at terrible tragedies in his life, which had been built into the fabric of his walls: “The walls that he built exactly forty years before probably contained the biggest of his great, bitter, unrepeatable secrets. Some evenings, when I leaned against them I could feel them shuddering violently within.”<sup>56</sup>

Perhaps the greatest accolade is given to the priest in “Papaz Efendi,” (*Lüzümsüz Adam*) who proclaimed to the narrator that he was neither priest nor philosopher, but a human being without land, property, family or religion. Papaz efendi explained that it was his belief that God intended man to live life to the full, to enjoy everything that earth offers. Despite his priesthood, he admitted to having tasted all worldly pleasures except gambling. His beliefs appeared more pagan than Orthodox Christian from the way he regarded the earth as the source of all riches with its “smell, colour, minerals, vitamins, metals, phosphorous, arsenic etc.”<sup>57</sup> For him the earth, or life force, was essentially female in nature while the sun, water and weather constituted the male elements of life. However the priest explained that he was able to reconcile the Orthodox religion with his own personal beliefs by substituting the word ‘earth’ for ‘Jesus and God’ when he prayed. He was greatly saddened that people felt the need to gossip about his ‘eccentricities’ since he wanted no more than to work the soil and delight in the company of young girls. When he became ill with cirrhosis of the liver (like the author), the priest expressed a philosophical belief that his illness was not a result of his lifestyle, but that his life was merely reaching its natural conclusion. In the end he predicted the exact date of his own death.

---

<sup>55</sup> Sait Faik, “Barba Antimos,” *Son Kuşlar*, 201-202.

<sup>56</sup> Sait Faik, “Barba Antimos,” *Son Kuşlar*, 203.

<sup>57</sup> Sait Faik, “Papaz Efendi,” *Lüzümsüz Adam*, 196.

The Greek priest, builder and lobster hunter, the Armenian craftsman, the Levantine beggar and would-be scientist, despite their different occupations and ethnic backgrounds, are all members of a timeless Istanbul culture that has continually absorbed newcomers whatever their ethnic or religious roots.

### **Female Minority Characters**

Although few of Sait Faik's female characters have romantic roles, women have important if, for the most part, secondary roles to play. It is also notable that more than half of his females are from ethnic minority communities, and that they stand out as colourful characters compared to most of his Turkish female characters. However, the author does not use his non-Turkish female characters to lead the interest of his readers into different ethnic communities, but presents them as a contrast to the women of mainstream Turkish society. Many of his ethnic minority female characters are living on the margins of their own cultural group, often as prostitutes. The Turkish males who seek their company are either alienated from conventional Turkish society, or have an occasional need to stray for one reason or another.

Warm domestic scenes such as that in "Semaver" (*Semaver*) and even the bigamous household in "Babamın İkinci Evi" (*Semaver*), are set in familiar Turkish households. By contrast, in "Plajdaki Ayna," (*Mahalle Kahvesi*) in which a mother/son relationship becomes warped by poverty and betrayal, the author finds it necessary to slip in the fact that the woman's face is Tatar-like or 'Tatarımsı'. Her 'foreign' looking face perhaps makes her maternal negligence more readily acceptable to readers than if she were portrayed as an inadequate Turkish mother. Similarly in "Havada Bulut" (*Havada Bulut*), the exploitative greedy and vain nature of Yorgiya's mother is made more credible to readers by her belonging to 'another' (Greek) culture.

Married women feature in a number of works and can be divided into approximately three groups. The first group is small and only relevant here in that they give clues as to why conventional marriage had little attraction for the author.<sup>58</sup> They are Turkish wives whose simple-mindedness or bourgeois aspirations have

---

<sup>58</sup> See Sait Faik, "Kıskançlık," *Semaver*, and "Sarıç," *Sarıç*.

disappointed the narrator and ended in marriage failure. Subsequently, the author shows little interest in marital relations between Turks, with the exception of “Kaçamak, Karabiber, Papağan” (*Lüzümsüz Adam*) when the Turkish couple break with convention by choosing to move to a multi-ethnic district. The second type includes Caucasian or Balkan immigrant wives who disturb local society with their ‘foreign’ and seemingly forward behaviour, such as the young Bosnian wife in “Lohusa” (*Sarnıç*), and the Rumanian wife in “Sakarya Balıkçısı” (*Mahalle Kahvesi*) mentioned earlier. A Circassian wife in “Hancının Karısı” (*Sarnıç*) also comes into this category, since although she offers no more than normal hospitality to the narrator, his perception of her behaviour leads him to half-expect a nocturnal visit from her.

The third group is comprised of a number of non-Turkish wives who, when their husbands are absent or disappoint, openly complain or seek alternative male company. This theme first appears in “Kış Akşamı, Maşa ve Sandalye” (*Mahalle Kahvesi*), which is a fantasy created out of domestic images in which a passionate Gypsy woman taunts her husband relentlessly in her attempts to arouse his desire. Another wife to seek sexual gratification is Sultana in “Bir Define Arayıcısı” (*Şahmerdan*). Sultana, whose ethnic background is not identified, converses mostly in Turkish but when she describes how, in her husband’s absence, she would select good looking men for her own pleasure, she speaks in Greek. This change of language suggests that either she herself feels uncomfortable discussing such matters in Turkish, or that she would only expect a cosmopolitan bilingual type to understand her behaviour. Either case emphasises the social unacceptability of such characters in Turkish society. A similar situation occurs in “Öyle Bir Hikâye” (*Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*), where a Jewish woman invites a Turkish carriage-driver to keep her company when her husband is away. Still in the same vein, the Greek bride in “Yandan Çarklı” (*Son Kuşlar*) is observed enjoying the company of her male fellow passengers during her lone voyage to meet her future husband.

The question arises as to whether the author thought such uninhibited behaviour in Turkish wives was unacceptable to his readers, or whether his choice of ethnic



minority characters merely reflected reality at a time when the lives of non-Turkish women were less restricted than those of their Turkish counterparts, and were consequently open to misunderstanding by Turkish society.<sup>59</sup>

Among the numerous females who appear as prostitutes, only two are presented as wholly Turkish.<sup>60</sup> Most are Greek, but there are also Jewish and Gypsy women as well as the 'Tatarımsı' woman mentioned above. The author does not write about these women with anger or disgust, nor does he adopt a patronising attitude. There is a mixture of concern and fascination combined with sympathy for the personal suffering of individuals who are forced into prostitution. These women are portrayed as victims of circumstance who are struggling to survive in any way they can.

Sait Faik's fascination with prostitutes is a complex issue. As a man with homosexual preferences, he shared with these women an acceptance that his life-style involved socially unacceptable behaviour. He also understood only too well the compulsion that drives certain men to seek the company of prostitutes. However because he himself did not harbour any physical desires for these women he was able to write about them with a friendly compassion untainted by conventional pity or scorn. One recurrent theme is the indifference of such women towards their clients, which was at variance with popular male fantasy. Another is the interdependence between prostitute and client, when they both sacrifice self-respect in order to satisfy needs they cannot acknowledge openly. The men need women for illicit sexual gratification, and the women need the men for the money they provide. This money, which may initially be for the basic essentials of life such as supporting a parent or child, often becomes the means of enjoying a few small luxuries later on.

Women who treated sex as a commodity, who knew how to attract clients, who sought pleasure in bars and cafes, were outside the accepted perception of Turkish womanhood at the time. Early twentieth century literature had presented females in

---

<sup>59</sup> Exceptions are the Turkish heroines in "Bayan Gülseren" *Havuz Başı*, and the novel *Kayıp Araniyor*.

<sup>60</sup> These are namely Dilber in "Park," *Sarıç*, and the young girl from Kırşehir in "Ayten," *Lüzümsüz Adam*.

Turkish society in a limited number of predictable situations such as the tragic victim of circumstances, the decorative but modest romantic figure, the virtuous matriarch, or as the emancipated heroine dedicating her life to altruistic causes. Sait Faik had little interest in such well-used character types, yet to have portrayed sort of female characters which interested him as Turkish would have been unacceptable to his readers. He therefore made use of the popular Turkish perception of non-Muslim, Balkan or Caucasian women to create lively independent-minded females who, if necessary, were prepared to use the only capital at their disposal, namely their bodies. In doing so, the author unobtrusively introduced a new feminist element into Turkish literature that was later taken up and developed by female authors such as Füzûnâ and Pınar Kür.

In an early story, the narrator even teaches a young girl the art of love-making so that she can escape from her abusive parents and fend for herself.<sup>61</sup> At no point does the author romanticise such a way of life, but he does not judge or condemn it. Consequently, when Zehra in “Beyaz Pantolon” (*Şahmerdan*) begins entertaining men for extra money, disapproval is not directed at the girl, but is reserved for the male characters who fight over the spoils. Likewise, the ‘Tatarımsı’ woman mentioned earlier is not criticised for the act of selling herself, but the narrator holds both her and himself accountable for the devastating effect their behaviour has on her son.

The portrayal of a young Greek prostitute, Yorgiya, who is the focus of the narrator’s obsession in the collection entitled *Havada Bulut*, is full of inconsistencies in her character which varies from innocent victim to cynical manipulator in an unconvincing manner. Her character is not well drawn and her presence is mostly a focus point for the moods and emotions of the narrator, with the exception of the second story, “Havada Bulut,” which relates how Yorgiya descends into prostitution. However, the author introduces other colourful yet tragic characters into this collection. As mentioned earlier, by giving them ethnic minority identities, the author is able to explore personal characteristics that would otherwise have been unacceptable.

---

<sup>61</sup> See Sait Faik, “Marsilya Limanı,” *Sarıç*.

Katina, the lesbian prostitute in “Eleni ile Katina” (*Havada Bulut*) is one of these characters. Through this Greek female prostitute, Sait Faik finds a means of opening up the complex and taboo subject of homosexual love. Even though Katina’s life is very brief, as is the story, the reader is given sufficient information to form a detailed picture of her entire life. Katina appears to be an intelligent woman who is capable of success in the underworld she inhabits. Her indifference to male opinion gives her a strength that is unfortunately more than counterbalanced by the force of her emotional distress following the death of her child, and later the desertion by her female lover Eleni. This double tragedy affects the health of Katina and she dies of tuberculosis within two months at the age of twenty.

The character of Katina is used in two ways. Firstly, it relates the sort of personal circumstance and tragedy that underlie what is often perceived to be the careless and carefree lifestyle of prostitutes, many of whom disappear without trace. Secondly, it expresses aspects of the author’s own character. Apart from the obvious difference in gender, the lives of Katina and the author have a number of features in common, namely their beauty and attractiveness in youth, their indifference towards conventional society, their feelings of elation and rejuvenation in the context of a homosexual relationship coupled with the destructive effect of rejection, their love of children, and lastly the early onset of a fatal illness. These correlations suggest that the author may have used Katina as a vehicle for conveying his own personal tragedy.

Women with an independent spirit are written about by Sait Faik with respect and approval, and are mostly non-Turkish. A few of these characters remain rather mysterious with vague European links, and are outside the scope of this study. Others are portrayed in some detail, and share a tom-boyish quality, such as Armenian Janet in “Plaj İnsanları” (*Sarnıç*) and Greek Eftehia in “Kaşıkadası’nda” (*Şahmerdan*).

Janet is described as the daughter of Istanbul Roman Catholic Armenians, whose energy and beauty captivates the local youths. Having spent four years in Paris with her parents, she has adopted European ways and exploits her Parisian background among the socially ambitious youth of Istanbul, a type wholly disliked by the narrator.

Janet has a Turkish girlfriend, who is well-educated and well-mannered, yet has fallen prey to the common idea that all things European are superior to their Turkish counterparts, and who longs to be able to converse intimately in French with male contemporaries and to participate in outdoor activities. Although the Turkish girl has an open mind and an honourable character, she is described rather strangely as ‘animal-like’ as if there is some deficiency in her personality.

An incident in which a youth is saved from drowning by a local boatman, triggers different reactions in the two friends. The Turkish girl clearly recognises the bravery of the boatman but after establishing that he has been offered a reward, she walks away. In contrast, Janet reacts to the situation with spontaneity and warmth:

She suddenly ran up to the boatman in an American-like way. She stopped in front of the boatman who had rescued the child, then threw her arms around his neck. She bent his head towards her and kissed him noisily on his bearded face.<sup>62</sup>

After this incident, Janet abandons her sophisticated circle of friends for the companionship of a motley group of individuals which includes “a fisherman and a dancer, French speakers and Turkish provincials, a boatman and a reader of poetry, and occasionally a guitar player from the German school.”<sup>63</sup> In other words, like the author, she abandons her own social class in pursuit of human integrity and genuine friendship.

The description in “Kaşıkadası’nda” (*Şahmerdan*) of the adolescent Eftehia refers to her athleticism and active lifestyle. These are attributes which are never found in Turkish heroines, yet they are perceived as provocative and attractive by Turkish youths. She is described as having a lively, typically Greek face that is neither beautiful nor ugly, a slim body, and long straight legs that arouse wild desires in her male contemporaries when she dons her navy-blue swimsuit. The author writes: “she had

---

<sup>62</sup> Sait Faik, “Plaj İnsanları,” *Sarıç*, 233.

<sup>63</sup> Sait Faik, “Plaj İnsanları,” *Sarıç*, 233-234.

legs that were ready to come alight like yellow church candles .... sharp teeth that were as white as fresh walnuts, and hands that were waiting to be kissed.”<sup>64</sup>

Earthy metaphors are used to describe how she willingly surrenders herself to (Turkish) Yakup after becoming drunk on the taste of ripe blackberries and the honeyed scent of red-flowering heather. But, when rich ‘white-trousered’ adolescents arrive on the island, Eftehia quietly and masterfully abandons Yakup with his heavy grey clothes. Eftehia is one of the author’s first female characters to unashamedly enjoy sensual pleasures and to make positive decisions about her own life.

Traces of both Janet and Eftehia can be seen in Nevin, the female protagonist in *Kayıp Aranıyor* which is the author’s second full-length novel, published near the end of his life in 1953. Ethnic identity is not a feature of the novel and therefore a study of its heroine is not appropriate here, but it is nevertheless interesting to observe that several of Nevin’s character traits have previously appeared in his minority characters. It is also perhaps legitimate to surmise that the ease with which the author defines the character of Nevin suggests that he used her to express aspects of his own character.

### **Minorities as Projections of Romantic Images**

There is no doubt that Sait Faik was a romantic, but defining the nature of his desires is not straightforward. Beauty of body and soul is what he repeatedly seeks, yet he does not restrict himself to conventional manifestations of beauty. He searches for these qualities in individuals of either gender and of all age-groups, though there is little doubt that his preference is for youth, and that the search for love is mostly pursued outside his own ethnic and social circle.

Since the author scarcely differentiates between genders in his expression of romantic feelings and since it can be supposed that in some cases he has altered the sex of his characters in order to avoid legal transgression, this section makes no divisions according to gender. Instead, romantic figures will be traced as they appear and develop through the course of the author’s work.

---

<sup>64</sup> Sait Faik, “Kaşıkadası’nda,” *Şahmerdan*, 30. This story is also featured as an episode in *Medari Maişet Motoru*. The wording is almost identical, except that in the novel her teeth are compared to the inner flesh of corn, see page 52.

In his early volumes, Sait Faik seldom indulged in romantic trains of thought. “İpekli Mendil” (*Semaver*) and “Düğün Gecesi” (*Semaver*) are touching love stories, but the narrator remains a detached observer whose attention is focused mainly on the behaviour of the male protagonists. “Kıskançlık” (*Semaver*) and “Sarnıç” (*Sarnıç*), which are about dysfunctional marriages, express despair at the absence of romance in the life of the narrator. However some stories in these first volumes contain, or hint at, romantic figures that are used and developed in later works, such as the independent-minded female, the vulnerable good-looking male youth, and the colourful uninhibited Gypsy girl.

For instance there is the shadowy female figure in “Meserret Oteli” (*Semaver*) and the equally mysterious woman in “Bir Kadın” (*Semaver*) who waits to comfort a newly released political prisoner.<sup>65</sup> They are both generous and independent in spirit, full of human understanding, and are able to act on their beliefs. They seem to appeal to the author in the same way as Janet, the Armenian girl mentioned earlier.

A demonised version of uninhibited female behaviour appears in “Şehri Unutan Adam” (*Semaver*), which is the first story to suggest a paranoid dysfunctional aspect in the narrator’s character. The sight of two well-spoken Frankish (*Frenk*) girls with their sunburnt, freckled faces and their happy laughing disposition is a source of torment to the narrator whom the girls tease and finally dismiss as a harmless madman.

In contrast to the discomfort felt in the company of the Frankish girls, the narrator’s descriptions of his encounters with young boys and adolescent youths are fluent and articulate, if at times heavy with suppressed emotion. “Üçüncü Mevki” (*Semaver*) starts with a straightforward observation of ethnic and social diversity among passengers on a train journey, and ends with a fleeting reference to an encounter with a small boy which has an unexplained sinister tone. The narrator relates quite simply that after most of the passengers have either left the train or fallen asleep, he makes his way to the saloon where he sees a sleeping child. He returns to his

---

<sup>65</sup> The ethnic identity of these women is not made clear.

compartment feeling affected by the innocence of this child. He then adds, strangely that “this childish innocence spreads through his veins, but he sleeps as if poisoned.”<sup>66</sup>

The vulnerability of innocence is a recurring theme. In “Gece İşi” (*Sarnıç*) there are suggestions of transsexuality and homosexual prostitution which are condoned if not practised by people in the multi-ethnic underworld that is the setting for this story. When a good-looking young newcomer arrives, attempts are immediately made to entice him into the world of vice. Speaking with a *Karadenizli* accent, this dark curly-haired youth named Karayel resists such overtures, insisting that he has fought many times to preserve his honour. Despite his brave attitude, Karayel’s youth and solitariness make him a target for lesser but older men, who wish to draw him into their murky world. The way in which Karayel is portrayed as a vulnerable innocent, who is confronted with evil, puts him in a position which is more commonly associated with female roles in literature.

“Park,” (*Sarnıç*) is the only story about homosexuality that contains no references to minorities. Rather untypically, the author puts this story firmly in the third person and assumes the role of detached observer. This story about a man’s involvement with a young military officer lacks Sait Faik’s usual sympathy and understanding. It is written with, for Sait Faik, unusual objectivity about the fear of discovery and loss of respectability, and about the dread of punishment, and suggests that the author was indeed more at ease writing about controversial topics of this nature in a multicultural or non-Turkish setting.

The author writes with sensitivity about the feelings between adolescent youths in “Kaşıkadası’nda” (*Şahmerdan*), a tale about the transition from childhood innocence to the complexities of puberty. The narrator remembers Odisya, a Greek friend from his youth, who is introduced in an almost adulatory manner. He is an uneducated gardener’s son, an excellent fisherman, oarsman and swimmer with an unsurpassed knowledge of the Marmara islands. He also has a beautiful singing voice and an infectious laugh. His slight personality flaws, such as sudden mood swings and a

---

<sup>66</sup> Sait Faik, “Üçüncü Mevki,” *Semaver*, 75.

craving for attention, expose a vulnerability which the narrator finds endearing. Odisya reacts to any display of affection by taking on heroic challenges, yet even the slightest threat from another person makes him turn pale and become confused.

The narrator describes an encounter during one of their island games when Odisya is pretending to be a Portuguese sailor taking shelter in a derelict building:

We knocked at the door. Odisya opened it, he was alone with the dog. He had made a crown of leaves for his head. With his bare feet, his sunburnt chest, his blue eyes, his small thin face and his striped shirt he looked . . . like a Portuguese sailor . . . . He was as wild and beautiful as a child pirate.<sup>67</sup>

Although “Kaşıkadası’nda” is a story about boyhood, a time when romance normally stands for active adventures, there is little doubt that there is an adolescent aspect to the way in which the narrator is captivated by Odisya. He recounts some moments of shared intimacy that occur with Odisya during a night-time game. There is a point when he reaches out to touch the boy’s hand and Odisya unexpectedly puts his head on the narrator’s shoulder, confiding that his greatest desire is to be able to read. The boy falls asleep but the narrator remains in a semi-dream state, musing on Odisya’s life, home and family, and has the strange sensation of entering into Odisya’s own personal consciousness. The feeling of intense closeness prompts the narrator to bend down and kiss the sleeping Odisya, after which he runs out towards a hut where he peeps through a window and sees a young couple making love. The juxtaposition of images conveys the confused thoughts and emotions that fill the mind of the narrator during his last summer of childhood.

By the next summer the spell is broken. Odisya’s voice has lost its clarity and the maturing features of his face are beginning to expose the flaws in his character. Mannerisms, which had been charming the previous year, now seem ugly and vulgar. The changes that have taken place, both in Odisya and in the narrator, are analysed at

---

<sup>67</sup> Sait Faik, “Kaşıkadası’nda,” *Şahmerdan*, 25.



considerable length, and the narrator is left wondering with distaste how he could have kissed the boy only a year ago.

Clearly this story was of considerable significance to the author because he engineered its inclusion in the novel *Medarı Maişet Motoru* where it does not lie easily, but nevertheless stands out as a superbly written episode.

Another type of romantic figure to occur in the author's early work is found in "Beyaz Pantalon" (*Şahmerdan*) in the character of Zehra. The author describes her with the kind of appreciation he usually reserved for good-looking males or for the tom-boyish females mentioned earlier. With her clear voice, her repertoire of songs and her athletic energy, she retains her charisma even after she sells her favours to some local men. The ugly aspects of the story do not harm her but they destroy the male characters who exploit her.

There were two significant stages in the middle period of Sait Faik's writing career. The first was the emergence from his extended period of retreat, the second was his return from Paris and the grim knowledge that his life was nearing its end. In the first stage his reluctance to provoke legal interference or disapproval may be observed in his careful handling of romance, while in the second stage his freedom of expression indicates the diminishing importance to the author of social or official approval. In the volumes *Lüzümsüz Adam* and *Mahalle Kahvesi*, he cautiously avoids suggestions of romantic feelings for, or between, males, whereas in *Havada Bulut* and *Son Kuşlar* suggestions of homosexuality and bisexuality start to reappear. Throughout this period, most of the romantic figures are ethnic minority characters.

The manner in which romantic figures are portrayed in the middle period is of less importance than the effect they have on the narrator. The personal development of the narrator is traced through his expression of emotions and feelings for individuals, who are often very sketchily drawn. Character types include further examples of the Gypsy temptress, a Greek madonna-like figure, a prostitute figure who remains uninvolved with the narrator but who brings out an unhealthy obsessive side of his personality, and male figures.

Mürtüvvet appears only briefly at the opening of the story bearing her name (“Mürtüvvet” *Lüzümsüz Adam*) yet her presence, which brightens up an otherwise unremarkable situation, is the cause of the story being told. The narrator remarks on her ability to create an instant theatrical effect with her provocative swinging walk and her dark sultry eyes. Gypsy girls, together with Greek girls, are brought into “On Milyonerlerle On Metresi” (*Havuz Başı*) for the purpose of amusing ten millionaires and their mistresses on a private estate. The girls are neither described nor individualised. They are merely referred to as “thirty Greek and Gypsy girls,”<sup>68</sup> as if their number and ethnicity were enough to brighten up the lives of this wealthy but emotionally starved community. In a single sentence the narrator creates a brief sensual vision in “Sur Dışında Hayat” (*Havuz Başı*). As he walks through a Gypsy settlement and hears music coming from one of the tents, he observes “a love-sick girl saunter by with swinging hips, lips that are moist, soft and full, skin that is the colour of wheat, and glances that reflect her womanhood . . .”<sup>69</sup>

One truly romantic figure, quite different from all the other examples, is a young Greek girl observed on a boat journey to the island of Kınalıada. This story, “Kınalıada’da Bir Ev” (*Mahalle Kahvesi*), is a fantasy based on his notion of how life might be with this girl in her home environment. Because it is fantasy and because she is Greek, the narrator feels no need to mention marriage, but the details of daily life that play on his imagination suggest that this is the author’s final expression of his search for an ‘ordinary’ female partner. In fact the Greek girl, who is described as “a calm, quiet and good girl”<sup>70</sup> is not unlike the maligned Turkish wife of the failed marriage in “Kıskançlık” (*Semaver*). However in the imagined home of this Greek girl, the domestic routine of her Orthodox Christian family retains his interest and he remains charmed by the girl’s healthy appearance, her ability to eat without distorting her face, and her cheerful patter of simple conversation which makes the narrator long to understand her language. This is the only occurrence in Sait Faik’s work of a female

---

<sup>68</sup> Sait Faik, “On Milyonerlerle on Metresi,” *Havuz Başı*, 70.

<sup>69</sup> Sait Faik, “Sur Dışında Hayat” *Havuz Başı*, 104.

<sup>70</sup> Sait Faik, “Kınalıada’da Bir Ev,” *Mahalle Kahvesi*, 64.

figure who is totally feminine, pure, and desirable. Yet this desirability stems from the narrator's perception of her as an almost spiritual being, whose 'otherness', that is her different culture and language, precludes the need for normal human communication and interaction.

A darker aspect of the narrator's longing for intimacy, without the tedium of everyday social expectations and responsibilities, is observed in his obsessive pursuit of prostitute figures. The paranoia that began in "Şehri Unutan Adam" (*Semaver*) is further explored in "Lüzümsüz Adam" (*Lüzümsüz Adam*) and in some of the stories in *Havada Bulut*.

In "Lüzümsüz Adam," the narrator is obsessed with a young Jewish woman. The story describes the narrator's neurotic state in considerable detail. Having recently emerged from seven years of retreat, he is attempting to live in the city once again. In the manner of certain neurotics he maintains a regular, if unhealthy, routine. Every day at the same time he leaves his room and heads straight for the street in the Jewish quarter where the young woman lives. She is never given a name, nor is there any suggestion that any relationship exists between them. The narrator's obsession is based solely on his imagination and his passing observations:

In one of the houses here, there was a flighty young Jewish girl with regular features, - apart from a defect in one eye, but no matter! - with hands plump enough to balance a nut on top as the old wives used to say, and a large bosom with a slightly grubby dark cleavage showing at the opening of her gown. She would sit sewing at an open window. Sometimes she would stand outside her door, gazing for hours on end, chatting to anyone who passed by. She had thick sturdy legs. Jewish brunettes have quite a different type of beauty . . .<sup>71</sup>

Merely to set eyes on this woman, the narrator braves the stares and jibes of local dwellers. At the same time he is continually observing his own state of mind which becomes highly disturbed as he approaches her street, and then gradually calms

---

<sup>71</sup> Sait Faik, "Lüzümsüz Adam," *Lüzümsüz Adam*, 128.

down as he returns towards his own neighbourhood. His aspirations towards this woman amount to no more than the hope of “being able to kiss her legs just once in his life,”<sup>72</sup> and later, to take her as his mistress for a year after which he would put an end to his life by slipping quietly into the Bosphorus.

The young Greek woman, Yorgiya, in *Havada Bulut* plays a similar role in the narrator’s life, but this time her character and circumstances are more fully presented. As a child she has a natural innocence and an imaginative mind that is informed at a young age by the vulgar society in which she lives, yet she retains a certain degree of innocence or naivete. The narrator relates how she would disregard the comments of neighbours and go to the cinema with anybody who would take her, demonstrating a free spirit reminiscent of Janet and Eftehia. When she rejects the offer of a comfortable marriage because she refuses to leave her shallow-minded materialistic mother, she is perceived to have integrity. The narrator, a man of thirty-five, is having his first affair with Yorgiya who until then was supposedly a virgin, and who shows no interest in him. In Yorgiya, the author attempts to create a complex female character by combining features that he has used separately in earlier female roles. These features include innocence, freedom from social restraints, integrity, loyalty, an appreciation of spiritual generosity, a disdain for materialistic values, an apparent indifference to male feelings and opinions, and an Orthodox Christian upbringing. The characterisation is weakened by poor links between the different stages of Yorgiya’s life and inconsistencies in her personality. These inconsistencies are unimportant if the stories are read individually, but when read as a novel, or as a collection of inter-related stories, they diminish its overall effect. However in the novel *Kayıp Aranıyor*, which was published two years later, the author was more successful in bringing together a number of these attributes to forge the complex character of its heroine Nevin.

Throughout *Havada Bulut* the reader is constantly reminded of the seedy and tawdry environment in which the narrator finds himself. After a passage in which he

---

<sup>72</sup> Sait Faik, “Lüzümsüz Adam,” *Lüzümsüz Adam*, 128.

fantasises about an ideal existence with Yorgiya, he follows with a description of the reality:

Each morning I wake up in a city full of lice, where nobody respects anyone or regards anyone to be worthy of respect, where the wealthy and fortunate are exploited and robbed, where tradesmen are fierce and undisciplined, where the rich are mad, greedy, egoistic and cruel, and where the poor are indifferent and confused; the worst part is that I wake up in a dingy bed without you. But my darling, think of the future, I have great dreams.<sup>73</sup>

The theme of dreaming about the perfect union while living in sordid surroundings recurs in the author's late works, and indicates the degree to which he distanced himself from reality where human relationships were concerned.

The first hint of any romantic feelings for males in the middle period is no more than a fleeting memory of a schoolboy crush.<sup>74</sup> This is followed by the outrageous appearance of İstepan, "whose voice and manner give the impression of a woman rather than a man,"<sup>75</sup> and who seeks to capture the attention of the narrator with his suggestive renderings of old-fashioned songs.

Characters from the Greek island of Imroz are featured in two stories, namely *Yaşayacak* (*Son Kuşlar*) and "Dondurmacının Çırağı" (*Son Kuşlar*). Superficially, these stories have little in common, since the first is about a fishing expedition and the other concerns the narrator's friendship with an ice-cream seller's young assistant, but in his descriptions of both these characters, the author makes lyrical references to their classical Greek heritage.

A disturbing mood is set in the opening lines of "Dondurmacının Çırağı" (*Son Kuşlar*) when the narrator remarks that he has fallen out with most of his neighbours because they disapprove of his friendships with young boys and keep spreading rumours about him. The narrator develops an obsession for the exceptionally beautiful

---

<sup>73</sup> Sait Faik, "Büyük Hülyalar Kuralım," *Havada Bulut*, 183.

<sup>74</sup> See Sait Faik, "Büyük Hülyalar Kuralım", *Havada Bulut*, 180.

<sup>75</sup> Sait Faik, "Karidesçinin Evi", *Havada Bulut*, 185.

Todori and gives him money just to listen to him speaking in his own language, an ancient form of Greek. A long one-sided imaginary conversation follows during which the narrator fantasises about the boy's family and village on Imroz, and imagines that, like the fisherman in "Yaşayacak" (*Son Kuşlar*) Todori had arrived from the world of ancient Greek demigods.

Although there is no hint of impropriety in this story, the narrator is honest enough not to suggest that his interest in the boy is totally altruistic. It is the narrator who wants to spend time with the boy, not the reverse. When the narrator offers Todori money for his company during his few free hours the boy cannot refuse, and the picture that emerges has an uneasy quality. It is one of a middle-aged man paying for and enjoying the company of a beautiful young boy, in other words, using his age and wealth to exercise power over a child. When the narrator provides the boy with the fare to his island, it is done with the best of intentions, but a suspicion lingers that it is may also have been done to assuage a slight feeling of guilt.

The stories that appear in the last year of the author's life express his true feelings and desires with considerably more daring than his earlier works. However his venture into a surrealist style of writing made the meaning of these stories obscure to any but the most sophisticated of his contemporaries. He relies even less than before on physical detail, but builds up scenarios by piling image upon image to create a world where the normal boundaries between plant, animal and human life are blurred. Sometimes the rational mind can make sense of these images, at other times it seems foolish to attempt to do so. In fact, like the best of surrealist paintings, such stories create an atmosphere so strong that facts and details are unnecessary. The three types of romantic figures in this period include the exotic female, the alter-ego figure named Panco, and a beautiful Greek youth.

Among these late stories there is one final fantasy about exotic women in "Rıza Milyon-er" (*Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*). In a way that is reminiscent of earlier works, Rıza dreams of being able to summon a harem of women that includes "A blue-eyed, fair-haired Bosnian; a dark-haired, clover-smelling Gypsy from Serez with languid-

eyes . . . A small-waisted Circassian. A Georgian with slanting almond-shaped eyes and firm body . . .<sup>76</sup>

The first four stories of *Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan* feature a figure named Panco who serves sometimes as the narrator's confidant, sometimes as his alter-ego. He is the one to whom all the narrator's thoughts are directed, to whom the narrator is answerable on all matters, and from whom he is unable to conceal anything. In "Öyle Bir Hikâye" (*Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*), Panco represents morality in the narrator's conscience. The narrator pointedly refers to this morality as a Christian morality, perhaps once again to deflect the disapproval of Muslim society. In defending a liaison about which he thinks Panco will disapprove the narrator states:

We shall have a morality that has not yet been written about. It will be a morality which will view our thoughts and actions of the past and future with admiration. Then, my pop-eyed friend, our friendship will last longer. Never fear. My friend Panco will concede that I am right. He won't mention Christian morality. He'll tell his children about the extraordinary beauty of friendship.<sup>77</sup>

Panco's role becomes more confused in "Yalnızlığın Yarattığı İnsan" (*Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*). The narrator is sharp with Panco, who retains his role as the narrator's alter-ego. When they are apart he yearns for Panco, as if Panco represents the true essence of his own life, a life that is rapidly slipping away. In "Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan" (*Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*) Panco plays a secondary, if capricious role, while in "Panco'nun Rüyası", he is the central character. There is no longer any suggestion of his being Greek or even Christian. He has now become a familiar abstract figure, an expression of the narrator's innermost feelings.

"Kafa ve Şişe" (*Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*) has a setting and characters similar to the early work "Gece İşi," (*Sarnıç*) but there is a distinct difference in style. Whereas the tension in the earlier work was built up with the use of innuendo and dark

---

<sup>76</sup> Sait Faik, "Rıza Milyon-er", *Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*, 52.

<sup>77</sup> Sait Faik, "Öyle Bir Hikâye", *Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*, 17.

insinuations, the tension in this later work is created by juxtaposing 'unreal' or imaginary characters with 'real' characters in the same setting. The narrator can trust the imaginary characters whom he is able to control whereas he finds that the 'real' characters behave and react in unpredictable or violent ways.

Using the cloak of surrealism and the ambiguity of gender in Turkish pronouns, the author fantasises about an ideal companion:

"Is it a woman or a boy, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, old? He/she is whatever I decide. Sometimes he/she is a simply dressed woman without make-up who makes brilliant conversation. Sometimes it is a beautiful youth of sixteen or seventeen. He is more or less uneducated. He is a decorator. He is a Christian. He has coal-black eyes. When he smiles he has a supernatural quality. I never tire of looking at him."<sup>78</sup>

In "Yani Usta" (*Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*) the narrator describes with clarity the type of friendship he has been seeking throughout his life, and articulates clearly why these friendships are always doomed to failure. Yani, a beautiful Greek fifteen year old uneducated youth with a hunger for life and knowledge, used to welcome the attentions of the narrator who was delighted to act as mentor. Unfortunately Yani wants their friendship to develop into an adult relationship in which he is treated as a friend and equal, whereas the narrator wants everything to remain unchanged. Once Yani becomes an 'ordinary' married man with 'normal' responsibilities, the narrator can no longer maintain the relationship because Yani has entered the very world in which he has always felt inadequate. The narrator states quite clearly that he still feels like a child inside and therefore prefers the company of children. With a subtle blend of childish pique and mature understanding, the narrator observes with wry amusement that Yani's hurtful behaviour exposes the very sort of childish quality that enables him to continue loving the young man.

In "Kalinikhta" (*Az Şekerli*), written in the same year, the year of the author's death, Yani appears once again. The work has no storyline, but consists of visual

---

<sup>78</sup> Sait Faik, "Kafa ve Şişe", *Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan*, 7, 82.



recollections and expressions of emotion and fantasy that are interweaved to form a poetic prose. In his mind the narrator calls out: "Yani, Yani boy! Hey Yani! Dark-haired Yani! Hey my dark-eyed friend Yani, grandson of Panayot the organ-grinder from Beykoz! Sing for me in Greek the song 'My Black Peppercorn' "<sup>79</sup> A disjointed series of imaginary scenes in Greece follows, in which Yani continues to serve as a focus for the narrator's yearnings and desire. There is nothing factual about the portrayal of Greece, it is there to represent another existence, another world. He uses Greece and its associated images in much the same way that European Romantic poets used the East, that is as an exotic land where man is unconstrained by social convention and allowed to give free rein to his most fantastic desires.

The varied nature of the minority characters that occur in Sait Faik's work indicates that the author was constantly aware of the different ethnic elements of the society in which he lived. His portrayal of society is probably an accurate representation of the places and situations selected by him for his fictional works. If his settings seem to have more minority characters than most Turks would normally encounter, that is a reflection of his lifestyle.

There is no obvious obsession with any particular minority group in his observations. Without being judgmental, the author expresses his affection and revulsion for people according to his own personal moral code which makes no distinctions on religious or ethnic grounds. He differs from other writers in the way he discovers human idiosyncrasies in all his characters, and at the same time shows how dependent people are on each other. Any social divisions in his works have come about because of reasons such as poverty, frustration, and jealousy.

Minority characters contribute to the value of Sait Faik's work in three ways. Firstly, he creates atmosphere by using ethnic minorities to bring colour and life to his Istanbul settings, and to help create a sense of mystery and decadence to whet the appetite of his readers. Secondly, with his cosmopolitan gallery of Istanbul characters he produces a literary documentation of a society that is on the verge of disappearing

---

<sup>79</sup> Sait Faik, "Kalinikhta," *Az Şekerli*, 159.

totally. There is a historical element wrapped in his perceptions of the daily experiences of ordinary people living in a city which is poised to break free from the past into a new era. Thirdly, he uses minority characters as a literary device to introduce permanent changes in the concepts of character. This is arguably one of Sait Faik's most important contributions to developments in Turkish literature. Although there had previously been considerable development in the content and style of fiction writing, until the publication of Sait Faik's work, most characters in Turkish fiction remained essentially two dimensional and not very far removed from the traditional stereotypes. Sait Faik used his minority figures to present questionable or controversial aspects of human behaviour, and in so doing, created characters with a new complexity and depth. Having established among his readership an acceptance of, and an interest in such characters, he made it possible for subsequent writers to incorporate further complexities into their portrayals of the social fabric of contemporary life in Turkey. At a time when the old multicultural aspect of Istanbul society had almost disappeared, Sait Faik drew on it to create a new individualist social diversity in literature which paved the way for subsequent writers to explore individualism within a homogeneous society.

### **Haldun Taner**

Haldun Taner (1916 -1986) began publishing his work a decade later than Sait Faik. Most of his short stories are also set in Istanbul, but his work is the product of a much more socially adept personality than the previous author. His father, Ahmet Selâhattin Bey, was a representative for Istanbul in the last Ottoman Chamber of Deputies and the first Professor of state law, serving for a while as Dean of the Law Faculty. He participated in the speeches at the 1919 meeting in Sultan Ahmet Square and was a signatory to the National Pact of 1920 (*Misak-i Milli*).<sup>80</sup>

Although Ahmet Selâhattin Bey died when Haldun Taner was only five years old, his professional discipline and judgment, and his fearless search for truth left a deep and lasting impression on his son.

---

<sup>80</sup> The National Pact was a manifesto adopted by the mainly nationalist Chamber in 1920. It was a proclamation of the aims of the resistance movement which remained unchanged throughout the War of Independence. See Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey : A Modern History*, 142.

Haldun Taner was born in 1916 in the Çemberlitaş district of Istanbul.<sup>81</sup> Despite a shortage of money, he received a good education as a scholarship pupil at Galatasaray School and grew up in a lively family environment. He learnt to appreciate French language and culture from a maternal uncle, and to love nature and sport from his grandfather. During this time he also developed a lasting interest in the theatre and cinema. In 1935 Haldun Taner went to Heidelberg to study Political Science, hoping to pursue a career in politics like his father. Three years later he was forced to return when he became ill with tuberculosis.

It was during his four year convalescence that Haldun Taner began writing, at first for the radio and, in 1946, for literary magazines such as *Yedigün* and *Varlık* under the name of Haldun Yağcıoğlu. It was not until 1949 that he published his first collection of short stories, *Yaşasın Demokrasi*, after which he wrote and published many more. However he retained his interest in writing for the theatre and in 1955, he left his post at the Faculty of Literature in Istanbul University to acquire a working knowledge of the theatre at the Vienna Theatre Institute. During his two and a half years in Vienna he learned about theatrical writing, acting and directing, and at the same time developed a passion for cabaret and satirical theatre. He believed that if he could create a new Turkish theatrical movement incorporating the traditional literary arts of Turkey such as *meddah*, *ortaoyunu*, *karagöz*, and *tuluat*, in much the same way that Brecht had drawn on the old theatrical traditions of Europe, the Far East, and ancient Greek comedy, it would be greatly welcomed by the public.<sup>82</sup> It will be seen that this idea was to influence his fiction writing as well.

On his return to Turkey, Haldun Taner became heavily involved with new theatrical developments in both Istanbul and Ankara, and for a period of eight years between 1956 and 1964 he wrote no fiction. However during this time he was active as an educator and a newspaper columnist. During the last fifteen years of his life he was

---

<sup>81</sup> For a detailed account of Haldun Taner's life, see Siddıka Yalçın, *Haldun Taner'in Hikâyeleri ve Hikâyeciliği*, 16-44.

<sup>82</sup> Haldun Taner's play *Keşanlı Ali Destanı* (1964) was written with this idea in mind. See article in *Cumhuriyet Gazetesi*, 14/05/1986 as quoted in Mahir Ünlü and Ömer Özcan, *20. Yüzyıl Türk Edebiyatı* 3, 435.

invited to participate in a number of international symposiums, and worked for the UNESCO cultural commission. Haldun Taner was married twice. He took marriage seriously, believing that the most essential element in any marriage was honesty.

Haldun Taner managed to incorporate most of the positive aspects of his rich and varied life into his work. In addition to personal experience and vision, he thought that to be a writer it was necessary to have good powers of observation and a retentive memory. He listed the following points as elements to consider when writing a modern short story:

To be free of merely personal themes, to address current social issues. To be able to find the essence of every type within our society and environment; to be able to express their thoughts in their own style, to address the problems of today, to expose some of society's weaknesses, either through a realist approach or through satire. And most importantly, to achieve this with artistry . . .<sup>83</sup>

Haldun Taner wrote seven collections of short stories as well as two separate stories, six epic tales and six dramas. He wrote in a wry satirical style about the lower and upper middle classes of Istanbul. His own cultured background enabled him to give his works a veneer of sophistication that impressed many of the types of people about whom he wrote. His characters come from all walks of life, ranging from military officials to artists, minor clerical officers to successful entrepreneurs, and lavatory attendants to society ladies. In each case, he is merciless in exposing bourgeois aspirations, human vanity, and fragile egos. Without directly attacking his characters and without openly giving an opinion as to how they should live their lives, the author engineers complex plots (like sophisticated versions of traditional Turkish tales) that allow the characters to reveal their weaknesses through their reactions to situations and other characters. Overall, his short stories constitute an intelligent and satirical comment on the intricacies of Istanbul life as its citizens struggle to better their

---

<sup>83</sup> Varlık Dergisi, 01/01/1955, as quoted in Mahir Ünlü and Ömer Özcan, 20. *Yüzyıl Türk Edebiyatı* 3, 436.

social position by acquiring, or appearing to acquire, money, respectability, and culture.

Like Sait Faik, Haldun Taner frequently makes brief references to minority characters to bring realism and colour to his writing, particularly in his earlier works. For instance in “Yağlı Kapı” [1945] (*Yaşasın Demokrasi*) Rıza works alongside a Greek tractor driver and an Albanian gardener, and he saves the life of a woman by taking her to an Armenian pharmacist. In “Sebati’nin İstanbul Seferi” [1948] Sebati notices a Greek girl sitting opposite him on the crowded ferry, her legs crossed, and chewing gum as if “she were chewing the cud.”<sup>84</sup> A sailor with a misplaced sense of loyalty in “Kaptan’ın Namusu” [1946] (*Tuş*) comes from Rize on the Black Sea, and is therefore assumed to be Laz. In “Fasarya” [1952] (*Şişhane’ye Yağmur Yağıyordu*), a Laz youth and a nimble Greek goal-keeper of the local football team give bad advice to the unfortunate Fasarya. In “Bayanlar 00” [1953] (*Ay Işığında “Çalışkur”*) the wise lavatory attendant keeps a special supply of sweet-smelling towels for her ‘high-class clients,’ in the knowledge that anyone may wish to use her facilities in times of need, including “the polite and the rude, the famous and the unknown, the young and the old, the good-looking and the ugly . . . the Armenians, the Greeks, the Turks and even foreigners . . .”<sup>85</sup> Finally there is a Greek watch-mender in “Karşılıkla” [1983] (*Yalıda Sabah*).

Minority characters frequently appear in prominent roles, but unlike Sait Faik who created stories out of his perception of ordinary daily life, Haldun Taner puts his characters into the context of strong plots. He draws on familiar stereotypes but creates a new dimension to their character by placing them in unfamiliar or contemporary circumstances. The following examples include Armenians, Greeks, a Circassian, a Russian, Jews and a Kurd. They include stories that ridicule the social aspirations of the upwardly mobile middle classes, expose attitudes and reactions to political events, and portray the interactions of ordinary men in their working lives. However it should

---

<sup>84</sup> Haldun Taner, “Sebati’nin İstanbul Seferi”, *Yaşasın Demokrasi*, in *Hikayeler*, 76.

<sup>85</sup> Haldun Taner, “Bayanlar 00”, *Ayışığında “Çalışkur”*, in *Hikâyeler* 2, 64

be emphasised that many of Haldun Taner's works contain no minority characters, and that no social group or class are spared from his wicked perception of the ridiculous.

### **"Beatris Mavyan"**

"Beatris Mavyan"[1946] (*Yaşasın Demokrasi*) satirises the lengths to which people, particularly those of the minority communities who had expected to retain their former tax privileges, were prepared to go in order to avoid the Wealth Tax of 1942. Among the fiction of this era this story is unique in having an Armenian girl in the main female role. Haldun Taner gives a detailed account of Beatris's family history and her fashionably 'European' education and upbringing. Her father, Osep Mavyan, is a well-travelled sophisticated man who returns to Turkey after the proclamation of constitutional government in 1908. He has taught French at Armenian schools, made money in insurance, and built a large house and several apartment blocks. His wife; Şarlot Mavyan, is also accomplished, and has an ancestry she can trace back to one of Napoleon's captains. In order to ensure her child's European birthright, she had gone to Marseilles for the birth of Beatris.

Despite the efforts of her parents, Beatris, who is well-educated and accomplished in music and painting, is singularly unattractive, and the author paints a cruelly detailed picture of her physical defects. Up to this point the author has merely reinforced and elaborated on the popular perception of the stereotype Armenian family. The twist in the story comes when Beatris falls in love with a fellow Armenian, Jirayir Keklikyan who already has a Greek lover, and who shows no interest in Beatris until he learns that he has to pay a large sum of money in Wealth Tax. He comes to a special arrangement with Osep Mavyan whereby he marries Beatris in return for a substantial cheque to cover his Wealth tax demand, and at the same time continues to visit his Greek lover. Beatris, unaware of this last detail of the arrangement, is supremely happy, and thanks the government every day for their tax policy.

This satirical story is directed at all people, not only Armenians, for whom status and material well-being come before other considerations. By drawing on the stereotype of the business-minded Armenian who keeps his options open in Europe, the

author makes it easy for his predominantly ‘Turkish’ readership to laugh at their weaknesses. However much of this readership would have secretly envied the business acumen of the ‘typical’ Armenian, and his ‘European’ connections, and would have been only too familiar with the type of financial arrangement needed to secure a marriage for a woman who had wealth but lacked beauty.

### “Şiřhane’ye Yağmur Yağıyordu”

Another Armenian businessman is parodied in “Şiřhane’ye Yağmur Yağıyordu” [1950] (*Şiřhane’ye Yağmur Yağıyordu*). This is a complex plot with four different story lines that become interwoven in the chaos following a traffic accident. One of these story lines concerns the Armenian Artin Margusyan who rushes out to his car on receiving a telegram from Sao Paulo about a possible business deal. Without waiting for his driver, he takes the wheel himself, despite having no driving licence. As he drives in teeming rain, Margusyan calculates prices and percentages in Turkish, French and Armenian in readiness for submitting his tender. Inevitably he crashes the car. When Margusyan regains consciousness, he realises he still has a few minutes in which to make the tender, but finds that the only available telephone is engaged. The frustration makes him faint again and when he comes round he believes he has missed the deal. The author creates a farcical stereotype of an Armenian businessman, puts him in a modern twentieth century setting involving cars and telephones, and then introduces an unexpected twist by pointing out that Sao Paulo is in a different time zone, where they are still waiting for Margusyan’s tender. When his telegram fails to materialise, they accept an offer from Morgenrot in Hamburg, thus introducing another of the four strands of the story. Alois Morgenrot is a Czechoslovakian Jew whose father came to Hamburg 50 years before. He is still immobilised by the poverty brought about by Hitler’s policies and the World War that followed, but the news that his tender has been accepted, albeit on credit, means that he can make a new start as a businessman. To complement these two businessmen the author includes a nondescript romantic couple, and a perceptive but overworked horse who represents the working masses of Istanbul. The storyline has a global perspective and touches on several

sociopolitical issues, but its main message is that human endeavour is powerless to manipulate fate, which is dictated by accident and coincidence.

### “Konçinalar”

In “Konçinalar” [1953] (*Şiřhane’ye Yağmur Yağtıyordu*) the author explores the possibility or impossibility of applying the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 through the satirical personification of the four suits of playing cards as different dynasties. The Ace of Hearts is compared to the head of an Ottoman dynasty which most closely resembles modern society, and the Ace of Diamonds to a Selchuk Sultan. The Ace of Clubs is a Byzantine prince whose people are dissolute and deceitful, while the Ace of Spades is an ill-fated Armenian whose palace is full of dark intrigue and mysterious deaths.

The Spades family is described as living in Gedikpařa, headed by Father Spades (King), Miss Spades (Queen), and Master Spades (Jack). The Numbers constitute the cluster of ministers and courtiers without which the aristocratic members cannot exist. Father Spades is a devout Catholic with a rich baritone voice. Master Spades runs a general store in Mahmutpařa, and flirts with Miss Clubs. Miss Spades is described in some detail as dark, with thick eyebrows, black eyes, and an excess of body hair. She has a warm beauty and performs her religious duties with sincerity, clearly taking after her father in this respect. If she knew what her brother and the Miss Clubs get up to she would die of shame. Although she has a good dowry, she is no longer young and hopes to marry a sober middle-aged man. The author adds a footnote saying that one look at her face makes one realise that she is very different from the typical Spades girls of the State Monopoly with their slanderous gossip.

Among the Numbers, suit is of less importance and their characteristics are common to all four. The Tens and Nines are endowed with privileges, but otherwise strut around rather impolitely and stupidly. The Tens have been drawn from the masses and trained as ministers, whereas the Nines waste time currying favour with the senior ‘faced’ cards. They are slaves to fashion, curry favours from their betters, and look with disdain upon anyone of lesser rank. The Eights and Sevens work as couriers and



gardeners' assistants. After these come the lower numbers or *konçinalar*. Here the attributes and aspirations are mainly negative and apply to social status rather than to family or religion. Never mind Bezique and Poker, they are of little use even in the most vulgar of games. For this reason the *konçinalar* are perceived to be mere parasites that exist to provide support for, and to confirm the position of higher beings. What is the meaning of the top level without a bottom level? The narrator confesses that having searched unsuccessfully for a new game which offers equal opportunity to all cards, he has resorted to playing Patience, in which every card is of equal importance.

### **“İki Komşu”**

“İki Komşu” [1951] (*Tuş*) is set at the time of the first multi-party elections, and concerns two elderly female neighbours, both former courtesans whose lives have been spent competing with other women. Saraylı Hanım is a Circassian who has retained her tall, arrogant looks and who enjoys a few extravagances. She regards her neighbour, İfakat Hanım, as unworthy of her attention, and yet is desperately jealous of İfakat Hanım's status as the owner of freehold property. Saraylı Hanım yearns for the old days, feeling that the country is being run by sons of inferior nonentities, but her attitude suddenly changes when she hears that her son-in law is standing as a deputy for the (Republican) Peoples Party in the forthcoming elections. She immediately becomes a vociferous supporter of the government that she has so recently denounced. In the meantime, İfakat Hanım falls ill with jealousy until she hears that Saraylı Hanım's son has lost the seat, when she makes a miraculous recovery. In this story Haldun Taner places the stereotype of the beautiful Circassian, queen of the harem and in her way representative of the old Ottoman system, into the contemporary context of a political election in order to show that nepotism remains a potential threat, always capable of seizing opportunities for reclaiming influence and power.

### **“Allegro Ma Mon Troppo”**

In “Allegro Ma Mon Troppo” [nd] (*Tuş*) the narrator is a young male student who is captivated by the atmosphere in the shabby rented room of Linowsky, a Russian emigre violinist, where he attends music lessons with a mixed group of students. More

than the music, the narrator enjoys the romantic photographs, the sound of Italian terms and the company of the female students, who are “unfortunately mostly of the type with hair on their upper lip.”<sup>86</sup> The most promising pupil is Mathilda, whose mixed Italian/Greek blood is considered to be the reason for her superiority over the other “*safkan tatlısu matmazeller*” (pure-blooded Europeanised young ladies).<sup>87</sup> The pupils meet for weekly listening sessions in Linowsky’s house at which they have the opportunity to talk among themselves. Siranuş, a pupil at the famed Dame de Sion school, dominates these conversations with her claims that the source of all acclaimed literary works in Turkey or Europe can be traced to Armenian writers such as Eşber, William Saroyan, Rupen Mamulyan or Dartyan. The beautiful Mathilda is too sophisticated to heed her nonsensical talk.

One day the narrator rings Linowsky’s bell and enters as usual. He finds the elderly teacher making love to a willingly submissive Mathilda while they listen to music. The naive young narrator’s romantic notion of European culture is instantly shattered. The story ends with an acknowledgement that much later in life he (the narrator) was to learn that it takes the skill of a virtuoso to bring out the true essence of a woman. This is a light-hearted parody of the earnest attitudes of untalented social climbers and the earthiness of those who possess genuine artistic ability.

### “Harikliya”

“Harikliya” [1948] (*Yaşasın Demokrasi*) is a tale about an attractive young Greek seamstress named Harikliya who rejects her childhood sweetheart, Andon, for an American soldier. She accompanies him to America believing her life will have a fairy-tale ending but, after being discharged from the army, her husband becomes a worker in a car factory earning a mere \$65 a week. Meanwhile Andon marries into a rich family and uses his own talents to become highly successful in his own right. However Harikliya stubbornly maintains her belief that she left him behind for a better

---

<sup>86</sup> Haldun Taner, “Allegro Ma Non Troppo,” *Tuş*, Hikayeler, 164.

<sup>87</sup> Haldun Taner, “Allegro Ma Non Troppo,” *Tuş*, Hikayeler, 165.

life in the USA. There is no obvious reason why Harikliya is Greek, except that perhaps it was still too early to present such a wayward girl as Turkish.

### “Rahatlıkla”

“Rahatlıkla” [1965] (*Sanco’nu Sabah Yürüyüşü*) concerns an election board at Istanbul University which meets to decide on the appointment of a new professor. One of the candidates is Ragıp Avşar, a burly Kurd. The author shows no more mercy towards this ambitious Kurd than he does for the top academics, whose discussions are reduced to self-serving childish wranglings, and who are themselves being manipulated by politicians. Ragıp Avşar is portrayed as a shabbily dressed man, whose large frame belies his attempts to look compliant. The events are seen through the eyes of Professor Sedat Germiyanoglu, whose voting intentions are governed by his determination to reinforce his own position within the university. He also demonstrates that he has contradictory attitudes, which are equally patronising, towards the ambitious Kurdish candidate. At one point he wonders how Ragıp Avşar can believe he has earned the right to be considered for such a senior post as Professor of Ethnography, yet he feels pity for him when Ragıp Avşar, on hearing a chance negative remark, loses his presumptuous academic manner and assumes “the confused look of a Kastamonu cow herder who has been driven off his farm.”<sup>88</sup> Finally, hearing that in anticipation of success, Ragıp Avşar has already used the title of ‘professor’ for a Ford scholarship application and for his new visiting cards, Germiyanoglu decides not to support this vulgar upstart. In the end the appointment goes to an unknown candidate, and it eventually transpires that the candidature of Ragıp Avşar was only allowed to proceed in order to deflect attention from the fact that the appointment was being determined by anonymous politicians. It is natural to draw a parallel between the university setting of this story and the national political scenario, and in this context the use of a Kurdish candidate as political pawn perhaps adds an extra touch of reality to the plot. However, during most of the story, attention is focused mainly on the rivalry between those who

---

<sup>88</sup> Haldun Taner, “Rahatlıkla,” *Sanco’nun Sabah Yürüyüşü*, 73.

are already in power. The struggle of 'outsiders', in this instance Kurds, to gain a foothold in the Establishment is merely alluded to through Ragıp Avşar.

### **“Küçük Harfli Mutluluklar”**

Not many of Haldun Taner's stories about incidents in the lives of 'ordinary' working people mention ethnic identity, but “Küçük Harfli Mutluluklar” [1983] (*Yalıda Sabah*) features a Jewish character who again is developed from stereotype. The story relates how Nizamettin Bolayır, who was discharged from the army for reasons he could not, and had no wish to, understand after the military takeover in 1960,<sup>89</sup> has applied his naturally officious nature for the last twenty years to serving as a factory security officer. One day at work he encounters a friend from his army days named Moiz Eskinazi. Moiz, now a successful businessman, is visiting the factory director to whom he explains that he always used to address Nizamettin Bolayır as colonel even though his true rank was much lower. As Moiz speaks to Nizamettin Bolayır he reverts to his former respectful manner, and the security officer assumes the dignified stance of a Turkish military officer. The factory director now also treats Nizamettin Bolayır as an equal. Moiz reminds Nizamettin Bolayır how he (Moiz) was always made a scapegoat because of his Jewish name and his timorous temperament. He laughs about how he used to be teased for being both a Jew and an 'old Nazi', this being a play on his surname Eskinazi which when split into the two words *eski Nazi* means in Turkish 'old Nazi.'<sup>90</sup> This bitter and farcical play on double meanings is developed further when Moiz recounts how a captain had punished him for forgetting to salute by ordering him to salute one hundred times in full view of the other soldiers. He recalls with glee how Nizamettin Bolayır had turned this situation against the captain by arguing that for every salute made by Private Moiz to the captain, the captain was required to salute back. Moiz remembers this as the supportive gesture of a friend with a sense of humour, whereas Nizamettin Bolayır knows in his heart that he had never regarded this incident as a joke but as a serious point of army discipline. Moiz then

---

<sup>89</sup> See Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey : A Modern History*, 253-254.

<sup>90</sup> Haldun Taner, “Küçük Harfli Mutluluklar”, *Yalıda Sabah*, 62.

asks Nizamettin Bolayır about his work at the factory, whereupon the jolly atmosphere is immediately broken. Moiz Eskinazi and the factory director resume their roles as business managers and revert to addressing Nizamettin Bolayır as a minor employee.

As the previous examples suggest, many of Haldun Taner's stories contain a potentially tragic element, but the author does not develop this aspect of his work, nor does he indulge in sentimentality towards his characters. Instead, he develops the *Karagöz* tradition of placing stereotype characters into contemporary situations, usually with a humorous or farcical element, in order to reveal human frailties. There is an assumption that nobody is exempt from the difficulties of life, and nobody is free of egoistic character flaws. In this respect ethnic minorities are subject to the same satirical treatment as his other characters.

## Chapter Three

### The Anatolian Perspective

The 1950 election heralded the end of the one party government system that had lasted for more than twenty five years. The introduction of multi-party democracy to Turkey gave rise to optimistic hopes for change. However this optimism proved short-lived. The new economic and agricultural policies failed to generate wealth in the country at large. There was little or no improvement in the living conditions of poor rural inhabitants, who increasingly resorted to seeking comfort in traditional beliefs and superstitions. Their poverty and backwardness was exposed through the village literature (*köy edebiyatı*) movement which provoked feelings of shocked outrage among intellectuals. Many writers who expressed criticism of the situation in journalistic articles were perceived by government authorities to be hard-line communists, though most were doing no more than expressing liberal socialist beliefs. The government responded to criticism with increasingly authoritarian policies. Strict censorship laws were imposed with the result that most of the well-known writers spent time in prison.

As the pace of industrialisation increased in the 1960s, the emphasis in literature shifted towards portraying characters employed in factories, and away from agricultural settings. There was an increase in the rate of migration to urban centres around which *gecekondu*<sup>1</sup> districts expanded and increased dramatically, especially those in the vicinity of Istanbul and Ankara. New social patterns began to evolve as migrants struggled to adapt to urban living. Though largely uneducated, these migrants were not ignorant. They now had easier access to information and more opportunities for education. They were also able to observe for themselves the lives of people in

---

<sup>1</sup> This term refers to dwellings put up overnight thereby avoiding official registration of land ownership.

relatively affluent communities and make comparisons with their own impoverished circumstances. In short, they developed aspirations for a better way of life.

Much of the fiction from 1950 to the mid-1980s focused on class differences, the exploitation of workers, the backwardness of impoverished rural communities, and the often misguided attempts of poor urban dwellers to acquire the trappings of affluence. There was the added dimension of the emergence of a number of female writers in the seventies who questioned and criticised accepted norms within Turkish society from a feminist perspective. The literature of this time was inclusive in that it focused on issues that affected all ethnic groups, yet this very inclusivity meant that references to ethnic minorities were few.

The emigration of workers to Germany began in the 1960s. Motivated by high wages and the possibilities of purchasing and reselling expensive items unavailable to even middle class Turks at that time, thousands of men went abroad to seek their fortune. They returned not only with varying degrees of wealth but also with a new perspective on life in Turkey. Often separated from family and friends, these guest-workers drew emotional support from new acquaintances with whom they exchanged and compared past experiences. They enjoyed a new-found freedom of expression, unfettered by fears of official retribution. By the seventies this freedom was leading to a strengthening Kurdish identity. Particularly in Germany and Sweden, Kurdish intellectuals became active in researching and publishing material pertaining to Kurdish language, history and culture. Their work aroused interest in academic circles and, contrary to the repressive attitude of successive Turkish regimes, sympathetic responses in European political circles. The denial of Kurdish autonomy and the struggle of Kurds to retain and revive their language and their cultural identity became topics for serious discussion in Europe.

The climate of freedom in Europe also provided opportunities for the planning of Kurdish terrorist activities which were intended to force radical change in Turkey. The 1980 military coup in Turkey was followed by a sweeping wave of arrests of alleged Kurdish dissidents. The scale and nature of these arrests disturbed many

previously indifferent Turkish citizens. With the journalistic freedom permitted under Prime Minister Özal's government, the complex situation in South Eastern Turkey was discussed regularly in the Turkish press. At the same time new fiscal policies were bringing Turkey further into the international political arena, and Turkey's bid to join the European Union made the question of human rights a serious issue.

Thus, the Kurdish question was being discussed at high levels both at home and abroad. In Turkey the emphasis was on containing terrorism and solving the economic problems of South Eastern Turkey, while in Europe the focus was on establishing human rights within the Turkish judicial and penal systems. Turkey was now forced to confront these issues, not only in order to protect its domestic social order, but also to further its progress towards membership of the European Union.

Concurrently with these events, the collapse of communism led to numerous minority groups of the former USSR re-establishing and proclaiming their separate identities. The world suddenly became aware of the mosaic of cultures and languages that had been obscured under the cloak of communism for seventy years. Encouraged by this new universal awareness of ethnic issues, a variety of factions began to make their presence felt, including not only Kurds, Greeks, Jews and Armenians, but also communities with origins in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Numerous publications tracing ethnic histories, cultural traditions and folklore are now openly available in Turkey. Greek, Jewish, Armenian and Kurdish writers are publishing fiction written from their different cultural perspectives, which is often based on personal experience or that of their forefathers. As long as this literature avoids incitement of nationalist sentiments, it is no longer regarded as contentious, but as a valuable contribution to the body of Turkish literature.

In literature, the first expose of rural living conditions in Turkish fiction had appeared as long ago as 1890 with the publication of *Karabibik*, a short novel by Nabizade Nazım, followed in 1910 by *Küçük Paşa* by Ebübekir Hazim Tepeyran. Later works by writers such as Reşat Nuri Güntekin and Halikarnas Balıkcısı also dealt with aspects of rural or provincial life. However these writers were well-travelled, educated



men whose experiences had little in common with the peasants they wrote about.

What was special about 'village literature' was that it was written by a small number of writers who had graduated from village institutes (*köy enstitüleri*). These institutes were part of an education programme set up in the 1940s for training bright village youths to become school teachers who would be prepared to work in the remoter areas of Anatolia. These teachers were perceived to have returned to village life barely affected by their experience of the outside world, yet to have acquired adequate literary acumen for writing about peasant life.

*Bizim Köy* [1950], by Mahmut Makal (1930-), was the first of the publications to be labelled 'village literature'. It shocked readers, not only with the factual and detailed descriptions of poverty and squalor which belied any official claims to improvements during the previous twenty five years, but also because it exposed peasant ignorance and resistance to secular education. Another writer who falls into this category is Fakir Baykurt (1929-). Like Mahmut Makal, the content of his writing was largely based on his own experiences of life in a small village, and like most works of this genre lack historical or cultural perspective. Apart from Fakir Baykurt's allusions to an Alevi community in his novel *Kaplumbağalar*, there is barely a mention of any past or present minority citizens living in the villages he describes. This is despite the renowned long memories of non-literate villagers, and despite the undoubted intelligence and keen perception of the writers in question. Herkül Millas suggests that it was as natural for writers in this period to promote a homogeneous national identity as it was for Ottoman novelists to view society as a collection of different communities.<sup>2</sup> However he neglects to point out that while the observations of Ottoman writers were based on centuries of tradition, this new wave of writers belonged to a post-war generation whose families had recently undergone terrible suffering as a result of ethnic and cultural divisions. The national environment was still too fragile to withstand anything more than superficial or passing references to these differences.

---

<sup>2</sup> Herkül Millas, *Türk Romanı ve "Öteki": Ulusal Kimlikte Yunan İmajı*, 45.

Despite the limitations of village literature, it had a considerable effect on subsequent Turkish literature. An interest in the lives and views of village inhabitants was kindled, and the provincial speech patterns and accents reproduced in village literature were noted with interest. The term 'villager' became a generic term which, when used without other identifiable characteristics, suggested a homogeneity that was construed as being essentially Turkish (in the national sense). From this, the archetypal Anatolian Turk was born in Turkish literature. Like the post-war generation of authors, this archetypal Anatolian Turk had little interest in his past. He was mainly concerned with the desperately poor and hopeless conditions in which he lived. As village literature became superseded by the more comprehensive 'Anatolian literature', the focus was increasingly directed at worker exploitation and class struggles which were issues common to all workers regardless of ethnic or religious origins. Orhan Kemal was the first of these writers to emerge. He was soon followed by Yaşar Kemal (b.1923) who was perhaps the greatest of the Anatolian novelists.

As previously stated, there was little interest in the past or present ethnic diversity of villages in Anatolia, but nor was much thought given to the conceptual difference between an ethnic Turk and a national Turk. Survival instincts informed citizens it was preferable to be identified as Turks living in a Turkish state than as members of any kind of minority community. However with increased mobility and access to media information, people were beginning to question why some areas were prospering more quickly than others. The areas where progress was slow or nonexistent proved to be fertile ground for turning dissatisfaction into political unrest, which in turn discouraged further investment. Of course South Eastern Turkey was the area with the most grievances. Remote, inaccessible, with insufficient water resources and an inadequate administrative infrastructure, its inhabitants endured not only terrible poverty but also the ripple effects of this poverty, such as the spread of Communist ideology.

Bekir Yıldız [1933-1998] published some heart-rending stories about life in this region during the 1970s and 1980s. Although he was known to be Kurdish and his

earlier works are set in an area inhabited by Kurds near the Turkish/Syrian border, the themes about which he wrote could apply to almost any impoverished and remote region of the world. As in the village literature genre of the 1950s, there is no mention of ethnic differences. Bekir Yıldız writes about the emasculating effects of grinding poverty that makes naturally mild men become wild or violent, the terrible results of men trying to maintain self respect by inflicting cruel and contradictory codes of honour onto family members, and about the social breakdown which results when men seek work abroad or become entangled in dangerous illicit rackets. His accounts are graphic and often shocking, but the author refrains from making personal comment and leaves the reader to make his own inferences.

### **Orhan Kemal**

Orhan Kemal [1914-1970] grew up in South Eastern Turkey where communities had been disrupted by war, emigration, immigration. He had first-hand experience, not only of living in a multi-ethnic provincial environment, but also of the alienation felt by migrants and minorities who were forced to live in a strange or hostile environment.

His many novels and short stories portray the lives of ordinary men and women without attempting to make them into heroic characters. At the same time he gives them dignity by treating their day to day problems with a seriousness and an attention to detail that was all too rare at the time of writing. In some respects his approach to his characters may be compared to that of Sait Faik, but Orhan Kemal writes not only with empathy and compassion for his characters, but as one who has actually shared many of their experiences.

Orhan Kemal was born in Ceyhan, close to Adana in the South East of Turkey.<sup>3</sup> His real name was Mehmet Raşit Öğütçü, son of Abdülkadir Kemali and Azime Hanım. His paternal grandfather had been brought up in Elâzığ before settling in the Adana district, where he became the chief clerk of Ceyhan, and his paternal grandmother

---

<sup>3</sup> For a more extensive general study of Orhan Kemal, see Asım Bezirci and Hikmet Altınkaynak, *Orhan Kemal*.

belonged to a migrant family from Bulgaria. Abdülkadir Kemali studied law at Istanbul University, during which time he became involved with the Committee for Union and Progress. After graduating he served as an assistant district attorney and married Azime, a relative on his father's side, before going to Çanakkale where he fought as an artillery lieutenant. It was during this time that Orhan Kemal was born in 1914.

In 1918 the French occupied Adana, and Abdülkadir moved his family first to Niğde then to Konya while he fought with the National Force (*Kuvayi Milliye*). But the continuing violence forced them to flee again to Ankara. Between 1920 and 1923 Abdülkadir Kemali served as political representative for Kastamonu in the first Grand National Assembly. In 1923 he returned to Adana to take up farming in Ceyhan. He began publishing a newspaper called *Toksöz* but before long, due to an article that displeased the government, he was arrested and imprisoned for eleven months. After his release he founded the Peoples Republican Movement (*Ahali Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) in 1930 and, since it received little attention in the Istanbul press, he bought a publishing firm in order to publicise its manifesto. Finally, in the same year, the party was shut down and Abdülkadir Kemali was forced to flee to Syria.

Orhan Kemal, though he loved his father dearly, confessed to having no interest in his turbulent world of politics. He was now aged 15, had left school, and was quite content to fill his time indulging his passion for playing football. However although he enjoyed the freedom resulting from his father's absence, the situation caused great hardship for his mother, and after some months the family went to join Abdülkadir Kemali in Beirut. Here life continued to be hard because Abdülkadir Kemali's qualifications were not recognised in Lebanon and the family had no capital. Following a failed business attempt there was no alternative but for Orhan Kemal to go out to work.

Orhan found it difficult to adapt to living in a foreign country. Apart from the distraction of a few Turkish-speaking friends, he felt so miserable and lonely that after a year or so he returned to Adana on his own and went to live with his grandmother. For the next few years he spent his time playing football and sitting around in coffee-

houses. Eventually at about twenty years of age, he was befriended by some left-wing workers who introduced him to the world of literature. Among these socialists was İsmail Usta who had a lasting influence on Orhan Kemal. He maintained that whenever he was faced with a problem he would base his solution on what he thought his father or İsmail Usta would do or recommend.

While working as a clerk in the National Textile Factory he met Nuriye, an immigrant from Yugoslavia, whom he married in 1937. Her family were also living in poverty and had hoped their beautiful daughter would marry into a more affluent family, but Orhan Kemal persuaded Nuriye's father that his honesty and good intentions were of more value than material wealth. In 1938, three weeks after the birth of his first child, Yıldız, Orhan Kemal was conscripted for six months military training in Niğde. Forty days before his discharge he was arrested for suggesting that to learn the meaning of communism one should read Nazım Hikmet<sup>4</sup> and Maksim Gorki. In January 1939 he was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment. He wrote to his wife offering to release her from her marriage vows, knowing that even after the next five years she would face many more troubled times with him, but she remained loyal to him.

In prison Orhan Kemal began to write poetry and articles for journals. They came easily to him and he regarded them as being of little significance. However, his father, who had returned to Turkey in 1939 following Atatürk's death, succeeded in getting a number of these poems published in journals such as *Yedigün* and *Yeni Mecmua* under the name of Raşit Kemali. Abdülkadir Kemali was also instrumental in getting his son transferred to Bursa prison where he was joined by Nazım Hikmet in December 1940. At Nazım Hikmet's request they shared the same living quarters and the poet began to educate Orhan Kemal in the practice of writing in a natural and sincere style that reflected the thoughts and aspirations of ordinary people. Although Nazım Hikmet was merciless in his criticism, he gave Orhan Kemal assurances that he had the makings of a good writer, and promised to give him the necessary educational

---

<sup>4</sup> A comprehensive account of Nazım Hikmet's communist ideology and how it affected his literary work is given in *Romantic Communist* by Saime Göksu and Edward Timms.

grounding in French, political economics, philosophy and literature. During this time the author produced the draft of a novel which impressed Nazım Hikmet so much he insisted that Orhan Kemal abandon poetry and concentrate on writing fiction. A section of his first novel *Baba Evi* [1949], an autobiographical novel about his childhood in Beirut, and some short stories appeared in the newspaper *Yeni Edebiyat* under the name Orhan Raşit, and from 1942 his works appeared regularly in various journals under the name of Orhan Kemal.

After his release from prison in 1943 Orhan Kemal returned to Adana, where he was unable to find employment other than menial factory work because of his prison record. In a letter to his friend Kemal Sülker he described how he was working 12 hour shifts as the night clerk for a cotton processing factory in cold, wet and stormy weather, and in a state of hungry exhaustion.<sup>5</sup> In 1944 and 1949 his wife gave birth to two sons which added further to their problems. Finally, after his attempt to set up a vegetable transportation business failed and after he began to receive acclaim for his first publications including the *Baba Evi* and the story *Ekmek Kavgası* [1949], they moved to Istanbul where he was determined to make a living from his writing.

At this time it was almost unheard of for an author to support a family solely through writing, but Orhan Kemal persisted despite having to live and work in difficult conditions. Although he succeeded in publishing many literary works over the next twelve years, the financial returns did not cover the rent and household bills. In 1963, the situation improved with the concurrent publication of a number of works in Istanbul and the Soviet Union. Two years later, *İspinozlar* [1964], a dramatised version of the novel *Devlet Kuşu* [1958], was staged in Istanbul and the publication of more works followed.

In March 1966 Orhan Kemal was imprisoned for supposedly spreading communist propaganda but was released the following month for lack of evidence. In the meantime, the Turkish Literary Union together with Melih Cevdet Anday, Yaşar Kemal and James Baldwin had celebrated his thirtieth anniversary and publicly

---

<sup>5</sup> As quoted in Mahir Ünlü and Ömer Özcan, *20. Yüzyıl Türk Edebiyatı* 4, 315-316.

recognised his merit as a literary artist.

During the next few years Orhan Kemal's health deteriorated after a heart attack in 1967. A visit to Russia in 1969 was cut short by illness, but he continued to work on novels and dramatisations. In 1970, feeling himself to be considerably recovered, he accepted an invitation from the Bulgarian Writers' Union to visit Bulgaria. He went with the dual purpose of continuing his medical treatment and researching his paternal grandmother's family history in order to write their story under the proposed title "From '93 to the Present Day."<sup>6</sup> However another heart attack in Sofia resulted in his death on 2nd June 1970.

Orhan Kemal has acknowledged that some of his early novels (*Baba Evi*, *Avare Yillar* [1950] and *Cemile* [1952]) are autobiographical accounts of his experiences in childhood, adolescence and young adulthood. This is of interest in three respects. Firstly, his father was a politically controversial figure during Turkey's emergence as a republic. Secondly, the 'middle-class' observations he brought to bear on his personal experiences of poverty and working-class life brought a new dimension to Turkish literature. Thirdly, the characters and situations of these early works formed a basis from which he developed most of his subsequent literary plots.

### ***Baba Evi***

The introduction to *Baba Evi* confirms its autobiographical nature with an explanation that the main character, the "little man" (*küçük adam*) represents the author. The multi-cultural aspect of Adana is conveyed, not by detailed descriptions of streets and buildings, but by descriptions of life in the neighbourhood where the *küçük adam* lives. In particular there is an account of how his family home gets caught in cross-fire because it has an Armenian school on one side and a Greek or Armenian household on another.<sup>7</sup> There are references to the Cretan district where young girls joke loudly behind open windows knowing that their broken Turkish is attractive to passers-by, and the impoverished Bosnian district where men stare suspiciously at any

---

<sup>6</sup> Asım Bezirci and Hikmet Altinkaynak, *Orhan Kemal*, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Baba Evi*, 15.

strangers.<sup>8</sup> In *Avare Yıllar* and *Cemile* there are numerous individuals of Kurdish, Albanian, Cretan, Laz, Arab, or other origin. Some of these characters are class-mates or work colleagues and have no significant role in the plots, except to add colour and authenticity. In *Avare Yıllar* there is a middle-aged Cretan cafe owner who is eventually jailed for owning and supplying drugs. There are also Kurdish Dursun, Albanian Nuri and his Cretan wife, Laz Haydar, Metroviçli Necip, Arab Sadri, and Kurdish Sermet. In *Cemile*, the heroine, who was Bosnian Güllü in the previous novel, is renamed as Bosnian Cemile. She works in a factory with colleagues such as ugly-faced Albanian Meryem and snub-nosed Cretan Hatice.

In *Baba Evi*, the narrator finds relief from his loneliness in Beirut at the Armenian market where he hears people talking in Turkish, and where the people remind him of home. The Armenian quarter is very squalid with rotten wooden houses and muddy narrow alleys down which herds of swine wander. The *küçük adam* meets a young Armenian girl named Virjin. He is impressed by her loyalty to her elder sister who is a prostitute, her fearless attempts to care for her dying mother, and her ingenuous attitude towards the inevitability of her own future as a prostitute. When the narrator meets Virjin's sister, Şinorik, he notes her heavily made up appearance, her ability to carry on an intelligent conversation while at the same time responding in kind to provocative jibes and taunts from men in the street. On a visit to their home he observes that they have a large room divided into two sections by some sacking hanging from the ceiling. A large Sivas kilim is on the floor, and the table is littered with empty rakı bottles, eggshells and the remains of fish. Şinorik serves coffee in very delicate French coffee cups, which she says is all that is left of their former life, implying that they too are refugees from Turkey. They are disturbed by the arrival of Şinorik's 'friend' who proceeds to beat her behind the sacking curtain. The narrator is further disconcerted to hear that when her sister's clients arrive in the evening, Virjin serves them *meze* and sits on their laps in return for tips.<sup>9</sup> It will be seen that Orhan

---

<sup>8</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Avare Yıllar*, 127-128.

<sup>9</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Baba Evi*, 90.



Kemal develops the character of Virjin into the Gypsy girl, Çevriye, in later novels.

During his stay in Beirut, *küçük adam* goes to work for a printing firm where he meets and falls in love for the first time with a blonde Greek girl called Eleni. Eleni's family had migrated from Istanbul to Athens, from where they were forced to flee because of the left-wing political activities of her father and brother. Her father is now a broken man and an alcoholic, but her brother makes a lasting impression on *küçük adam*. On his first visit to Eleni's house, the narrator's instant admiration for the brother and his pleasant surprise at the warm welcome from her mother are echoed in a later novel when he goes to the home of a Greek friend called Kosti in *Suçlu* [1957]. Orhan Kemal has attributed the beginnings of his sense of social justice to the moment when Eleni proudly states that her brother believes it is the rich who should feel ashamed about the wretched state of the shoes she wears.<sup>10</sup> The *küçük adam* has grown up with conflicting feelings about his father. He admires and respects him, yet he also resents his strong personality and the high expectations his father has for his future. Eleni's brother is not unlike the narrator's father, and his suggestion that the narrator should spend less time boasting about his father and more on improving himself is noted by the narrator in stubborn silence.

The third childhood friend in this novel is a Muslim migrant from Greece, whose real name is İsmail, but who is commonly known as Yorgi. Yorgi is not naturally appealing to the narrator, not least because he is a terrible football player. His family connections to a rich shop owner provide an insight into the way the active imaginations of the local youths dwell on the possibilities of a better life through such connections. Yorgi succumbs to tyrannical public beatings and scoldings from his rich uncle whose daughter he hopes to marry. At the same time he boasts to his friends that he will have a second home in which he will install a local beauty named Mendiye as his mistress. As the local youths learn the pleasures of drinking wine, they indulge in fantasies over Mendiye, but before long they hear that, following a medical examination, the unfortunate girl has been sent away to a brothel.

---

<sup>10</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Baba Evi*, 67.

## *Avare Yıllar*

The second novel in this trilogy, *Avare Yıllar*, gives an account of the *küçük adam*'s reluctant recognition that he has to earn a living. It interweaves themes about working conditions at the time, and about social attitudes towards people of different ethnic or social groups. A turning point is reached when *küçük adam* falls in love with a Bosnian girl and he meets İzzet Usta who is introduced somewhat mysteriously as being of unknown origin, possibly Kurdish. In fact these two events are linked by the fact that İzzet Usta turns out to be the elder brother of the hero's prospective Bosnian bride Güllü. The strong desire to marry Güllü forces *küçük adam* to acknowledge that as an uneducated unemployed young man with a father who is (politically) 'on the other side' his prospects are poor.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, İzzet Usta awakens in him a hunger for ideas and a new sense of purpose. Rather like Eleni's elder brother, he refuses to accept excuses from the *küçük adam* about his family difficulties. He tells him to stop feeling sorry for himself and to start finding solutions to his problems, which are no worse than those of anyone else. This rather stern attitude is also present in the character of Güllü's father who nevertheless comes to believe that *küçük adam* has inherited sufficient intellectual integrity for him to be a suitable match for his daughter despite his destitute state.

## *Cemile*

The story of this love affair, leading to marriage between the *küçük adam* and the Bosnian girl is explored with more detail and imagination in the third novel of the series, *Cemile*. The hero is now given the name of Necati and, as mentioned earlier, Güllü becomes Cemile. The story is set in a Bosnian neighbourhood and revolves around Cemile, her father Malik and her brother Sadri. Cemile and Sadri work in the local factory, where there is unrest among the workers because a foreigner has been brought in to reorganise the working practices.

The author frequently refers to the humiliation and difficulties of being a refugee in a foreign land. Malik was rich and powerful in his own country, but after leading an

---

<sup>11</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Avare Yıllar*, 97.

attack against the Serbs in retaliation for a massacre of his people, he had to flee to Turkey. Once in Turkey, he not only experienced the loneliness of losing all his siblings, he suffered the indignity of being unable to provide for his family. He had been trained to ride and shoot, and knew nothing of farming or city life. He observes with regret that the next generation of Bosnians are becoming completely assimilated into the Turkish way of life. This further intensifies his loneliness.

While Malik's wife had no understanding of the necessity to work, Cemile's generation of females accept their role as working girls, and the early signs of feminist attitudes become apparent. Although the girls' lives are still very restricted by social tradition, Cemile is not afraid to express her resentment at what she perceives to be unreasonable behaviour by her elder brother or men at the factory. Her father is quite willing to run the house while Cemile works until he realises that she will soon leave home to get married. At that point he reverts to romantic dreams about taking his children to a remote village in Bosnia where he can live out his days in comfort and peace. Cemile is looked down on by her fiance's relatives who know nothing of her family's past. They see only her poverty and the fact that she is a 'working girl'.

Cemile's brother, like his father, is not at ease with his place in Turkish life. Sadri resents the fact that the family live in poverty and yearns for the former wealth and status of his father, even though he has no experience of that life. His sense of being a nobody is compounded by Cemile's independent attitude. He wants to play the part of protective brother because it gives him a sense of power, but Cemile rejects this protection. He wishes Cemile would stop work and stay at home so that he could enjoy his life without having to listen to remarks and gossip about his sister.

Apart from Cemile's family and her Bosnian neighbours there are a number of other Balkan migrants working at the factory. In contrast to these there is Salomon, the General Manager of the factory. No background details are given about him except that he arrived penniless in Çukurova to try his luck, and that with his smattering of French and German, and his shrewd mind he has quickly risen to his present position. Salomon does not get involved in disputes within the factory, but there is an

uncomfortable moment when Kadir Ağa, who is tired of the reforms initiated by the recently appointed Italian engineer, accuses Salomon of siding with the Italian simply because they are both 'infidels' (*gâvir* - sic).<sup>12</sup>

### ***Suçlu***

*Suçlu* is the first novel by Orhan Kemal to be set in Istanbul. It is centred around a trio of friends including thirteen year old Cevdet (Turkish), eleven year old Çevriye (Gypsy), and thirteen year old Kosti (Greek). They each have dreams of escaping from the various problems in their lives, and find that they are able to share these dreams with each other without fear of ridicule. Cevdet sees himself as an American hero of the wild west, with Çevriye as his 'moll', while Kosti dreams of becoming a world-famous tenor. Even though the multi-ethnic quality of their little group can be traced to the author's own childhood experiences, there is also a sense that he has particularly chosen such a group in order to be inclusive in his presentation of the dreams and aspirations of the young people of Turkey, particularly those with no family to help them get started.

At the beginning of the novel Çevriye is already a friend of Cevdet who is still grieving for his recently deceased mother, and feeling angry with his father for remarrying. He has left school without graduating from primary school and is forced to make a living as a pedlar. In Çevriye he finds a friend who gives him total and unconditional love such as he once knew with his mother. Çevriye has had no education, and has no relatives except an exploitative grandmother. Having neither material nor emotional sustenance, she projects all her affection and loyalty onto Cevdet, and allows herself to dream of a better existence as the glamorous blonde companion of the tough cowboy persona that Cevdet dreams of for himself. Like Virjin in *Baba Evi*, Çevriye lives in a state of total deprivation with a similarly bleak future. Excluding Cevdet, the local children despise her for being a dirty Gypsy, and make her a target for their lewd comments.

Çevriye, having nothing to lose, is fearless in her defence of Cevdet when his

---

<sup>12</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Cemile*, 35.

friends mock him about his family situation and his occupation as a pedlar. He in turn is the only person on the world to show any concern for her worth as an individual. Her grandmother merely exploits her childish looks by dressing her up, painting her face, and sending her out to attract the attention of men:

She did not like her grandmother, nor her work. It was not because her grandmother made her sit on men's laps and dance in the market place for money which she kept for herself. It was really because Çevriye was forced to go against the advice of Cevdet.<sup>13</sup>

Here we see an almost exact repetition of the situation in *Baba Evi*, where Virjin sits on the laps of her sister's clients. In *Suçlu*, new tensions are introduced. Unlike Virjin, whose life is dictated by her elder, but almost equally vulnerable sister, Çevriye is brought up by her grandmother. This grandmother, contrary to normal expectations, proves to be an evil exploiter of her small charge. In *Baba Evi*, Virjin knew no better, she thought that anything she could do to help her mother or sister was right, whereas in *Suçlu*, Çevriye has learnt from Cevdet that such behaviour is shameful so that she is faced with the choice of two 'wrongs': being disobedient to her grandmother, or continuing to 'perform' in a way that she thinks is wrong.

Eventually matters become so bad for Cevdet that he puts into action his plan for taking Çevriye with him to America. As they discuss their future, Cevdet assures Çevriye that once the Americans learn they are Turks their problems will be over. Çevriye immediately panics saying: "But Cevdet, I'm not a Turk!" When Cevdet asks her why this is so she replies: "I would like to be, but everybody calls me a dirty Gypsy. Are Gypsies dirty people?" Cevdet reassures her saying that "Every country has both clean and dirty people," that she is a Turk if this is what she wants, and that Turks are a nation of human beings like every other nation.<sup>14</sup>

Their escapade naturally comes to nothing and the two children are brought back to Turkey. For Cevdet this is the end of his dream and a crushing blow to his pride.

---

<sup>13</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Suçlu*, 78.

<sup>14</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Suçlu*, 346.

His father is dead, and he has spurned the offer of a home and education made by a kindly lawyer. Çevriye not only gives Cevdet her non-judgmental love, but she attempts to protect him from the teasing of others and the consequences of his own mistakes.

### ***Sokaklardan Çocuğu and Sokaklardan Bir Kız***

The relationship continues in the much same way through the first half of *Sokaklardan Çocuğu* [1963], after which Cevdet's fate takes him away from childhood friends. However Çevriye remains a central focus of Cevdet's thoughts for years after their last meeting. Even though his concern for her rarely extends far beyond jealousy at the thought of others enjoying her company, he longs to share every new experience with his erstwhile loyal little friend.

*Sokaklardan Bir Kız* [1968] relates events in Cevdet's life during young adulthood at a time when he is having difficulty sorting out his emotional entanglements. The situation provokes memories of his childhood friend Çevriye and her unconditional love. She continues to enter his consciousness and his dreams as a symbol of total loyalty and innocence, sometimes becoming confused with his wife, Nuran. Towards the end of the book, when his emotional life is once again in turmoil he wonders what has become of Çevriye. At this stage Nuran is in prison, and he is trying to decide whether to tell her that she was merely part of a phase in his life just as Çevriye once had been, or whether to remain loyal to her and wait for her release.

When finally Çevriye, who is aware of Cevdet's situation, seeks him out he does not recognise her. Despite her dirty barefoot appearance, Cevdet embraces her once he realises who she is, but he is shocked at the way she has aged since he last saw her. Çevriye is philosophical about the ageing process. She explains how her grandmother sold her to a married man, and how since his death and the disappearance of their mother she has taken care of his children. She doesn't mourn the dead because death is natural, but she just hopes that the children do not become addicted to rakı and gambling like herself. She scolds Cevdet for neglecting his wife who is pining in prison because of him, and arranges to accompany him on a visit to the prison. Once

Cevdet is inside, Çevriye disappears before he can thank her. Thus in adulthood, just as in childhood, Çevriye is watching over Cevdet, helping him when life becomes too difficult for him, yet making no demands and imposing no conditions.

Less obvious than the parallel between Çevriye and Virjin is that between Kosti's family and Eleni's family in Beirut (*Baba Evi*), but there are unmistakable similarities in the way the author portrays these two families. It is not so much that there are similarities between the characters as that these families have a similar effect on the central character. This effect is described only briefly in *Baba Evi*,<sup>15</sup> but in *Suçlu* it is expanded. In Kosti's family there is no political dimension, but his family, like Eleni's family, has a wholesomeness that makes a deep impression on the central character. Both Greek families are living in impoverished circumstances, in Eleni's case with a useless father and in Kosti's case with no father at all, yet in both families the mother creates a warm generous atmosphere within the home that belies their poverty and enables the children to maintain their self-respect.

When Cevdet sees Kosti for the first time, he sees a near mirror image of himself. A boy of his own age with a tray of goods for sale slung around his neck, daydreaming while he gazes into a shop window. One difference is that he is not Turkish. The author, writing through the mind of a child, does not analyse how Cevdet knows this, he merely mentions it as an accepted fact: "He realised immediately that he was not Turkish. If anyone else had invited him to sit down with him he would not have accepted, nor would he have shown his bread and olives to anyone else. This time it was different."<sup>16</sup> These few words more than adequately describe how children use their intuition when choosing their friends.

Another difference noticed by Cevdet is that Kosti looks well cared for. When he visits Kosti's house he sees that, even though the bedding is patched, his room is kept clean and tidy, unlike Cevdet's own squalid room. Kosti has an older sister with whom Cevdet also feels very much at ease, which is unusual for an adolescent boy at

---

<sup>15</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Baba Evi*, 69.

<sup>16</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Suçlu*, 59.

this time: "At any other time, or in any other place he would not have felt uninhibited like this. He would have been embarrassed and blushed to the tips of his ears. For some reason, he was neither embarrassed nor uncomfortable here."<sup>17</sup>

Like Cevdet, Kosti has dreams. He longs to become a world famous tenor. However, although his dreams are strong enough for him to enter into the fantasies of Cevdet and Çevriye about sailing to America, his life is not so desperate that he makes any serious attempt to realise them. The strong family support Kosti receives from his mother and sister enables him to progress slowly but surely from being a street pedlar to becoming a shop assistant.

### ***Murtaza***

Orhan Kemal wrote several books about the harsh life of workers in semi-industrial Çukorova. Minority characters abound in these novels. The first of these novels was *Murtaza* [1952], a parody of the new employment systems that were gradually transforming working life in the region. The central character, Murtaza, is an immigrant from Greece, whose quixotic nature leads him to take discipline to extreme in his efforts to become assimilated into his new homeland. The difference in his attitude from that of his colleagues is continually reinforced by his 'foreignness' which is apparent throughout the novel because of his heavy Greek accent and his use, or misuse, of the Turkish language. This foreignness does not create antipathy between Murtaza and readers, but softens the officious side of his character by making him appear vulnerable and prone to ridicule in a way that generates affection.

### ***Vukuat Var and Hanımın Çiftliği***

In *Vukuat Var* [1959] and its sequel *Hanımın Çiftliği* [1961], the community consists of Kurds, and immigrants from Bosnia, Greece and Crete, while the murder victim is an Arab. As observed by Tahir Alangu, the author uses fiction to create a record of the assimilation into mainstream Turkish society of the numerous and varied indigenous and immigrant ethnic groups.<sup>18</sup> Through the Bosnian heroine, Güllü, the

---

<sup>17</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Suçlu*, 85.

<sup>18</sup> Mahir Ünlü and Ömer Özcan, 20. *Yüzyıl Türk Edebiyatı* 3, 325.



author unequivocally states his views on racial and religious prejudice. When questioned about the wisdom of pursuing her relationship with an Arab named Kemal, Güllü brushes aside family objections, saying: “He may be black, but he is still a human being isn’t he?” and to Kemal himself: “I don’t care whether you are African, Gypsy or infidel, I still love you. Is there any more to be said?”<sup>19</sup>

### *Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde*

*Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde* [1954] is generally considered to be one of Orhan Kemal’s strongest novels. Certainly when it first appeared, its disclosure of harsh exploitation and cruel working practices shocked his readers. There is no romantic storyline as in the adventure novels of Halikarnas Balıkcısı, no comic relief as in the works of Haldun Taner, and there is no personal angle on the characters as in the works of Sait Faik. The novel relates events that ensue when three friends leave their village to seek work in Çukurova. They have no skills and no experience outside their village. Their struggle to comprehend and adapt to the confusing world of industrial labour in Adana ends with one dying from sickness, another being killed in an agricultural machine accident, and the return of the third with nothing more than a spirit stove for his wife.

Among the working community there are several ethnic minority characters who are mostly existing at just above subsistence level, although there is no suggestion that life is better or worse for minorities in the harsh conditions that prevail at this time. However certain cultural characteristics prove to be significant in the way their lives unfold.

There is a surly Albanian, who guards the door of the cotton processing factory from men who are desperate for work. He rejects bribes, ignores flattery and resorts to rough treatment when necessary. There is the concrete worker Laz Ali and Laz Rıza, a sub-contractor who is involved in the pilfering of site materials and who uses his position to pursue women of his choice. There is Halo Cafer, a slightly built hashish-smoking Kurd with a thick black moustache. He has little knowledge of Turkish and

---

<sup>19</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Vukuat Var*, 24, 25.

appears ready to pick a fight at any moment. A graphic description follows of how his wife, Kürt Hürü, goes into labour and gives birth at the work site. When Halo Cafer is observed responding to his wife's summons by going to visit her in the shed after the birth, it is recognised that she has delivered a son, and that therefore her value as a wife has risen. If the baby had been a girl, he would have ignored the event.

Laz Kılıç is in quite a different league. He is a forty-five year old father of five children, who leaves home every year with his plasterer's trowel, water measure, and plumb line to seek work. When he has earned enough he returns home for about six weeks before setting off again. He is proud that in his twenty-five years of travelling he has never slept with a woman other than his wife. Kılıç feels it is his duty to teach his skills to younger men if they prove themselves receptive and responsible. He finds Yusuf a quick learner, and Yusuf in turn regards Kılıç as his master. When he overhears Yusuf attributing his new skills to the grace of God, Kılıç scolds him stressing that Yusuf has acquired these skills because he kept his eyes open and used his wits, not because of some divine intervention. After a while Laz Kılıç decides to move on, and he leaves Yusuf with the following mottoes: "Be a slave to no-one, bow to no-one, and keep your mouth clean." and "If you can't live generously, don't crowd the world with your presence."<sup>20</sup>

Kürt Zeynel and Halo Şamdin are strong characters in quite a different way. Halo Şamdin knows little Turkish, but his instincts are sound and he has tremendous physical strength. He is inseparable from the outspoken Zeynel to whom he gives total loyalty. Zeynel is a more complex character. In the past he had worked alongside the site foreman, Cemo, who is probably also Kurdish but is not identified as such. They had both participated in a protest against unfair working practices. But since then, Cemo has compromised his integrity, not only by conniving with the landlords and getting promoted to foreman but also by selling his daughters into prostitution. Zeynel on the other hand has refused to accept injustice quietly. The issue that arises in this

---

<sup>20</sup> Orhan Kemal, *Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde*, 78.

novel is over food. Zeynel complains that the rice they are given to eat is full of stones and the bread is maggot-ridden. He points out that it is unfair that the bosses should be eating well-cooked meat, rice and yoghurt while the manual workers are provided with such bad food. As Zeynel continues to draw attention to this injustice, everybody has to acknowledge that he speaks the truth, but nobody other than Halo Şamdin is prepared to take action. Zeynel becomes such an irritation to Camo that he engineers the dismissal of the two Kurdish workers. The fearlessness of Zeynel in speaking the truth and his ability to assess what is just or unjust become legendary, but Zeynel is limited in his ability to effect any changes because of his lack of education. Instead he finds comfort in alcohol and hashish, and moves on to seek work elsewhere.

Orhan Kemal is arguably the most successful Turkish writer in his 'realistic' portrayal of life in Turkey. He has managed to combine his experiences of provincial and urban life, of life among factory workers, of life within minority communities, of life as a migrant, with his keen observation and ability to convey patterns of speech and thought. The result has proved to be a record of life among the ordinary people living in Turkey during times of momentous change which, unlike events of the present day, were rarely recorded on film. Today, many of the younger generation would not identify directly with his characters and plots, but most would have a parent or grandparent with very similar experiences and stories to relate.

### **Yaşar Kemal**

Yaşar Kemal, too, has written extensively about the struggle of poor Anatolians, and over his long writing career he has gradually attached more and more importance to the ethnic background of his characters. Although he has a Kurdish background himself, he has not singled out Kurds as being either better or worse than other ethnic groups. He has shown more interest in highlighting the plight of the helpless individual who is faced with local tyranny or irrational state policies.

Yaşar Kemal is one of the most prolific writers of Turkish literature with works spanning more than four decades from the early 1950's to the present day. He has received international recognition, particularly for his earlier novels which have been

translated into numerous languages. The value of his contribution to Turkish literature has been much discussed by literary critics and commentators in Turkey, yet on the whole the question of ethnicity in his works has been ignored or avoided. For example, one of the most respected Turkish literary analysts, Berna Moran, details the South Eastern Anatolian historical background to Yaşar Kemal's novels without mention of either Kurds or Armenians.<sup>21</sup>

An exception is Rohat, a Kurdish academic resident in Sweden, who has published a literary analysis of the Kurdish perspective in Yaşar Kemal's novels.<sup>22</sup> The main thrust of this analysis is to identify which major or minor characters are Kurds, but it has difficulty in explaining to the reader what differentiates Kurds from Turks living in the same region. This difficulty is recognised by Kreyenbroek, who writes: "A sense of identity is by its very nature an emotional rather than a rational thing, but shared customs and outlook, and a common history - whether real or mythical - normally play as important a part as language in generating such feelings."<sup>23</sup> This view is supported by Rohat's findings which suggest that the overriding bond among Kurds is a yearning for a homeland from which they have been banished. The image of this homeland is portrayed in romantic terms as a place where communities live in comfort and harmony according to traditions that are both benevolent and just. Rohat makes no reference to the recognised differences of language and religion among Kurds, nor to the frequent conflicts that occur between different groups of Kurds. He makes no reference to traditional rituals relating to births, marriages and deaths nor to the festival of *Nevroz*.<sup>24</sup> It is also true that these topics are scarcely mentioned in Yaşar Kemal's novels. Either consciously or unconsciously Yaşar Kemal has restricted himself to aspects of Kurdish life that are not only common to the majority of Kurds, but also to South East Anatolian inhabitants in general. A reading of Yaşar Kemal's

---

<sup>21</sup> Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış*, Vol. 2, 116-117.

<sup>22</sup> See Rohat, *Yaşar Kemal'in Yapıtlarında Kürt Gerçeği*.

<sup>23</sup> Philip G. Kreyenbroek, "Kurdish identity and the Language Question", 64.

<sup>24</sup> *Nevroz*, literally meaning "new day", is an ancient pre-Islamic festival celebrated in March to herald Spring. The festival has its roots in Zoroastrianism and is characterised by excursions to celebrate nature and the lighting of fires. It is celebrated all over Turkey, particularly by Kurds and Gypsies, but is disapproved of by strict Muslims.

works does not substantiate the impression given by Rohat that Kurdish issues are of over-riding importance to the author.

Events of the 1990's following the collapse of the Soviet Union have demonstrated how, after the break up of an empire, religious and ethnic intolerances emerge when different groups struggle to survive with the insecurity of a changing social order. Although ethnic conflicts are usually a symptom rather than the cause of this insecurity, the ethnic factor is often perceived as a fundamental element in these tensions. However, although many of Yaşar Kemal's works deal with the situation that developed in Anatolia following the collapse of the Ottoman empire, his main concern has been to highlight universal human needs and suffering rather than factional differences. Injustice, greed, cruelty and fear are contrasted with wisdom, generosity, kindness and heroism. The ethnic issue, though it has more prominence in later works, is secondary to his over-riding theme which calls for justice and tolerance for all citizens, regardless of ethnic or religious differences.

Yaşar Kemal was born in 1923, in Hemite formerly known as Gökçeli, a village in the Osmaniye district of Adana. He was originally named Yaşar Kemal Sadık Gökçeli, and adopted the pen-name Yaşar Kemal after settling in Istanbul. His father was a member of a Kurdish land-owning family in the Van district, and his mother came from a family that had produced some famous brigands, in particular her brother Mahiro and her uncle Çerko, who were later used by Yaşar Kemal as prototypes in his descriptions of brigands. During the First World War his family migrated from Van to Adana, where they settled as the only Kurdish family in Hemite a predominantly Turcoman village of about sixty households.

His father, Sadık Yaşar, was killed in front of Yaşar Kemal when he was five years old during a blood feud. The author was deeply affected by this violent death, and blood feuds feature prominently in his novels. He developed a bad stammer which he succeeded in overcoming by the age of twelve by singing songs. He also lost his right eye in an accident. Yaşar Kemal was brought up by his mother, Nigar Hatun, in extremely harsh conditions. His four siblings died of malaria. Since there was no

school in Hemite, he had to walk two kilometres to the elementary school in Burhanlı. Later he went to primary school in Adana but was unable to finish his education due to financial hardship. Yaşar Kemal draws heavily on his childhood experiences in the trilogy *Kimsecik* in which the head of a Kurdish family, İsmail Ağa,<sup>25</sup> is murdered, and the son, Mustafa, grows up haunted by fears of violence.

He began his working life in 1941 and is reputed to have had over forty jobs, including that of night watchman, cobbler's apprentice, casual labourer, street letter-writer, as well as secretarial and minor bureaucratic posts before he was able to earn his living from writing. These experiences proved to be valuable resources when he became a writer.

Despite his lack of formal education, Yaşar Kemal's literary talent was apparent from a young age. In 1939 his poem, "Seyhan", was published in *Görüşler*, a journal produced by Adana Halkevi. Two years later the same journal published his first piece of prose, "Yurd - 30 Ağustos İçin", which was written in praise of Atatürk. In 1940 Yaşar Kemal met the folk literature expert Pertev Naili Boratav who helped to promote his first book, *Ağutlar* [1943], which consisting of thirty laments many of which are identified as Kurdish. Yaşar Kemal continued to collect folk lore and after the two men met again in 1945, Boratav published an article in which he referred to the fact that Yaşar Kemal was studying was *Mem û Zîn*,<sup>26</sup> a work which had been proved to be Kurdish.<sup>27</sup> From this it is clear that although there were few references to Kurdish matters in his early fiction, Yaşar Kemal was aware of his Kurdish heritage from quite a young age. In fact his first short story, "Pis Hikaye" [1947] is about the troubles that beset a Kurdish family living in Çukurova, which they regard as a place of very low

---

<sup>25</sup> *Ağa* was a respectful form of address which was used particularly for men of land and property in Anatolia.

<sup>26</sup> *Mem û Zîn* was written by Ehmedê Xanî (more commonly known as Ahmed-i Hânî in Turkey) in 1695. It remained in handwritten form, available to only a handful of Kurdish scholars, until 1898 when some sections were published in *Kurdistan*, the first ever Kurdish newspaper which began publication in Egypt the same year. *Mem û Zîn* was first published in book form in 1919 in Istanbul in Arabic script. In 1957 it was translated into Arabic, and in 1962 into Russian. Eventually, in 1968, the work was published in Latin script with a Turkish translation but with certain omissions to comply with Turkish censorship rules. In spite of these cuts, the publication was banned in Turkey for several years. A Turkish translation of the full work, with historical and literary notes by M. Emin Bozarlan, was published in 1996.

<sup>27</sup> See Rohat, *Yaşar Kemal'in Yapıtlarında Kürt Gerçeği*, 27.

principles. This story was later included in *Sarı Sıcak* [1952], his first published collection of short stories.

In 1950 Yaşar Kemal was imprisoned in Kozan prison for nearly a year having been accused of trying to form a Communist Party. On his release he decided to settle in Istanbul and began work as a journalist for the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper in the regional news section. For the next four years he travelled extensively throughout Turkey, and produced a wide variety of articles which were later published in *Bu Diyar Baştan Başa* [1971]. Some of his travels took him to the Kurdish regions of Eastern and South Eastern Turkey where he collected material on Kurdish communities and folklore that he was to use later in his novels. At the same time he managed to convey some of the hardships experienced by people living in these remote regions through his newspaper columns.

Yaşar Kemal met Thilda, his future wife, in 1952. Thilda was a member of a well established Jewish community in Istanbul. She proved to be of great assistance in promoting his works in Turkey and abroad, and she translated several of his works into English. They have one son, Raşit Gökçeli, who owns Toros Yayınları that has sole publishing and distributing rights to Yaşar Kemal's works.

1955 was a turning point in Yaşar Kemal's life with the publication of his novel *İnce Memed*. The following year it received the *Varlık Edebiyat* Award for being the most widely read book in Turkey. It has since been translated into about 40 languages, including Kurdish. At the time few people could have expected such an influential work to be produced by a young journalist from the provinces. In the same year his next novel, *Teneke* [1955], was also published. (This work, which was staged several times in Turkey and abroad, was just as important to the author as *İnce Memed*.) In the same year Yaşar Kemal was awarded the *İstanbul Gazeteciler Cemiyeti* Award for journalism. Thus, in 1955, he suddenly became a well-known literary figure.

Since then Yaşar Kemal was won a number of national and international awards including : *Madaralı Roman* Award (1974), Best Foreign Novel Award (1979 -France), *Sedat Simavi Vakfı Edebiyat* Award (1985), International Duca Award

(1982 - France), the *Legion d'Honneur* awarded by President François Mitterrand (1984 - France) and the Orhan Kemal Novel Prize (1986).

In parallel to his literary work, Yaşar Kemal became involved in political work and joined the Turkish Labour Party. He was chosen to serve on the General Administrative Committee and organised the headquarters of the Party Propaganda Committee. He retained his links with the Labour Party until 1969 when he resigned. Between 1967 and 1971 Yaşar Kemal was one of the founder writers of the left wing weekly journal *Ant Dergisi*, a position that resulted in a month's imprisonment for him and his wife following the military ultimatum of 1971.<sup>28</sup>

Yaşar Kemal had been fired from the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper in 1963 for failing to contain his political views. He, thinking more as an author than a journalist, believed he should write about the social and political influences in his life. The hardship of his childhood years, his struggle to make a living as a young man, his experience in the Turkish Labour Party, and his talent with words gave his left wing views an authority and authenticity that were perceived as dangerous by the establishment.

Since 1970 Yaşar Kemal's literary output has been prolific. He has published 16 novels, as well as numerous articles and short stories. He began to travel to different parts of the world, sometimes staying abroad for months or years. Between 1978 and 1980 he and Thilda lived in Stockholm where he began the first volume of his trilogy *Kimsecik*, which, according to Rohat, is inspired by past events in his own family life.<sup>29</sup> It tells of a Kurdish family that leaves Van and migrates to Çukurova, and it contains frequent references to the feelings associated with being a migrant, feelings with which he would have been able to identify while living in a foreign land. The author became a much read and discussed literary figure in Sweden. Many articles about him and his works have appeared in Swedish newspapers and journals. In 1987

---

<sup>28</sup> This was a memorandum sent by the chief of the general staff to the prime minister, calling for the government to exercise greater control over the rising levels of anarchy. See Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey : A Modern History*, 271.

<sup>29</sup> Rohat, *Yaşar Kemal'in Yapıtlarında Kürt Gerçeği*, 34.



the Swedish Art Academy and The Swedish Writers' Association nominated him for the Nobel Literary Prize.

Despite the generally assumed knowledge of Yaşar Kemal's Kurdish background, he did not formally admit to this until the 1980s. His efforts to avoid further imprisonment, and possibly the pragmatic influence of his wife were factors in his decision to deny a cultural identity that was not formally recognised by the Turkish government. However as general awareness, both within and outside Turkey, of the Kurdish situation increased, he stopped denying his Kurdish identity, and in doing so further risked his personal freedom. In 1992 Akdeniz University decided to award him an honorary doctorate. He responded by presenting the university with a short analytical work entitled *Yerel Kültürden Evrensele* as a doctoral thesis. The journalist Oktay Ekşi wrote about the significance of giving such an honour to a Kurdish citizen, thus publicly establishing Yaşar Kemal's ethnicity once and for all.

Most of the themes in Yaşar Kemal's works are directly or indirectly related to the breakdown of society and culture following the demise of the Ottoman empire. He recognises that the sudden loss of a way of life which has dictated actions and loyalties for generations, leaves society in a state of disarray. Primitive survival instincts prevail over cultural traditions which have previously provided community discipline. At the same time, Yaşar Kemal is critical of the more brutal aspects of the old social order. In his novels there are despotic leaders desperately clinging to traditional tribal values, who are in stark contrast to the drifting, isolated, landless characters whose tribal lifestyle has already been destroyed. There are communities which, while still recovering from the disturbance to their ethnic balance caused by war-time events, the disappearance of the Armenians, and later the evacuation of the Greeks, have been forced to come to terms with new migrant neighbours from far off regions such as Van or the Caucasus. Yaşar Kemal repeatedly portrays individuals who have been traumatised by war and poverty. He is careful to point out how these conditions stunt the emotional and moral development of children. He regards fear as a highly negative emotion which causes violence or, conversely, reduces man to a state of passivity and

inactivity that hinders his personal development. In addition, the author highlights how such breakdowns in society allow opportunists to exploit the misfortunes of others and raise their status within the new social order.

Yaşar Kemal chose to set his novels in contexts that he himself had experienced or observed closely. It is therefore natural that much of his work is set among the communities of South Eastern Turkey where he grew up. However it was not until the 1970s that he began to identify and give prominence to Kurdish characters. His works feature ordinary people struggling with local issues, and contain no more than fleeting references to people at the centre of power. Among the ethnic groups which are represented in his novels are Turcoman, Kurds, Lazes, Caucasians, Greeks and Arabs. There is a noticeable absence of Jews,<sup>30</sup> and although references to Armenians are frequent, they are scarcely more than memories invoked by abandoned properties and gardens. In an account of his visit to Kadirli in 1930, Yaşar Kemal writes: "In the old days this town was mostly Armenian. Then they packed up their homes and left. . . . I lived in this town for years, but I didn't meet anyone who even mentioned the Armenians."<sup>31</sup> While many of his characters have a specified ethnic identity, the emphasis of his works is on universal social or moral divisions rather than ethnic or cultural differences. Among his leading characters there are landowners and the landless, cheaters and the cheated, the corrupt and the incorruptible, the generous and the greedy. No particular ethnic group is accorded a role of moral superiority.

As stated previously, in the early part of his career Yaşar Kemal was cautious about presenting characters with Kurdish identity. Apart from possible fears of government reprisals, he had earlier expressed a genuine belief in the Kemalist ideology of a Turkish nation state into which ethnic identity was secondary to national identity. Nevertheless he found ways of bringing the Kurdish factor into literature without provoking official disapproval. For instance, he kept the emphasis on the moral integrity of his characters by giving no more than a hint of their ethnic background, or

---

<sup>30</sup> This is perhaps surprising, given his wife's Jewish background.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Mahir Ünlü and Ömer Özcan, *20. Yüzyıl Türk Edebiyatı 4*, 229-230.

by juxtaposing good and bad Kurdish characters in a way that precluded accusations of bias. He introduced Kurdish characters into stories of a legendary nature which gives them a universality.

### *İnce Memed I and Teneke*

*İnce Memed I* [1955] can be read without the reader having any idea of Memed's Kurdish background. The theme of a young man fighting against injustice is universal and has no need of an ethnic element to hold the interest of its readers. However for those with some understanding of the area and the times, the author's references to maternal relatives of Memed, with names such as Mahiro and Çerko, suggest definite Kurdish family links.

In *Teneke* [1955] the author presents two Kurdish characters with very different senses of morality. Kürt Memed Ali is a former brigand who is trying to earn an honest living as a farmer in South Eastern Turkey. He attempts to pit his wits against the corrupt dealings of the local landowners and supports the Kemalist aspirations of a newly arrived young Kaymakam. The other character is Arif Saim Bey<sup>32</sup>, a man of great cunning who, despite his humble origins, cultivates friendships within the Ankara government, and mercilessly exploits the rural poor. During the War of Independence he had maintained contact with both sides until it became clear that Mustafa Kemal Paşa would win, after which he offered his allegiance to the Republicans. He settles in Çukurova and acquires extensive land by force or deceit. In Yaşar Kemal's novels such practices are mostly perpetrated by Turkish opportunists, so that by giving Arif Saim a Kurdish identity the author defies any suggestion that he believes any single ethnic group is guilty of greed and cunning. At the same time, the admirable nature of Kürt Memed' character suggests that moral integrity, idealism and humanitarian principles can be found just as easily among displaced Kurds in Southern Turkey as among idealistic Kemalists in Ankara. Ethnic identity is secondary to moral integrity in the characters of both Kürt Memed and Arif Saim.

---

<sup>32</sup> Arif Saim Bey is a prominent character in the first volume of *İnce Mehmed*. He also appears in *İnce Memed I* and *İnce Memed II*, and later in the *Kimsecik Trilogy* volumes 1 and 2.

Yaşar Kemal wrote several stories in the style of *efsane* or legend. The legend medium, with its archetypal characters set in an undetermined past age, allows the author to depict a fairy-tale land of Kurdish culture, heroes and heroines with a lack of caution not found elsewhere in his early works.

### *Ağrıdağı Efsanesi*

Ahmet, the hero of *Ağrıdağı Efsanesi* [1970] has almost god-like physical attributes. He is described as tall, with an abundant golden beard, a narrow face and large clear blue eyes that have the poignant expression of a roe deer. He is a man of great moral courage and chivalry, with a love and respect for horses and the traditions associated with them. Ahmet's lover, Gülbahar, is the daughter of Mahmut Khan, in whose castle Ahmet is imprisoned. She is dressed in the multi-skirted costume of mountain women with her hair in forty little plaits, and is perceived as both beautiful and saintly. Her attributes are like those of any conventional heroine of folk literature, with the addition that Gülbahar is described as clever, observant, contemplative, sociable, passionate, impulsive and an accomplished horsewoman. Although Gülbahar loves and admires her father, she is rebellious when she disagrees with him. She initiates her first meeting with Ahmet and abandons herself to her passion for him with no regard for the consequences. Her character is proactive rather than reactive, and has a more pivotal role in the plot than Yaşar Kemal's other heroines. It might be inferred that Yaşar Kemal's notion of realism precludes his inclusion of such females in his novels, whereas in the context of a 'legendary' tale he feels at liberty to create a female in line with his own ideals which are based on the more liberal traditions of Kurdish womanhood.<sup>33</sup>

Mahmut Khan's father is presented as an archetypal tribal leader of ancient times who, after studying at a Muslim Seminary in Erzurum, went to Istanbul where he obtained a post at the Sultan's court, and returned home as Paşa by appointment of the Sultan. He used to live in a huge castle to which he invited wise men, bards and poets.

---

<sup>33</sup> For a description of some of the female traditions in Kurdish society, see M. Emin Bozarslan, *Mem û Zîn*, 34-35.

A powerful eagle of a man and a fine horseman, he spent his summers out in the high pastures of Mount Ararat where he was both feared and respected by the mountain folk. Mahmut Khan is also highly educated and well-travelled. He is a loyal Ottoman who is also steeped in Kurdish tradition, yet finds he has difficulty in accepting these traditions when they are to his disadvantage. But if he deviates from tradition, he feels he is betraying his ancestral values. His haughty appearance and aristocratic bearing are attributes that are found repeatedly in tribal (usually Turcoman) leaders in the later novels.

The varied ethnic backgrounds of Mahmut Khan's four wives, who are respectively Armenian, Kurdish, Caucasian and Iranian, bear testimony to the fact that ethnicity was secondary to tribal identity. In the context of Asia Minor the descriptions of his daughters (Gülistan with her red hair and hazel eyes, fair-haired Gülriz, and Gülbahar with her 'burnt straw' complexion) suggest goddess-like appearances, yet their distinguishing features are only the inevitable outcome of cross-breeding.

Numerous other colourful characters appear in this tale including İsmail Ağa the sagacious counsellor, Memo who sacrifices his life for Gülbahar, Sofi the aged travelling musician and mystic, Huso the heretic blacksmith, the Sheikh of the Caravans with his miraculous powers, the shepherds who gather round Lake Kup every spring to play their pipes from dawn to dusk.

In this rich cultural setting the author gradually shifts the focus from the personal challenges of the central characters to a rejection of Ottoman imperialism and a call for the revival of selected traditional values and customs. The silent solidarity and peaceful uprising of ordinary people living in the area stretching from Mount Ararat to Lake Van is movingly told. It is one of the few examples in Turkish literature to hint at the link between Kurdish solidarity groups and Communist ideology .

Yaşar Kemal's major work of the mid-seventies was *Akçasazın Ağaları*, a two volume work consisting of *Demirciler Çarşısı Cinayeti* [1974] and *Yusuçuk Yusuf* [1975]. The two novels are structured around a blood feud between two Turcoman families (Sarıoğlu and Akyollu) whose lives are dictated by centuries of tradition which

mostly concern the defence of family honour. Attached to the Sariođlu family is a Kurdish family, of which Kürt Mahmut is dead by the end of volume one, and his son Yusuf dies in volume two.

### ***Demirciler Çarşısı Cinayeti***

At the start of *Demirciler Çarşısı Cinayeti*, there is a short tale which expresses the essence of the whole work and represents a traditional element of epic poetry. It is a short allegorical tale which conveys the message or moral of the long work that follows. In this case it is the tale of a young traveller who arrives in a town where social order prevails, the horses are strikingly handsome, and the people are happy and content. Years later the traveller returns to find the town in complete disarray, the horses gone, and the people unable to express their grief. This encapsulates Yaşar Kemal's message that the breakdown of an established order, however flawed, inevitably leads to much suffering until a new, hopefully better, order has evolved.

Much of *Demirciler Çarşısı Cinayeti* is devoted to the complicated character of Derviş Bey, the aristocratic head of the Sariođlu family. He has difficulty in implementing traditional practices which involve violence yet, unable to find acceptable alternatives, he applies them mercilessly. The story is set in the 1950's when the feudal *derebeylik* system was disintegrating and land owners were using exploitative practices to increase their power. Central to the plot of the novel, and representing (in the author's eyes) a negative aspect of the old system, is the role of a Kurdish family headed by Mahmut. Kürt Mahmut is raised by Derviş for the sole purpose of defending the Sariođlu family honour. Despite his status as a quasi-slave, his role within the family is of such importance that Derviş Bey trains him with utmost care in the traditions of courage and bravery, and grows to love him like a son. Kürt Mahmut has to set aside his own moral principles and his aversion to killing in order to obey the commands of Derviş Bey. And he has to undergo terrible torture in the protection of his master by keeping silent in line with the maxim that it is better to die than to tell. Although Kürt Mahmut knows very well that the task allotted to him of killing another

human is wicked, he nevertheless feels a misplaced pride in the trust that is placed in him. Despite feeling deeply hurt by Derviş Bey's perfunctory dismissal of him after the task is completed, Kürt Mahmut refuses to betray the master who has raised him. Thereafter his life is governed by guilt and a fear of death, a theme that Yaşar Kemal explores again in later works.

### *Yusufçuk Yusuf*

The second novel, *Yusufçuk Yusuf*,<sup>34</sup> continues to develop the same themes. Mahmut's son Yusuf is trained by Derviş Bey in exactly the same way as Mahmut. In spite of his hatred of violence, Yusuf also ends up killing for Derviş Bey. Like his father Yusuf tries to disclaim responsibility for his murderous act. He tries to convince himself that he committed the murder because of his status as 'slave' to Derviş Bey, and because avoidance of his task would have been viewed as 'unmanly' according to social convention. There is an additional motivation which is that Derviş Bey will not allow him to marry his sweetheart unless he completes the task. Perhaps most importantly, the act of killing dispels his shameful feeling of fear which has poisoned his life, and which is another theme developed by Yaşar Kemal in later works. Finally Derviş Bey kills Yusuf in an attempt to end the destructive tradition which he himself has perpetuated and in which Mahmut and Yusuf were merely pawns. The events leading up to this moment seem to represent the decline and extinction of a tribal system that is long past its 'golden age.' There is no particular significance in the fact that Mahmut and Yusuf are Kurdish. They could just as easily have been Turkish, though Kurds are renowned for their strength, bravery and loyalty. However by giving them Kurdish identity the author introduces a Kurdish element to the very core of the novels in a context where the controversial subject is one of class rather than ethnicity. It will be seen that Yaşar Kemal increasingly assigns roles of importance to ethnic minority characters.

During the last twenty years the location and characters in Yaşar Kemal's novels have broadened in scope, yet he still dwells mainly on the same themes: alienation,

---

<sup>34</sup> *Yusufçuk* means turtledove, synonymous with 'a tender loving person'.

fear, the horror and legacy of war and violence, and nostalgia for a past in which society's evils were obscured and contained by cultural traditions. In addition, the later works give substantially more prominence to the diversity of cultures constituting the composite 'Turkish' culture.

*Kuşlar da Gitti* [1978] and *Deniz Küstü* [1979] are the only novels of Yaşar Kemal's to be set in Istanbul. The first of these is a short novel about homeless children living in the ethnic melting pot of Dolapdere, and focuses particularly on a lad, presumably Laz, from Rize on the Black Sea. The enterprise and energy of these displaced youths overrides their cultural differences. The optimism with which Yaşar Kemal writes about this community of destitute children is reminiscent of Sait Faik's work.

### ***Deniz Küstü***

*Deniz Küstü* is a longer novel set in the fishing communities of Istanbul. The overriding theme is mankind's greedy exploitation of his environment, in this case the Marmara Sea. This is supplemented by psychological insights into the circumstances of war, abuse and exploitation. It examines how, when confronted with such extreme situations, some people are propelled into violence against their fellow men, while others find their abhorrence of violence is intensified. The universal nature of the principal plots allows the author to incorporate background details of the diverse characters without reducing the novel to a series of linked short stories, a shortcoming often found in lesser novelists. There are numerous character representations drawn from Istanbul's multicultural working communities such as the Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Circassians, Georgians and Gypsies in the Kumkapı district, and the Laz men who sleep rough in cargo boats.<sup>35</sup> The lives of three characters are traced in detail including Selim, a fisherman of Circassian descent, and two Laz youths, Zeynel and Dursun. The author does not suggest that their backgrounds are directly responsible for their individual tragedies, but the reader infers that they are relevant to the circumstances that have shaped their lives and characters.

---

<sup>35</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Deniz Küstü*, 52, 313.



Selim's Circassian ancestry is not confirmed until the ninth chapter when he describes his parents' journey from the Caucasus mountains, a journey which represents the large-scale exodus of Circassians from their homeland and their subsequent resettlement in Turkey. Selim relates how this painful experience is repeated when they are later forced to migrate from the mountains around Kayseri to Çukurova.<sup>36</sup> Whenever Yaşar Kemal refers to such forced migrations, he always emphasises the pain and suffering inflicted on those who have to leave behind homes and land, have to see the break up of their communities, and have to start rebuilding their lives in new and often alien environments. Selim, who moved to Istanbul after the death of his father, lives in the fishing community of Kumkapı after inheriting a fishing boat from a Greek fishing friend who had been forced to leave Istanbul. Despite his initial success as a fisherman, Selim's life is dictated by dilemmas. He has a nostalgic yearning to return to his family in Uzunyayla, yet is constantly lured towards the gambling and drinking haunts of Istanbul. He wants to get rich so that he can build a beautiful home for his bride, yet he hates the profitable practices of dolphin fishing which would enable him to achieve his aims.

In Zeynel the author presents an analysis of a certain type of criminal mind. Zeynel was born into the large Laz community in Rize on the Black Sea. After witnessing the massacre of his entire family, the shock left him unable to speak, eat or drink for days. When he finally emerges from this extreme trauma he has the instincts of a frightened wild animal. Zeynel eventually turns up in Menekşe, Istanbul, where he hides for months in a relative's house. He is too frightened to venture out until, at the age of about seventeen, he suddenly turns into a street hooligan. His name becomes linked with every robbery or fight in the area. Instead of running away, his fear now makes him confront everybody as a bitter enemy. After killing a well-known gangster in front of several witnesses, he takes a pride in his growing reputation as an outlaw with the ability to strike fear into a whole community and to outwit the police.

In contrast to Zeynel, Dursun Kemal, also a Laz, is friendly, gentle and loyal.

---

<sup>36</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Deniz Küstü*, 164.

His life has been hard, but he has had the benefit of maternal love which enables him to give love to others. Only after his mother is killed and he sees his friend Zeynel wrongly accused of her murder does he show signs of violence. Although the author clearly indicates that there is suffering among, and victimisation of the Laz community, there is no suggestion of any political reasons for this, only hints of underworld connections. The author delves beneath the surface of an ethnically mixed society to touch on some of the tensions that exist in any such multi-ethnic society.

Selim gives an account of his war experiences in the Mount Ararat region and describes how his commanding officer, Salih Paşa, gave orders for every Kurd to be shot on sight, and for one Kurdish village to be torched for every Turkish soldier shot by a Kurd. In the same paragraph, Yaşar Kemal states that Salih Paşa found favour with Atatürk, thus suggesting that such murderous campaigns were sanctioned by the government. This is counter-balanced by references to the willingness of some Kurdish Beys to collaborate with Turkish forces against Kurdish peasants, and to the willingness of some Turkish soldiers to spare Kurdish lives in return for gold. In other words, the author is careful to make it clear that there were no innocents, that everybody becomes tainted by the evil of war.

Later in the novel, the author exposes an ugly side of the right-wing nationalism that gained prominence in Turkey during the late thirties and early forties. He introduces three country lads who have been recruited by the police force and told that their 'pure Turkish blood' gives them a superiority over those of mixed race. Yaşar Kemal goes on to say that these young men represent twenty thousand such men in the police force and that they profess to be "sworn enemies of those Kurds, Lazes, Circassians, Jews and immigrants, especially the immigrants, and the Salonicians, those turncoat Jews . . ." <sup>37</sup> The mission of these extremists is to exterminate three million people, banish another five million, and replace them with 'true Turks' from Central Asia. Although the author gives mitigating background circumstances for the behaviour and attitudes of this trio of policemen, the spitefulness and the psychopathic cruelty of

---

<sup>37</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Deniz Küstü*, 173-180.

the nationalist movement emerges without the relief of any counterbalancing argument. Almost seven pages are devoted to the bullying tactics of the police towards ordinary civilians whose only known 'fault' is that they are of ethnic minority extraction, or that they are poor and therefore likely to have communist sympathies. This is the first time that Yaşar Kemal allows himself to indulge in an open expression of antipathy towards the political ideology of a powerful civilian Turkish institution.

***Kimsecik Trilogy: Yağmurcuk Kuşu, Kale Kapısı, Kanın Sesi***

The *Kimsecik Trilogy*, (comprising *Yağmurcuk Kuşu* [1980], *Kale Kapısı* [1986], and *Kanın Sesi* [1991]) is the author's most ambitious completed set of works to date. The plot revolves around a Kurdish family that, having been driven away from Van, attempts to establish a new life in Çukurova. The themes, by now familiar, include the traumatising effects of war, the tragedy and alienation of a people who have been forced to leave their homes, the fear experienced by both victim and perpetrator that accompanies every act of violence, the contrast of good and evil, and issues associated with exploitation and poverty. Although most of the themes have been worked into earlier novels, they are tackled here with a new openness and boldness.

İsmail Ağa is an archetypal paternal figure with universally admired qualities. They include bravery, generosity, resourcefulness, shrewdness, dependability, and a high sense of morality. He has a large capacity for love yet cannot express it easily, particularly towards his wife in their early years of marriage and later towards his adopted son. After İsmail Ağa's death at the end of the first volume, his wife Zeyro, replaces him as the symbol of parental strength. The Kurdish identity of these two figures is not overplayed or romanticised, but the portrayal of such upright and dependable Kurdish characters as the central figures of three long volumes is a new departure in Turkish fiction. Their son, Mustafa, is the eternal child figure, and almost certainly based on the author's own childhood experiences. Much-loved and intrinsically good, he is unable to comprehend the wickedness he encounters in his adoptive brother Salman. In Mustafa, the author once again creates a gentle, nature-

loving child whose entire life is dominated by fear of violence, though this time in very different circumstances to those of Mahmut and Yusuf in *Akçasaz'ın Ağaları*.

In contrast to Mustafa and his parents, İsmail Ağa's adopted son Salman represents the forces of evil. Although the author uses stereotyping devices to intensify the aura of malevolence that surrounds him, such as his strange appearance, his unidentified origins, his talking in a foreign tongue unknown to Turks, Kurds or Circassians, Yaşar Kemal seems reluctant to present such an evil character without suggesting reasons for his warped development. Having been left to die as an infant, Salman is subsequently found and revived by İsmail Ağa's family. He develops an obsessive love for İsmail Ağa which turns to hatred when he finds himself ignored following the birth of Mustafa. Salman's panic and bewilderment at losing the only love he has ever known results in a propensity for cruelty towards children and animals, and a burning drive to acquire skills that will ensure his physical superiority over his real or imagined enemies. Despite the detailed account of Salman's tragic beginnings, the author does not seek to justify his wicked actions, but suggests that evil is triggered by other acts of evil and is not an inevitable feature of mankind. He hints that the goodness bestowed on Salman by İsmail Ağa would have more or less repaired the damage inflicted by his natural parents had not Mustafa's arrival altered the family chemistry.

While the central characters of this trilogy are Kurdish, Yaşar Kemal makes frequent references to the multicultural nature of Eastern and Southern Anatolia. He indicates that certain languages are known by many of the multi-lingual inhabitants, while other languages remain strange and mysterious. He presents a romanticised perception of life in Eastern Anatolia before it was destroyed by men of power and politics. The following passage in *Yağmurcuk Kuşu* describes how the local people used to go up to the natural paradise of Esrükdağı where every day would be a celebration enjoyed by Kurds and Armenians alike:

Esrükdağı was full of thousands of knee-high flowers and grasses. A gentle cool breeze blew continuously, and the mountain was bathed in a

sweet sunlight. On the mountain pastures, every day was like a wedding festival. Players with drums and reed instruments would wander across the pastures. Half of the villages were Armenian. But they too spoke Kurdish. There was never any suggestion of massacres or hostility between them. At Easter, Kurds painted eggs just like the Armenians, and Armenians joined the Feast of Sacrifice by slaughtering animals. For centuries this brotherhood and friendship continued unbroken until the present day. Armenians would pray to their God in the mosques, Muslims would perform *namaz* in the churches. For İsmail Ağa, the days of massacre were the bitterest days of his life.<sup>38</sup>

There is also a long description of Kuş Memet and Mustafa participating in a ritualistic dance to offset feelings of fear. The words they sing and the steps they dance have unknown ancient origins that are perhaps Kurdish, perhaps belong to Salman's strange language, or quite possibly are of gypsy origin. The author emphasises that in this area where language is no barrier, the children are able to express feelings which are common to all people through the medium of song and dance.

There are a number of references to multi-lingual abilities in less appealing contexts, such as the wounded soldier who cries aloud in Arabic, Kurdish, Zaza, and Suryani about how the Ottoman army were defeated not by Russians but by lice infestation, and how the few survivors kept themselves alive by rampaging and plundering Yezidi, Armenian and Alevi households.<sup>39</sup> Yaşar Kemal often refers to the linguistic talents of children. Salman learns to speak Turkish well, and is proud to act as translator for İsmail Ağa, yet he reverts to a language that even he cannot identify when his nightmare fantasies begin.<sup>40</sup> When Salman is no longer able to return home he joins one of the wild gangs of armed orphan children who roam the region scavenging for food. They included Georgian, Circassian, Karapapak, Terekeme, Afşar, Kurdish, Armenian, Yezidi, Arab, Assyrian and Nestorian children who at first

---

<sup>38</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Yağmuncuk Kuşu*, 56.

<sup>39</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Yağmuncuk Kuşu*, 61-62.

<sup>40</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Yağmuncuk Kuşu*, 118-119, 168.

speak their own separate languages but soon settle on a common language.<sup>41</sup> The gangs of children are also mentioned in the next volume (*Kale Kapısı*) by İskender Çavuş before he sets out to kill Salman. He talks about the packs of wild dogs and the gangs of children (including Armenians, Kurds, Jews, and Turcoman) that raid towns and villages killing and getting killed for mere morsels of food.<sup>42</sup>

Armenians are represented by just one character, Onniki, who has survived the massacres and remains in hiding in Anatolia. He is always a reliable and loyal friend to İsmail Ağa. Yaşar Kemal repeatedly mourns the disappearance of the Armenians, the immorality of which is expressed through İsmail Ağa's mother on her deathbed. With the kind of intuitive wisdom common to elderly Anatolian women, she warns İsmail Ağa and Zero never to inhabit a house vacated by Armenians:

“My son, if you go to that town I beg one thing of you, don't accept any of the houses or fields left behind by the Armenians. When a bird flees a nest, another can never nest there. It cannot become the nest of that which destroys it. A house that does not respect its owner will not shelter another. The fields of tyranny will bring more tyranny.”<sup>43</sup>

İsmail Ağa remembers these words when shortly afterwards he is offered a substantial farm house that was recently vacated by an Armenian. İsmail Ağa's refusal to accept this property, despite his refugee status, and his insistence on respecting the memory of Armenians provokes a furious outpouring of anti-Armenian sentiments from Arif Bey, the head of the resettlement bureau. The insults that emanate from Arif Bey indicate the sort of rivalry for land and prestige that had existed between the more affluent members of the different ethnic groups in Çukurova before the disappearance of the Armenians.

Towards the end of the novel a number of dark suggestions are made in dialogue passages between unidentified speakers, suggesting the spread of gossip and rumour. There is speculation as to the integrity of upright (Kurdish) İsmail Ağa, the

---

<sup>41</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Yağmurcuk Kuşu*, 395.

<sup>42</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Kale Kapısı*, 289.

<sup>43</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Yağmurcuk Kuşu*, 102.

possibility of (Kurdish) Arif Saim betraying Mustafa Kemal Paşa, and the suspected Yezidi origins of Salman. There is the appearance of beautiful Dal Emine, supposedly a Yezidi, who takes both İsmail and Salman to her bed, and the shameful discovery that an Armenian who had converted to Islam, unnamed but possibly the above-mentioned Onniki, had been allowed to die from starvation in the mountains. These are shocking topics which are in total contravention to the moral and ethical codes of every Anatolian, Muslim or otherwise. Perhaps for this reason Yaşar Kemal avoids open debate and restricts himself to almost surrealist sequences, reminiscent of Sait Faik's handling of taboo subjects in his late works.

In the second volume (*Kale Kapısı*) Yaşar Kemal makes a conscious attempt to include more cultural detail. The second chapter gives a long detailed account of İsmail Ağa's funeral ceremony which starts with a long lament in Kurdish by Mustafa's paternal uncle and describes the arrival of a group of tall swarthy Kurds on horseback. They wear goat skin jackets, woollen shalvars, rawhide sandals and embroidered woollen stockings, and they wait outside the house paying their respects in silent sorrow. A grand funeral feast is held which is attended by Kurdish and Turcoman dignitaries. The lengthy meal is interrupted by the arrival of a famous Turcoman lamenter named Telli Hatun. To have Telli Hatun present at a Kurdish funeral is considered a great honour, for no person lamented by her is ever forgotten. She is joined by numerous other famous female lamenters, each elaborately dressed in distinctive style according to their own region or culture. They begin their ritual lament with each of them holding a symbolic possession belonging to İsmail. Eventually İsmail Ağa's widow, Zero, takes the lead. She sings in Turkish, Kurdish and Farsi about the beauty of their Van homeland. Afterwards, there is a ritual washing of the corpse before it is taken to the mosque for a quiet ceremony and buried in the graveyard accompanied by a special Kurdish lament. A succession of visitors continues to arrive at the household. Women guests are taken to the women's quarters where they each unwrap İsmail Ağa's blood-stained clothes and begin their individual laments in turn.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Kale Kapısı*, 29-47.

A special visitor is Veli Dede. He goes straight to the grave where he sings and plays his saz quietly all night until daybreak when he disappears. This behaviour, identified as being in the *Kızılbaş* tradition, draws criticism from some quarters.<sup>45</sup> For Veci Dede to visit the grave without first going through the ritual of ablution and *namaz*, and for him to play his “devil’s instrument” next to İsmail Ağa’s grave is considered blasphemous. However, the single unobserved witness to Veli Dede’s night long vigil, swears that the words and melodies that came from his lips that night were the most moving ever heard.<sup>46</sup>

A grisly episode, in which Zero summons the local gendarmes to remove a rotting human head from her door, is given some light relief when the otherwise fearless Kurdish Ramo refuses to stand on a piece of marble that has writing etched on it. Nothing will persuade him to go against his superstition, even though the writing is in ancient Greek. He later chooses another piece of stone with the relief of a woman’s face on it. He has no qualms about standing on this one in order to cut down the fly-infested skull.<sup>47</sup>

In following episodes the young Mustafa has brushes with mysticism in his friendships with the master craftsman Abbas Usta and the Kurdish Sufi poet Abdal Sofi. Abbas Usta talks to Mustafa about his lifelong search for perfection in a piece of walnut wood. According to legend, the walnut trees that grow on the Taurus mountains contain within them reflections of the scenes they have witnessed. Eventually Abbas Usta finds a piece of walnut wood which represents perfection in his eyes. The grain depicts mountains, a bird, a gazelle, and there is an exquisitely perfumed knot in the wood which is formed like a beautiful flower of Paradise.<sup>48</sup> Abdal Sofi comes from a long family line of Kurdish minstrels. He travels vast distances on foot with his ‘magical’ cane to alleviate distress or mourning by reciting long epic poems about family history and singing ballads. His presence is regarded as a blessing to any

---

<sup>45</sup> *Kızılbaş* is another term for *Alevi*, which is a sect of the minority Shia branch of Islam.

<sup>46</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Kale Kapısı*, 58-60.

<sup>47</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Kale Kapısı*, 166-167.

<sup>48</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Kale Kapısı*, 207.



household he visits because of the healing effect of his words and music.<sup>49</sup>

### ***Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana***

At the time of writing, only one volume of Yaşar Kemal's trilogy *Bir Ada Hikayesi* has been published entitled *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana* [1998]. This novel is set at the time of the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923. For Yaşar Kemal this novel breaks new ground in two ways. Firstly the theme of evacuation and exile is presented as a core issue rather than as a secondary element. Secondly ethnic and cultural issues are given prominence right from the start. This novel is a determined effort to relate, through fiction, events of the war-torn years leading up to 1923 through the eyes of ordinary citizens living in Anatolia, including Greeks, Turks, Circassians, Kurds and others.

The action takes place on an imaginary Mediterranean island called Karınca Island from which the Greek community are forcibly deported to the Greek mainland. A single Ottoman Greek war veteran, Vasili, remains hidden on the island where he vows to shoot the first person to set foot there. In the meantime another war veteran named Poyraz Musa buys property on the apparently deserted island in the hope that one day it will have a flourishing community.

The lives of all the characters have been affected by the wars of the previous decade. Men who have seen active war service are traumatised, while those who remained behind have encountered opportunities for quick gain which they have either exploited or avoided, according to their individual consciences. The author touches on several of the major war incidents, each time through the experiences of local inhabitants or of soldiers in the field. These events include the battle at Çanakkale, the Greek invasion of Izmir, and the massacres in South Eastern Anatolia of both Muslims and Christians including Kurds, Yezidis, and Armenians. Yaşar Kemal does not glorify any of the military campaigns and there are no war heroes. He concentrates on the unimaginably violent deaths, the starvation, the disease and, for those who survive, the trauma and grief.

---

<sup>49</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Kale Kapısı*, 197-199.

The first section of the novel convincingly describes the disbelief with which the news of the forthcoming Greek evacuation is received by Greek and non-Greek alike, and how a state of denial exists until the very last moment. Although the government order has been confirmed, there is a general feeling that it is all a bureaucratic mistake. The fact that Greek citizens have lived in the region for over three thousand years and that they speak Turkish, the realisation that the inevitable upset to the regional economic and social balance will be of no benefit to the region, the disbelief that Greek war veterans of the Ottoman army could be exiled, these are examples of how the locals convince themselves that the government will acknowledge that a mistake has been made.

As they wait for news, the atmosphere of mourning changes to nervousness every time a visitor arrives, and the mounting suspense manifests itself in futile quarrels between Greeks over property boundaries. When the inevitability of the situation begins to dawn, the non-Greeks start to become active. Some of them draw up a petition on behalf of a particularly valued and loved Greek fisherman, some exhibit great kindness and generosity to their Greek neighbours, while others realise they can exploit the situation to their own advantage and start activating opportunist schemes. The shock and suffering experienced by people forced to leave the only home and environment they have ever known is conveyed through the thoughts of Vasili as he reflects on several of the characters who have left and on his own reasons for staying behind on Karınca Island.

The long middle section deals with Vasili's determination to kill the newly arrived Poyraz Musa, and his process of self-examination as he finds himself unable to put his thoughts into action. While he stalks Poyraz Musa around the island, his shell-shocked state of mind is gradually revealed. Vasili sees Poyraz Musa in the guise of different officers that he has encountered in the Ottoman army. He believes him to be personally responsible for the killings and massacres that he witnessed while fighting for the Ottoman cause.

In the meantime a series of prospective settlers arrive on the island. Ostensibly

their reasons for not staying are different in each case, but they each have a sense of unease in such a deserted place. One of these visitors is Ali Paşa Selim Bey, an immigrant (*mübadil*) who has been evacuated from Salonica and forced to settle in Turkey. Ali Paşa had tried to work the system to his advantage by buying up acres of land in Greece in the mistaken belief that the same amount of land would be allotted to him in Turkey. His bad use of the Turkish language, his muddled thoughts on Turkish politics and “Kemal Mustafa Paşa” (sic) show him to be a complete foreigner in Turkey. He has no wish to be there, and he regards his exile as a punishment for past sins.<sup>50</sup>

Right at the end of the novel, a positive note is struck when Captain Kadri, decides to move to the island. He takes his mother to live in the beautiful home of a departed and much loved Greek friend called Keti Sotiri. This final episode suggests that there is a future for the island. In contrast to İsmail Ağa’s (*Yağmurcuk Kuşu*) refusal to inhabit a house from which its Armenian inhabitants have been forced to move, Kadri works through his doubts on this matter. His decision to move to the island suggests that perhaps it is better to use and care for these abandoned homes, while at the same time preserving the memory of their previous owners, than to leave them to decay as ghostly reminders of past tragedies.

The novel is interwoven with characters of various ethnic origins, including Turks, Greeks, Caucasians, Kurds and Arabs. Each character represents a particular aspect of their respective ethnic group. Among the Turks there is the unpleasant Hacı Remzi, who mercilessly exploits the forced exodus of Greeks by buying their valuable possessions at low prices, saying: “This has been your home for three thousand years, hasn’t it? This has been your land for three thousand years hasn’t it? Well you’ve been here long enough. You made this land stink for three thousand years.”<sup>51</sup> There is Ali Osman Reis who, together with his Greek partner Sakıza, is thought to have smuggled arms to Mustafa Kemal Paşa’s troops, and who articulates the confusion and disbelief

---

<sup>50</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 189.

<sup>51</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 59.

felt by the islanders on the day the Greeks are finally forced to board the boat that takes them away;<sup>52</sup> there is Captain Kadri, a warm generous Turk who cannot envisage life without the Greek community;<sup>53</sup> there is Cemil, a veterinary surgeon, who hoped to live on the island but finds it too desolate.<sup>54</sup> There is also Salonican Ali Paşa Selim Bey, mentioned above, who longs for his old urban life in Greece, and Dr Selman Sami, who by his name and profession is likely to be Jewish but is not identified as such. He too has been traumatised by his experiences as a military doctor at the wartime hospital that had been established on Karınca Adası. Despite his love for the island, he is unable to remain there because he cannot endure the sad memories.<sup>55</sup>

The most prominent Greek character is of course Vasili. Despite the fact that he is the only Greek to have remained behind, Yaşar Kemal never suggests any fundamental difference between him and other local inhabitants. On the contrary, he is portrayed as a man who above all belongs to the habitat and culture in which he has been raised. He is familiar with all the flora and fauna on the island, and with the waters that surround it. He acquired his fishing knowledge from his father, the best fisherman on Karınca Island. The family home, built by an Armenian, contains possessions of Istanbul quality such as could never be found in Athens. There is an island identity that bonds together the different ethnic elements similar to that in Sait Faik's *Medari Maişet Motoru*.

Perikles Karagüloğlu is a man of some standing in the original island community.<sup>56</sup> He had saved the life of Hacı Remzi when they were fighting side by side in the Ottoman army. He feels so betrayed by the manner in which Hacı Remzi informs him of the evacuation order that he packs up his household and leaves immediately, saying that he cannot remain in a place that repays his past efforts in this way.

Panos Valyanos is one of the best fishermen in the region. He has had

---

<sup>52</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 158.

<sup>53</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 68.

<sup>54</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 202.

<sup>55</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 203.

<sup>56</sup> It is not explained how he acquired a Turkish surname.

countless young apprentices, each of whom he has cared for like a father. The local Muslim community, consisting of Turks, Circassian, Georgians and Kurds, cannot imagine life without Panos. They start a campaign, collecting signatures for a petition asking that he be singled out to remain on the island in order to train fishermen. Despite their confidence that this petition will succeed in Ankara, Panos understands the reality. He presents his valuable boat to Captain Kadri, one of his previous apprentices, and leaves with the other Greeks. His sadness is only alleviated by his sense of honour at having given his possessions away without asking for anything in return.<sup>57</sup>

One of the visitors to the desolate island is Lena Papazoğlu, an elderly Greek woman who was forced to go Athens, but escapes and returns home to wait for her sons. Her four sons had gone to fight at Çanakkale and she holds on to her belief that they are still alive and serving alongside Mustafa Kemal Paşa. Lena is utterly convinced that Mustafa Kemal will send two of her sons to find her and take her to meet him.<sup>58</sup> Lena's presence on the island causes an immediate change of atmosphere. She brings female domesticity and motherly love into the human equation, and for the first time it seems possible that a community might be re-established there.

Poyraz Musa is a somewhat mysterious character. It becomes clear that he is of Circassian origin when he encounters a Chechnian, Üzeyir Han, during his bid to buy property on Karınca Island. We learn that Poyraz Musa is an assumed name, and there is considerable speculation among the locals as to his true identity. During the course of the novel his character emerges as principled, generous and warm. From the accounts of his memories of war-time experiences he emerges as self-reliant, enterprising, brave, and disciplined. He also has a taste for fine clothes and artifacts.

When Poyraz Musa comes face to face with Üzeyir Han, a proud but kindly Chechnian aristocrat who is now reduced to living in humble circumstances and working as a lowly civil servant, he assumes the manner of one Caucasian aristocrat addressing another. He speaks with great deference towards the older man,

---

<sup>57</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 66-69.

<sup>58</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 220-222.

acknowledging the two thousand seven hundred years of Uzeyir Han's family history. He also explains how his own family came from Dagestan to Uzunyayla in the Taurus mountains, and mourns the fact that the Circassians became a race of slaves scattered throughout the world. He compares their history of persecution to that of the Jews.<sup>59</sup>

Towards the end of the novel the author gives a long account of Poyraz Musa's life before his arrival on the island.<sup>60</sup> Having joined the army as a youth, he saw men in their thousands dying of typhus, bitten by bugs or freezing to death. Eventually what was left of his company plundered their way down to the Mesopotamian plain, by which time they were reduced to just seven men. Here they found people had plenty of food and were very hospitable. Some of the locals, including Kurds, Arabs and Turks, armed themselves and set off to hunt Yezidis. They were joined by a few survivors of military regiments in the area including Poyraz Musa.

A harrowing account follows of how Yezidi migrants were slaughtered and whole villages completely wiped out. The Yezidi corpses were thrown into the Tigris and their valuables shared among the attackers. The half-crazed perpetrators of these massacres justify their actions as being a mission on behalf of God to eradicate disciples of the Devil. The leader of this hunting group is evidently an educated man who speaks Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish and Circassian. He tells his men a Yezidi myth that there is a hoard of treasure in Laliş which is guarded by a black seven-headed snake, a dragon and a peacock (which is supposedly the devil in disguise). First the peacock has to be killed, then the snake because it has been working with the devil since the time of Adam and Eve. At the time of the great floods it boarded the arc but was thrown off by Noah after which the snake slithered onto the back of the devil and they came together to Laliş when the floods subsided. The first attack on Laliş was a failure, and Poyraz Musa escaped to Haran before the leader could make his next attempt.

Poyraz Musa had to report to a gruff Kurdish army captain who had been sent to the region by Mustafa Kemal Paşa to organise a campaign against the French. The

---

<sup>59</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 32-34.

<sup>60</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 236-275.

captain gave his men enough money to equip themselves with the finest military clothes boots and arms which were freely available at the Urfa bazaar. The French were easily intimidated and quickly defeated. The French retreat meant that large numbers of army stragglers were left with plentiful supplies of Turkish and French arms but no war to fight so, knowing no other way of life, they banded together to attack Bedouins.

Poyraz Musa relates how he was wounded in a skirmish with some Bedouins, and was delivered by his horse to the tent of another aristocratic figure, Emir Sultan, who is an interesting and mysterious character.<sup>61</sup> He claims to be a Sunni Muslim, also an Assyrian, and he has a beautiful, cultured Circassian wife. Through Emir Sultan the author gives another lengthy account of the persecution and massacres of the Yezidi communities in Eastern Anatolia. It is at this point in the novel that Emir Sultan utters the words in the title. In the context of the Yezidi massacres he says: "For days and months the Euphrates has been overflowing with dead bodies. See, the water of the Euphrates is running red with blood."<sup>62</sup> He explains that having spent a few years living with Yezidis he learnt how their customs differ from those of Muslims, that they have no holy book but worship the elements of nature, that they utter spontaneous prayers to the sun three times a day, that they perceive all wars as massacres and never kill another human being, despite the endless attacks which have been made against them. There is special mention of the fluid warmth and beauty of their language which Emir Sultan believes has contributed to the richness of the regional legends and mythology:

Their language was Kurdish. It was very rich, very warm. I knew this language. Everybody knows each other's language here. This language was so warm, so inclusive, so magical in the way it removed barriers between people that I was happy to study it more. Their language is not two-faced. Their language has no dark side to it. Some languages become ossified, unwieldy or lose their warmth. Even

---

<sup>61</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 241.

<sup>62</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 244.

Arabic has become an unwieldy language. The Kurdish language I found in those mountains was a language of warmth and love that elevates the heart.<sup>63</sup>

It is during his stay with Emir Sultan that the reader learns that Poyraz Musa was originally named Abbas. After leaving Emir Sultan, Poyraz roams the area in a state of post war trauma. Eventually he decides to visit his own village, where he finds all the houses deserted. Nobody in the neighbouring villages can understand how a whole village can disappear. His situation is similar to that of everyone he meets. Everybody is in a state of grief and perplexity. Nobody knows if any of the vanished people will return. The author makes it quite clear that in his eyes all the different factions living in the area suffered equally, there were no winners.

In this novel Yaşar Kemal has taken care to draw his main characters from different ethnic backgrounds in an attempt to make the context of the plot as inclusive as possible. The emphasis is on the diversity of cultures in Anatolia, and on the terrible experiences suffered by each ethnic group during the wars. At the end of the century in which these historical events took place, and at a time when there is an increase in the number of ethnic voices being heard through the media and art, the author shows that no single group can claim a monopoly on suffering. The novel has an educative quality in the way it attempts to present events in a non-partisan, inclusive light, and to promote tolerance and love towards fellow men regardless of their origins. Yaşar Kemal has taken an important step forward by unveiling the mixed ethnic and cultural elements of Turkey. He seems to think that it is essential for the stories of different groups to be told, and he expresses real regret at some of the treatment meted out to these groups in the past, but he never allows bitterness to infiltrate the tone of the novel, nor to become a basis for subversive ideology.

---

<sup>63</sup> Yaşar Kemal, *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana*, 246.



## Conclusions

The writers featured in this study constitute a disparate group in that they represent not only different stages of the twentieth century but very different views and outlooks. They have perceived minorities as integral to the social fabric, as a contrast to so-called Turkish society, or sometimes as elements of an idealised society. None of the authors has written with the specific purpose of denigrating or promoting a particular ethnic group, although most of them have displayed negative attitudes towards one or other minority group at different stages in their writing careers.

One effect of the early twentieth century conflicts was to raise Ottoman awareness of rebellious or resentful attitudes held by ethnic groups. These groups had previously been taken for granted as minority elements of the Ottoman empire, until they started to prove they could exercise strong influence in international circles. Not surprisingly, authors of the time wrote mostly about the feelings and emotions experienced by the people they knew best, that is the Turkish element of Istanbul society. Much of their literature is pervaded by a sense of bafflement as to how and why the situation deteriorated so rapidly, suggesting an ignorance of, and/or lack of interest in, the historical complexities of war. While it is probably true to say that between them the writers in the first part of this study represent most of the views held by Istanbul Turks at the time, readers should not expect to find balanced historical accounts in fiction written during or just after this period of conflict.

Hüseyin Rahmi conveyed the changes in perception and attitude of Istanbul society towards foreigners and non-Turkish Ottomans as war developed from being a possibility to a reality. Halide Edip's fiction mirrored her emergence from a comfortable lifestyle, in which minority elements of society aided and enhanced her personal environment, to committed participation in partisan wartime activities. Reşat Nuri, although he showed signs of being able to write a good war story, displayed little interest in war. For him victory was less a reason for celebration than an opportunity

for implementing programmes of social renewal and reform.

It was not until the end of the twentieth century, by which time few people remained of that generation, that an attempt was made by Yaşar Kemal to write a comprehensive overview of the war years in Anatolia. Yaşar Kemal has made no attempt to set his novels in an international context, but he has written from an Anatolian perspective rather than the well-worn viewpoint of Istanbul urbanites. Of course he has written without first-hand experience of these events but he has brought a complexity to the perception of these wars by including accounts of, and references to, events involving various minority communities living in Anatolia. He has used the demographic changes that affected Kurds, Armenians, Yezidis, and later Anatolian Greeks as a background to the plots of his novels which continually emphasise the pointlessness of war and its heavy cost in human terms.

The post-independence generation of writers showed little interest in the events of the preceding wars, nor in the Greek/Turkish population exchange. This is perhaps understandable in view of Turkey's enormous need to recover from decades of war and to unite in the implementation of regenerating the country. Clearly this generation wanted to forget the recent past and concentrate on the present and future of Turkey. However, the absence of contextual background information in much literature of this time gave a false impression of a country that was ethnically homogeneous. Rare exceptions were Sabahattin Ali's reference to the social decay in rural life following the population exchange and Sait Faik's allusions to past sufferings of Greek individuals living in Istanbul. Even Halikarnas Balıkcısı, with his knowledge of classical Greek history and mythology, made no reference to the deportation of Greeks from the Anatolian regions that became his adopted home.

The picture of social interaction between different ethnic groups in pre-republic literature was of an Ottoman society which had no defined ethnicity, but whose daily needs were attended to by servants or tradesmen with clearly defined ethnic minority status. In the early works of Halide Edip these servants were either ignored or dismissed as unimportant members of domestic scenarios. Hüseyin Rahmi created a

more balanced picture in which minorities, despite retaining traditional roles as targets of ridicule, were at least allowed to display signs of intelligence, wit and individuality.

As the threat of war encroached on Istanbul, the general perception of minorities in the works of Hüseyn Rahmi and Halide Edip changed from that of trusted servant to disloyal or suspicious alien. This was taken even further by Halide Edip when she railed against the Greeks sent from Greece in her nationalistic wartime novels. Hüseyn Rahmi focused more on the resentment felt by Turks over the high taxes they had always paid and the fact that they lost their sons in war while non-Muslim minority families had grown rich and healthy. Reşat Nuri tried to maintain a balanced attitude towards all factions but conceded that in times of war each person was obliged to choose one side.

Social interaction between different indigenous ethnic groups was featured much less in post-war fiction. This was in part a reflection of reality since most non-Muslims had by now left Turkey, but the steady exodus of most of the remaining Greeks and Jews during these years went largely unmentioned in fiction. Writers such as Reşat Nuri, Sait Faik and Haldun Taner were the exception rather than the rule in as much as they touched upon inter-ethnic relations at all. The migration to Anatolia of Muslims from former Ottoman territories, such as the Caucasus, the Balkans, Crete, and following the population exchange Greece, created new tensions which were hinted at in some works of Reşat Nuri and Sait Faik. Orhan Kemal introduced a new perspective on the plight of the immigrant with his personal experience as a reluctant emigre and because of his links through marriage to a Bosnian community. He wrote with authenticity about the feelings of degradation that accompanied the loss of home, material security and, even more importantly, social status and cultural identity. He portrayed these experiences with a new understanding of the difficulties associated with forced migration. At the same time he identified a collective mistrust among Anatolians of the intelligent, ambitious, and educated European type.

There seems to have been a general consensus among the writers in this study that life was better when ethnic and cultural divisions did not exist. Once Halide Edip

had finished with her nationalist phase she wrote with relish about the multi-cultural nature of the Ottoman court, and repeatedly created scenarios of ordinary daily life set in multi-ethnic communities. Reşat Nuri emphasised the importance of having no division between Muslims and non-Muslims in the new Turkish republic. Halikarnas Balıkcısı took pains to show that ordinary Turks and Greeks could work and live together successfully, that conflicts existing between them were provoked by politicians. Sait Faik, Orhan Kemal and Yaşar Kemal each wrote about orphaned children of various ethnic groups who survived by learning each other's languages and giving each other emotional support. They also wrote about adults who, having survived such childhoods, became lonely migrant workers or petty criminals living on their wits. In those days before the mass migration of families, these lone men relied heavily on each other for survival and ethnic differences were of little importance. The stories and novels of these three writers demonstrated how minorities, both indigenous and immigrant, were becoming assimilated into the social fabric of Turkey.

The last quarter of the twentieth century has seen a new generation of migrants who have moved to the cities with their families and who, though still very poor, have a better standard of living with more access to media information and education. This rise above subsistence level living, together with a perceived responsibility for protecting family traditions that had been impossible when men left their families behind, has coincided with a change in world attitudes towards ethnic issues. The result has been that many groups of impoverished people have sought to preserve their personal dignity in the rapidly developing capitalist Turkish society by reviving their cultural and ethnic ties. This new awareness of ethnicity has reawakened an unresolved issue of the 1920s.

Unlike the word Ottoman, which was associated with a collection of diverse ethnic groups, the naming of the republic as Turkey emphasised a previously insignificant division between ethnic Turks and other ethnic groups. The Constitution of the Turkish Republic made it clear that the term "Turk" is a definition of nationality. However the traditional custom of labelling anyone who was not of 'one's own sort' by

their ethnicity was not dropped. This has meant that, since the formation of the Turkish republic, anyone with no ethnic label is presumed to be Turkish in the ethnic sense. From this arises the question of what is Turkish identity, and can the term "Turk" be applied equally to all citizens of Turkey whatever their ethnic background? This would be a subject for another study. However it is important to acknowledge that this confusion has appeared frequently in twentieth century fiction. By default, ethnic Turks are assumed to be those characters who are referred to by their name alone, or with the name of their town of origin or trade. Minorities are almost always referred to with their ethnicity used as a prefix to their name.

As a young adult Halide Edip attempted to resolve this question intellectually with her hypothesis about how a Turkish state should be organised, but in later works she returned to labelling her non-Turkish characters. Halikarnas Balıkcısı was more interested in defining a quasi-national bond among the peoples of the Mediterranean. When he differentiated between Turks and others it was usually to stress his perception of the natural superiority and leadership of Turkish Muslims over non-Muslims. The other writers clearly regarded minorities as important elements in Turkish society, nevertheless they helped to prolong the confusion over identity by continuing to use labels for ethnic minority characters. An exception is Yaşar Kemal who in several instances introduced ethnic identity by relating individual case histories.

Each writer in this study has featured characters who represent traditions associated with different minorities. Among these are Hüseyin Rahmi's old Montenegrin soldier, Halide Edip's Circassian court concubine Canary, Reşat Nuri's kindly Armenian hotel porter Hacı Kalfa and his wife, and Sait Faik's Greek priest and Greek fishermen. These were character types who were fast disappearing from Istanbul life. Perhaps more interesting are the new roles the same writers projected onto minorities in their works.

The European residents of Istanbul did not constitute a single ethnic minority, but collectively they played an important part in literature by representing an "other" culture which was admired or disliked according to attitudes portrayed by the different

authors. Hüseyin Rahmi created several such characters who epitomised certain values that were presented as “European”. They were mostly beautiful, intelligent, manipulative and dangerous *femmes fatales* who exercised a seductive power over Turks. The Turkish characters in turn viewed Europeans with a mixture of admiration and distaste. Hüseyin Rahmi made it clear that, in his view, the complicity of Turks who supported, condoned or exploited the dubious activities of these Europeans was just as abhorrent as the behaviour of the Europeans themselves. Haldun Taner described the shattering of romantic illusions about European culture, but avoided any hint of resentment by suggesting that such illusions are merely youthful misconceptions which become understood in the fullness of time.

The Armenian, Greek and Jewish minorities, previously regular features of traditional oral literature, were no longer presented with any real consistency. Although traces of the old stereotypes remained, each author developed his characters in different ways. Armenians in the works of Hüseyin Rahmi were intelligent, adaptable and warm-hearted even though they were made fun of because of their accents. Reşat Nuri created kind and generous Armenian characters who were progressive in outlook. Haldun Taner, on the other hand, portrayed Armenian families as snobbish, scheming and materially ambitious with particularly unprepossessing daughters. In complete contrast to all of these, Sait Faik created an emancipated beautiful young Armenian female character who made unconventional and, in his view, exemplary choices about how she was going to lead her life.

Jews have rarely been perceived as very different from the old stereotype of the miserly, cowardly businessman. They have usually appeared to be part of an alien, if harmless, society with totally different values. In general authors have displayed little interest in understanding their culture, but there are some limited exceptions. Hüseyin Rahmi discovered some of the Jewish sense of humour, Haldun Taner acknowledged a generosity of spirit, and Halide Edip identified loneliness as a negative element in the life of a liberated European Jewess.

Greeks in the context of Turkish fiction are Greeks living in Istanbul or

Anatolia. (Mainland Greeks only appear in war fiction.) They have had a very low profile in Turkish literature in relation to the large numbers that had lived in Istanbul and Anatolia before the wars and the population exchange. Turkish fiction has given scarcely any indication of the excessive wealth accumulated by the very richest Greeks, and has almost completely ignored the Greek middle-class communities. Most fictional Greek characters were servants or tradesmen who individually were of little interest.

Halikarnas Balıkcısı, despite his fascination with the ancient Greek civilisation of Anatolia, showed no interest in the fact that they had all but disappeared from Anatolia. His Greeks were mostly rough and wayward fishermen who had nothing to lose by succumbing to the perceived natural discipline of Turkish leadership, and to conversion to Islam. Reşat Nuri made a serious attempt at avoiding stereotypes by making comparisons between Greek girls which showed their individual weaknesses and strengths. He tried to inform his readers that, despite the difference in their lifestyle, the Greek community had its own moral and ethical values. By the time Sait Faik was writing, Greek characters were becoming scarce in Turkish fiction. His Greek fishermen and Greek prostitutes, which are now such familiar figures, were new characterisations at the time of writing. Unlike Halikarnas Balıkcısı, Sait Faik easily associated his "living" Greeks with ancient Greece. Orhan Kemal's portrayal of Greek family life was refreshingly wholesome compared to the decadence of Sait Faik's Greeks and the rough vulgarity of Halikarnas Balıkcısı's Greeks. Yaşar Kemal paid little attention to Greeks until his last novel in which he looked for similarities rather than differences between Greeks, Turks and other ethnic groups.

Gypsies have generally been perceived in a positive or sympathetic light in Turkish fiction. Their rejection of materialist aspirations and social conventions were often portrayed in a way that made them appear morally superior to ordinary people. With their claims to understand the forces of nature, they were frequently cast in the role of guide or protector, and replaced the shaman as the provider of advice alternative or complementary to that of the mullah. Halide Edip's Gypsy not only protected the emotional needs of her friends, she brought entertainment, sparkle and an impetuosity

into the ordered lives of well-behaved Turkish Muslims. Halikarnas Balıkcısı wrote about Gypsies who refused to compromise their liberty for money, marriage or security. In addition, their uninhibited celebration of joy and passion, their affinity with nature and their ability to face the future unfettered by the past served to put them on a semi-spiritual plane. Sait Faik had no single model for his numerous gypsy characters. They variously appeared as charismatic, violent, peace-loving, lazy, hard-working, decadent and dishonest. As well as various solitary Gypsy figures, he wrote admiringly about a Gypsy community bound by seasonal rhythms and inclusive social traditions, and disapprovingly about a Gypsy group being destroyed by personal greed. In Orhan Kemal's novels the gypsy character provided unconditional love and served as protector and guardian to others at the expense of her own well-being.

The various Kurdish characters of the different authors had little in common. For Halide Edip, Kurds seemed to possess an innate wisdom and a spiritual warmth. For Sait Faik the Kurd represented the lonely alienated inarticulate outsider. Haldun Taner wrote about a Kurdish character who was as an outsider but, far from being inarticulate, he was an ambitious upstart who became entangled in professional political intrigues. In his legend-like tales, Yaşar Kemal created god-like Kurdish men and strong liberated Kurdish women. In his novels the feature that most distinguished Kurds from Turks was that the Kurds were migrants and therefore poor. It made little difference whether the main characters, who were usually heads of families, were Kurdish and Turkish. They were each proud, complex intelligent men who were bent on maintaining traditional values in the face of demographic and fundamental social changes.

Other minorities were represented by Halide Edip's military hero archetypes from Central Asia and the Laz region of the Black Sea coast. In contrast, Sait Faik and Yaşar Kemal portrayed Laz men as members of the criminal underworld of Istanbul. Circassians frequently appeared as natural aristocrats who survived through their ability to adapt. Halide Edip's Circassian slave girl blossomed into a princess of the Ottoman court, Haldun Taner's aging Circassian courtesan quickly adapted to the intrigues of



modern party politics, and Yaşar Kemal's Circassian soldier acquired wealth and a reputation for bravery as a result of his war experiences. Most of the Muslim immigrants from the Balkans, Greece or Crete had no really distinguishing characteristics other than being "different" and therefore somewhat suspicious.

Thus it is clear that once writers had discarded the old stereotypes there was no overall consistency in the way minorities were presented. However, one generalisation that can perhaps be made is that as the new century got under way the nineteenth century fascination with perceived European values was projected onto non-Muslim minorities. The result was that they were sometimes portrayed as role models for liberal modern living, at other times they represented negative aspects of humanity. A multiplicity also existed in the portrayals of immigrant Muslim minorities who were featured as anything from first class leaders to immoral or sinister newcomers.

Although the authors in this study chose to include minorities in a significant number of their works, in general they did not examine what made ethnic minorities different from the majority. There is little evidence of any real curiosity as to how other cultures functioned, evolved or survived. Their interest in minorities probably had less to do with their perceptions of reality and more to do with the social elements they found lacking in reality. It may be assumed that, intentionally or otherwise, they used minorities as a literary tool in their works rather than for reasons of historical or anthropological interest and accuracy.

As was explained earlier the old theatre and story-telling tradition made use of ethnic stereotypes as a means of creating instantly identifiable characters, each of which represented human strengths and weaknesses which could be found in any society. The basic formula of putting these characters together in comical situations which touched on serious issues had succeeded for centuries. Change came with the demand for stories in book form. Hüseyin Rahmi and Reşat Nuri (in his early works) were both influential in developing an accessible written literary style based on the old story-telling formula of using ethnic stereotypes to resolve potentially sensitive issues in comic settings.

First-hand experience of non-Muslim ethnic minorities naturally decreased as indigenous minorities left. Nevertheless, some authors continued to use ethnic labels in order to bring dashes of colour and variety into their works. Although they were no longer interested in using stereotype characters in the old manner, the use of fleeting, almost superficial, references to ethnic minorities was based on an assumed knowledge of those stereotypes. This came to be used as a literary device which was sometimes highly effective, sometimes little more than a habit which at times seemed irrelevant. Sait Faik was particularly masterful in using this technique to create multicultural backgrounds in his short stories. With his seemingly intuitive heaping together of brief images of the many ethnic groups that had lived in Istanbul he created instant visual impressions of centuries of history. Haldun Taner also made effective use of this technique. In his early works Yaşar Kemal used this device frequently, but as his literary style developed he wove his ethnic references into frameworks which supported lengthy background accounts of his main ethnic minority characters. Orhan Kemal only used references to ethnic minorities in his provincial settings where they gave an authenticity to the mixed labour force about which he wrote. These ethnic labels are almost completely absent from his novels with Istanbul settings, for which he had little or no first hand experience of minorities .

All the writers in this study used ethnic minorities to express their visions of a better way of individual or community living. At one level this was done through the creation of an individual who embodied certain ideals, such as Halide Edip's Laz war hero or her Kurdish heroines, Halikarnas Balıkcısı's Greek heroine or his Gypsy characters, Sait Faik's old fishermen and young liberated Greek and Armenian girls, Orhan Kemal's loving Gypsy girl, and Yaşar Kemal's wise, intellectual Caucasians. The exotic backgrounds help the reader to suspend normal assumptions and to believe in the sometimes extraordinary qualities of these characters.

With the possible exception of Haldun Taner, each of the writers indulged in fantasies about living in a multicultural society in which people live together constructively. Hüseyin Rahmi put together a mixed group of hostages who pooled

their human resources to resolve their predicament. Halide Edip had her Turanist dream in which all ethnic groups joined forces to create a new state, and later she repeatedly and somewhat nostalgically created fictional multicultural communities in Istanbul. Reşat Nuri also tried to show how different ethnic groups could live and work together at a time when ethnic minorities had almost disappeared from the areas about which he wrote. Halikarnas Balıkcısı had a vision of Anatolians setting aside their differences and accepting their place in a larger Mediterranean culture. Sait Faik repeatedly fantasised about creating a harmonious multi-ethnic island community, as did Yaşar Kemal. Orhan Kemal deliberately juxtaposed youngsters of different backgrounds and demonstrated that each of them had worthwhile qualities to contribute to society. All these visions had little to do with reality at the time of writing, but they indicate that the writers concerned believed in the positive value of multicultural environments.

Another conclusion which may be drawn from studying these writers is that, between them, they effected a transition from a tradition based literature, in which archetypes and stereotypes represented whole social groups, to a modern type of fiction in which minority characters facilitated the exploration of the individual. Traditional stories had served as allegories in which men fought against demons or mythical monsters in order to overcome disaster. The advent of French realism which was quickly adopted by Turkish writers suddenly rendered magical or mythical beings redundant. At the same time, character studies of nineteenth century French literature aroused in Turkish readers a fascination for the human excesses and frailties which were responsible for personal tragedy. Because external demons were no longer credible and in keeping with the developing trend for psychoanalysis, evil forces had to be sought out within the psyche. In the early days of Turkish fiction, there was no generally understood framework or language for exploring and understanding individual personalities. Initially French literary formulas were used, but the appetite for modern fiction in credible Turkish settings meant that a framework for exploring human characteristics had to be invented.

It is therefore suggested here that the reason for the creation of the 'decadent' European in early fiction, and the subsequent 'immoral' ethnic minorities was not so much to make shallow comparisons between "them" and "us", but to create a means of bringing out facets of the human mind which had previously either not been acknowledged, or were considered unsuitable for public scrutiny. Hüseyin Rahmi was the first to use his creativity in this way to expose negative aspects of the human condition. For instance his accounts of Turkish men abusing Armenian women tells the reader far more about the former than the latter. Sait Faik continued with this device, using it to examine in even greater depth the states of mind in which people seek self destructive experiences. Not only did he allow his reader to investigate the worlds of promiscuity and prostitution, but he let them venture to the extremes of society by exploring homosexual love, and even hinted at paedophiliac fixations. Such examinations of the human mind not only gave voice to emotions that had never before been expressed, they reached a very wide readership. This would not have been possible if readers had not been able to maintain a distance from what was generally perceived to be unacceptable behaviour by using ethnic minorities as representatives of the "other" world of unknown morality.

While the examination of relationships between Turkish men and promiscuous foreign or ethnic minority women served to open up aspects of the male character, an even more radical process was in progress with the use of the ethnic minority female as a means of exploring the mind of Turkish women. As mentioned before, the language for describing the intricacies of female relationships with men, or indeed other females, did not yet exist. Turkish society, which was still learning to accept the unveiling of its women, was not yet ready to openly acknowledge that the women in its midst might have strong physical desires, fall short of the highest moral values, or yearn for independence. Hüseyin Rahmi used minorities to show that women could be agreeable without continually maintaining standards of perfection, and that they were capable of acting and thinking for themselves. Although Halide Edip used her own experience to write about the personal development of educated women, relatively few women could

relate her stories to their own lives because such opportunities for education and travel were completely out of the question for most readers. On the other hand she played upon the imagination of female and male readers alike with her exotic Kurdish and Gypsy women, and her feminine perspective on the relationship between a Turkish male and an emancipated European female must have been very educational at the time. Reşat Nuri delighted his readers with the creation of wild energetic girls who had been brought up in the "European" way, but many female readers must have been disappointed that they eventually succumbed to the role of dutiful wife. Halikarnas Balıkcısı wrote about the joy of a liberated Greek woman who refused to compromise her passion even though she later paid for it with her life. He also used Gypsy characters to show that men looked for more than superficial beauty in a woman. The interesting and colourful ethnic minority female characters in the works of Sait Faik contrasted strongly with his rather drab or blinkered Turkish females. His tomboy characters were active and energetic, and made positive choices about their own lives. His prostitutes were seen to be fighting against personal tragedy and attempting to better their lives using the only means at their disposal.

The numerous deviations from the traditional heroine or conventional matriarch that were created by using minority female characters introduced new boundaries for female character development. Once these were established in the national consciousness, there was no longer any need to create ethnic minority characters on which to project these character 'imperfections' or idiosyncrasies. This idea is born out by the expanded horizons of Turkish female characters in the fiction, particularly of women writers, which was published after Sait Faik.

As the twentieth century entered its second half, Turkish literature was entering a new phase. Much of the new literature was being written by people with little or no experience of ethnic minorities, and the contribution of female writers was increasing. At the same time, as writers became more daring in their portrayals of human relationships, the need to use ethnic minorities in this way became redundant. During the last twenty years, the combination of liberal government attitudes and increased

wealth, media information, education and mobility has fostered an interest for different cultural perspectives on historical events and ethnic identity. This has produced a new generation of writers, many of whom are descended from ethnic minorities, who are writing about the experiences of their forefathers. It has also generated an interest in ethnic traditions and folk lore. These recent developments are still too new for comprehensive assessment and will undoubtedly be a subject for future research. The presence and representation of ethnic minorities in Turkish fiction has proved to reflect perception rather than reality, and it is perhaps fitting that historical accuracy should be left to historians and not expected of fiction writers. Turkish fiction has benefited enormously from writers who have used ethnic minorities to enrich the social environments in their works, and to further the development of multi-dimensional fictional characters. Recent political and literary trends have indicated that as the Turkish state gains in confidence and maturity, and if memories of past conflicts are allowed to fade, there is the potential for minorities to be accorded new roles and functions in Turkish fiction.

The End

## Bibliography

### List of Literary Works

- Abasıyanık, Sait Faik. *Semaver* [1936] : *Sarnıç* [1939]. Bütün Eserleri 1. 2nd ed. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1973.
- . *Şahmerdan* [1939] : *Lüzümsüz Adam* [1948]. Bütün Eserleri 2. 2nd ed. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1974.
- . *Medarı Maişet Motoru* [1944]. Bütün Eserleri 3. 11th ed. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1992.
- . *Mahalle Kahvesi* [1950] : *Havada Bulut* [1951]. Bütün Eserleri 4. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1970.
- . *Kumpanya* [1951]: *Kayıp Aranıyor* [1953]. Bütün Eserleri 5. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1970.
- . *Havuz Başı* [1952] : *Son Kuşlar* [1952]. Bütün Eserleri 6. 2nd ed. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1975.
- . *Alemdağ'da Var Bir Yılan* [1954] : *Az Şekerli* [1954] : *Şimdi Sevişme Vakti* [1953]. Bütün Eserleri 7. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1970.
- . *Tüneldeki Çocuk* [1955] : *Mahkeme Kapısı* [1956]. Bütün Eserleri 8. 8th ed. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1982.
- . *Balıkçının Ölümü* : *Yaşasın Edebiyat*. Bütün Eserleri 9. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1977.
- Adıvar, Halide Edip. *Seviyye Talip*. [1910]. 3rd ed. İstanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1967.
- . *Yeni Turan* [1912] : *Raik'in Annesi* [1909]. 5th ed. İstanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1982.
- . *Handan* [1912]. 20th ed. İstanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1992.
- . *Son Eseri* [1919]. 7th ed. İstanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1971.
- . *Mev'ud Hükiüm* [1919]. 2nd ed. İstanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1968.
- . *Dağa Çıkan Kurt* [1922]. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1945.

- . *Ateşten Gömlek* [1923]. 23rd ed. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi 1992.
- . *Kalb Ağrısı* [1924]. 3rd ed. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1962.
- . *The Shirt of Flame*. Trans. author. New York: Duffield & Co., 1924.
- . *Vurun Kahpeye* [1926]. 8th ed. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1993.
- . *The Memoirs of Halide Edib*. London: John Murray, 1926.
- . *The Turkish Ordeal*. London: John Murray, 1928.
- . *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* [1928]. 7th ed. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1996.
- . *Turkey Faces West*. USA: Yale University Press, 1930.
- . *The Clown and His Daughter*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1935.
- . *Sinekli Bakkal* [1936]. 46th ed. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1993.
- . *Yolpalas Cinayeti* [1937]. 3rd ed. Istanbul: Ahmet Halit Yaşaroğlu, 1964.
- . *Tatarcık* [1939]. 14th ed. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1993.
- . *Inside India*. London: George Allen Unwin, 1940.
- . *Döner Ayna*. Istanbul: Güven Basımevi, 1954.
- . *Akile Hanım Sokağı*. Istanbul: Yeni Matbaa, 1958.
- . *Hayat Parçaları*. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1963.
- Ali, Sabahattin. *Dağlar ve Rüzgâr* [1935]. Bütün Eserleri 11. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1965.
- . *Sırca Köşk* [1947]. Bütün Eserleri 5. 2nd ed. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınları, 1975.
- Balıkçısı, Halikarnas. *Aganta Burina Burinata!* [1946]. 6th ed. Istanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1993.
- . *Ötelerin Çocukları*. Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 1955.
- . *Turgut Reis*. Yerli Romanlar Serisi: 4. (Istanbul): Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1966.
- . *Deniz Gürbetçileri*. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1969.
- . *Ege'den Denize Bırakılmış Bir Çiçek* [1972]. Bütün Eserleri 11. 5th ed. Istanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1991.
- . *Gençlik Denizlerinde*. Istanbul: Hurriyet Yayınları, 1973.
- Baykurt, Fakir. *Kaplumbağalar* [nd]. 3rd ed. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1973.



- Güntekin, Reşat Nuri. *Harabelerin Çiçeği* [1918]: *Eski Ahbap* [nd]: *Boyunduruk* [nd]. 2nd ed. Istanbul: İnkilâp Kitapevi, 1960.
- . *Çalığışu* [1922]. 38th ed. Istanbul: İnkilâp Kitabevi, 1993.
- . *Akşam Güneşi* [1926]. 2nd ed. Istanbul: Semih Lütü Kitabevi, 1942.
- . *Leylâ ile Mecnun* [1928]. Istanbul: İnkilâp Kitabevi, 1962.
- . *Yeşil Gece* [1928]. 12th ed. Istanbul: İnkilâp Kitapevi, 1993.
- . *Anadolu Notları* [1938]. 17th ed. Istanbul: İnkilâp Kitabevi, 1993.
- . *Ateş Gecesi*. Istanbul: Semih Lütü Kitabevi, 1942.
- . *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*. Trans. Deedes. London: Allen and Unwin, 1949.
- . *Afternoon Sun*. Trans. Deedes. London: Heinemann, 1951.
- Gürpınar, Hüseyin Rahmi. *Şık*. [1889]. 5th ed. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1972.
- . *Şık : Mürebbiye* [1899]. Istanbul: Özgür, 1995.
- . *Metres* [1899]. Istanbul: Hilmi Kitabevi, 1945.
- . *Kuyruklu Yıldız Altında Bir Evlenme* [1910]. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1965.
- . *Cadı* [1912]. 3rd ed. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1971.
- . *Eşkiya İninde* [1919]. Istanbul: Hilmi Kitaphanesi, 1935.
- . *Kadınlar Vâizi* [1920]. 4th ed. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1969.
- . *Efsuncu Baba* [1924]. 4th ed. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1970.
- . *Billür Kalb* [1924]. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1967.
- . *Ben Deli Miyim?* [1925]. Istanbul: Atlas Kitabevi, 1964.
- . *Olağan İşler*. Istanbul: M.A. Halit Kitaphanesi, 1930.
- Kaygılı, Osman Cemal. *Çingeneler* [1939]. 3rd ed. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1972.
- Kemal, Orhan. *Baba Evi*. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1949.
- . *Âvare Yıllar* [1950]. 3rd ed. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1957.
- . *Murtaza* [1952]. 3rd ed. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1957.
- . *Cemile*. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1952.
- . *Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde* [1954]. 2nd ed. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi,

- 1964.
- . *Grev : Hikâyeler* [1954]. 3rd ed. Istanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1982.
- . *Suçlu* [1957]. 5th ed. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1972.
- . *Küçücük*. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1960.
- . *Hanımın Çiftliği* [1961]. 2nd ed. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1974.
- . *Kanlı Topraklar*. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1963.
- . *Sokakların Çocuğu*. Istanbul: Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1963.
- . *Sokaklardan Bir Kız*. Istanbul: Ülkü Yayınları, 1968.
- . *Gurbet Kuşları* [1962]. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1970.
- Kemal, Yaşar. *Sarı Sıcak* [1952], *Teneke* [1955] ve *Ötekiler* in *Bütün Hikâyeler*. Istanbul: Ararat Yayınevi, 1967.
- . *İnce Memed I* [1955]. 10th ed. Istanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1971.
- . *Üç Anadolu Efsanesi* [1967]. Istanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1969.
- . *Anatolian Tales*. Trans. Thilda Kemal. London: Writers & Readers, 1983.
- . *İnce Memed II* [1969]. 5th ed. Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1974.
- . *Agrıdağı Efsanesi* [1970]. Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1970.
- . *The Legend of Ararat* [1970]. Trans. Thilda Kemal. London: Collins & Harville Press, 1975.
- . *Demirciler Çarşısı Cinayeti*. Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1974.
- . *Yusuçuk Yusuf*. Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1975.
- . *Kuşlar da Gitti*. Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları : 1978.
- . *Deniz Küstü*. Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları : 1978.
- . *Yağmurçuk Kuşu* [1980]. 6th ed. Istanbul: Toros Yayınları, 1993.
- . *Hüyükteki Nar Ağacı*. Istanbul: Toros Yayınları, 1982.
- . *İnce Memed III* [1984]. Istanbul: Toros Yayınları, 1987.
- . *The Sea-Crossed Fisherman*. Trans. Thilda Kemal. London: Collins & Harvill, 1985.
- . *Kale Kapısı* [1986]. 4th ed. Istanbul: Toros Yayınları, 1992.
- . *Kanın Sesi* [1991]. 2nd ed. Istanbul: Toros Yayınları, 1992.

- . *Fırat Suyu Kan Akıyor Baksana* [1998]. 6th ed. Istanbul: Toros Yayınları, 1998.
- Makal, Mahmut. *Bizim Köy* [1950]. Istanbul: Derinlik, 1978.
- . *A Village in Anatolia*. Trans. Deedes. ed. Paul Stirling. London: Vallentine, Mitchell and Co., 1954.
- Nazım, Nabizade. "Karabibik" in *Hikâyeler* [1890-1892]. Ankara: Dün-Bugün, 1961.
- Nesin, Aziz. *Istanbul Boy*. Parts I and III. Trans. Joseph S. Jacobson. Austin, USA: University of Texas, 1990.
- Taner, Haldun. *Yaşasın Demokrasi* [1949]. *Tuş* [1951]. *Şişhane'ye Yağmur Yağıyordu* [1953] in *Hikâyeler*. Vol. 1. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1970.
- . *On İkiye Bir Var* [1954] : *Ay Işığında "Çalışkur* [1954] : *Gülerek Ölmek* [1971] in *Hikâyeler 2* [1954]. 2nd ed. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1971.
- . *Sanço'nun Sabah Yürüyüşü* [1969]. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1969.
- . *Yalıda Sabah* [1983]. Bütün Hikayeleri 4. 2nd ed. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1986.
- Yıldız, Bekir. *Reşo Ağa*. 3rd ed. Istanbul: Sinan Yayınları, 1971.
- . *Kara Vagon* [1968]. 2nd ed. Istanbul: May Yayınları, 1971.
- . *Kaçakçı Şahan*. 3rd ed. Istanbul: Sinan Yayınları, 1971.
- . *Sahipsizler*. Istanbul: May Yayınları, 1971.
- . *Harran* [1971]. Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1976.
- . *Harran - Berlin*. 4th ed. Istanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 1980.
- . *Mahşerin İnsanları*. Istanbul: Ağaoğlu Yayınevi, 1982.
- . *Aile Savaşları*. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1984.
- . *Darbe*. Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1989.

## General Bibliography

- Adivar, Halide Edib. *Doktor Abdülhak Adnan Adivar*. Istanbul: A.H. Yaşaraoğlu, 1956.
- Ahmad, Feroz. *The C.U.P. in Turkish Politics 1908-14*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Akcam, Taner. *Türk Ulusal Kimliği ve Ermeni Sorunu*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları: 1993.
- Aladağ, Ertuğrul. *Andonia : Küçük Asya'dan Göç*. Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1995.
- Alexandris, Alexis. *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek - Turkish Relations 1918-1974*. Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992.
- Alford Andrews, Peter. *Türkiye'de Etnik Gruplar*. Istanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1992.
- Alpman, Nazım. *Çingener*. 2nd ed. Istanbul: Ozan Yayıncılık, 1997.
- And, Metin. *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*. Ankara: Forum Yayınlar, 1963-64.
- Arı, Kemal. *Büyük Mücadele : Türkiye'ye Zorunlu Göç 1923 - 1925*. Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995.
- Balta, Eugenia. *Problèmes et approches de l'histoire ottomane : Une itinéraire scientifique de Kayseri à Eğriboz*. Istanbul: Isis, 1997. Pp 245-256.
- Başgöz, İlhan & Howard E.Wilson. *Educational Problems in Turkey 1920 - 1940*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968.
- Bellér-Hann, Ildiko. "Myth and History on the Eastern Black Sea Coast." *Central Asian Survey*. Vol. 14/4, 1995: 487-508.
- Berzeg, Sefer. *Kafkas Diasporası'nda Edebiyatçılar ve Yazarlar Sözlüğü*. Samsun: Kafkasya, 1995.
- Besikci, Ismail. *Kürt Aydını Uzerine Düşünceler*. Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, 1991.
- Besli, Mehmedali B. (Ed). *Ogni: Sökani Nena!* Yil: 1 Sayı: 2. 1994.
- Betin, Saffet Urfi. *Atatürk İnkılabı ve Ziya Gökalp - Yahya Kemal - Halide Adivar*. Istanbul: Güven Basımevi, 1951.
- Bezirci, Asım and Hikmet Altınkaynak. *Orhan Kemal*. Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi,

1977.

Boratav, Pertev Naili. *Halk Hikâyeleri ve Halk Hikâyeciliği* [1945]. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1946.

---. "Türklerde Hızır." *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. 44. Cüz. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1950. Pp. 462-471.

Bozarslan, M. Emin (Ed and trans.). *Mem û Zîn*. Istanbul: Deng Yayınları, 1996.

Braude, Benjamin and Bernard Lewis. *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*. 2 Vols. London: Holmes & Meier, 1982.

Bruinessen, M. M. van. *Agha, Shaikh and State: on the Social and Political Organization of Kurdistan*. Doctoral Thesis. Utrecht, 1946.

Chaliand, Gerard. *The Kurdish Tragedy*. Trans. Philip Black. London: Zed Books, 1994.

---. (Ed). *People Without a Country : The Kurds and Kurdistan*. Trans. Michael Pallis. London: Zed Press, 1980.

Davison, Roderic H. *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

---. *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History 1774-1913*. Austin: University of Texas, 1990.

---. *Turkey : A Short History* [1968]. Huntingdon, England: Eothen Press, 1991.

Doulis, Thomas. *Disaster and Fiction: Modern Greek Fiction and the Asia Minor Disaster of 1922*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1977.

Dumont, Paul. "Les grecs dans les nouvelles de Sait Faik." In *Mélanges offerts à Louis Bazin par ses disciples, collègues et amis*. *Varia Turcica XIX*, 1992. Pp 331-339.

Emil, Birol. *Reşat Nuri Güntekin*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989.

Enginün, İnci. "Ateşten Gömlek Romanının İngilizce Tercümeleleri." *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*. Vol. XX [31/12/1972], 1973: 93-104.

---. "Halide Edib'in Profesör Arnold Toynbee'ye Yazdığı Bir Mektup." *Türk Dili*

- ve *Edebiyat Dergisi*. Vol. XXII [1974-76], 1977: 163-168.
- . *Halide Edib Adivar'ın Eserlerinde Doğu ve Batı Meselesi*. İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1978.
- . *Mukayeseli Edebiyat*, İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1992.
- Ergin, Osman. *Türk Maarif Tarihi*. Vol. 1, 2. İstanbul: Eser Matbaası, 1977.
- Evlia Efendi. *Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa*. Trans. Joseph von Hammer. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968.
- Finn, Robert P. *The Early Turkish Novel 1872 - 1900*. İstanbul: Isis Yayıncılık, 1984.
- Göçtün, Önder. *Türk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları*. Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1991.
- Gökalp, Ziya. *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilisation*. Trans. and ed Niyazi Berkes. London, George Allen and Unwin, 1959.
- Göksu, Saime and Edward Timms. *Romantic Communist : The Life and Work of Nazım Hikmet*. London: Hurst and Company, 1999.
- Grimm, Miller Michael. *The Karamanlı-Turkish Texts : The Historical Changes in their Script and Phonology*. Michigan: University of Michigan, 1974.
- Guest, John S. *Survival Among the Kurds : A History of the Yezidis*. London & New York: Kegan Paul International, 1993.
- Gürsel, Nedim. "Sait Faik'in Eserinde İstanbul Rum Topluluğu." [1986] (Trans. Şirin Tekeli). *Toplum ve Bilim*,. Vol. 40, 1988: 58-75.
- . "Some Jewish Characters in Modern Turkish literature." [1987] (Trans. Eric Fassin and A. Levy). In Levy, Avigdor (ed), *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*. Princeton N.J: Darwin Press, 1994. Pp 647-665.
- . "L'univers de Mario Levi : l'exil et l'écriture." In *Paysage littéraire de la Turquie contemporaine*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993. Pp. 143-149.
- Habib, İsmail. *Tanzimattanberi 1 : Edebiyat Tarihi*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1942.
- Halman, Talat Sait. (Ed). *A Dot on the Map*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana

- University, 1983.
- Hasluck, F.W. and M.M. *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*. Vols. 1&2. UK: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1929.
- Hassanpour, Amir. *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan 1918-1985*. San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992.
- Heazell, F.N. and Margoliouth, Mrs (Ed). *Kurds and Christians* [1913]. UK: Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., 1984.
- Hizarcı, Suat. *Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar : Hayatı, Sanatı, Eserleri*. 2nd ed. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1964.
- Kaplan, Mehmet. *Türk Edebiyatı Üzerinde Araştırmalar I*. Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1976.
- Kansu, Ceyhan Atuf. "Ulusal Kurtuluş Savaşı Üzerine." *Türk Dili*. Vol. 34, 1976: 2-6.
- . "Aliye öğretmen, Ayşe Hemşire, Halide Onbaşı." *Türk Dili*. Vol. 34, 1976: 41-48.
- Karpat, Kemal H. *Ottoman Population 1830-1914 : Demographic and Social Characteristics*. Wisconsin, USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
- Kazamias, Andreas M. *Education and the Quest for Modernity in Turkey*. London: Allen &Unwin, 1966.
- Kinnane, Derk. *The Kurds and Kurdistan*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Kreyenbroek, Philip G. "Kurdish Identity and the Language Question." In Atabaki, Turaj and Dorleijn (Ed), *Kurdistan in Search of Ethnic Identity*. Utrecht: Margreet Houtsma Foundation Publications No1, 1990. Pp. 53-69.
- Kreyenbroek, Philip G. and Stefan Sperl. *The Kurds : A Contemporary Overview*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Kudret, Cevdet. *Türk Edebiyatında Hikâye ve Roman 1859 - 1959* [1967]. Vol. 2. 2nd ed. Istanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1970.
- Kurdakul, Şükran. *Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatı*. Vols 1-4. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınları, 1992.

- Kut, A. Turgut. "Ermeni Harfleriyle Basılmış Türkçe Atasözleri Kitapları." *Türk Folkloru*. No. 53, 1983: 5-6.
- . "Ermeni Harfleriyle Basılmış Türkçe Halk Kitapları." *Halk Kültürü*. 1984/1: 69-79.
- . "Ermeni Harfleriyle Basılmış Türkçe Destanlar : 1." *Halk Kültürü*. 1984/3: 65-73.
- . "Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Telif ve Tercüme Konuları." *Beşinci Milletler Arası Türkoloji Kongresi* (Istanbul - 23-28/09/1985). Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1985. Pp. 195-214.
- . "Ermeni Harfleriyle Türkçe Basılmış Şarkı ve Kanto Mecmuaları." *Müteferrika*. Autumn 1993/1: 19-43.
- Landau, Jacob M. *Pan-Turkism in Turkey : A Study of Irredentism*. London: Hurst, 1981.
- Lee, A. Robert (Ed). *Other Britain, Other British Contemporary Multicultural Fiction*. London: Pluto Press, 1995.
- Levy, Avigdor (Ed). *The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1992.
- Lewis, Bernard. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Lodge, David (Ed). *Modern Criticism and Theory*. London: Longman, 1988.
- Lodge, David (Ed). *20th Century Criticism*. London: Longman, 1991.
- Mango, Andrew. *Atatürk*. London: John Murray, 1999.
- McCarthy, Justin. *The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire*. New York and London: New York University Press, 1983.
- McCarthy, Şimşir, Lowry, and Öke. *Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey (1912-1926)*. Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Publications, 1984.
- McDowall, David. *A Modern History of the Kurds*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1996.
- Millas, Herkül. *Türk Yunan İlişkilerine Bir Önsöz : Tencere Dibin Kara*. Istanbul: Amaç Yayıncılık, 1989.



- . "The Exchange of Populations in Turkish Literature". Paper submitted to the conference titled *The Compulsory Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey : Assessment of the Consequences of the Treaty of Lausanne Convention* at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University: 17-20 September 1998
- . *Türk Romanı ve "Öteki" : Ulusal Kimlikte Yunan İmajı*. Istanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2000.
- Miller, Michael Grimm. *The Karamanli-Turkish Texts: The Historical Changes in Their Script and Phonology*. Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1974.
- Moran, Berna. *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış*. Vols 1-4. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994
- Ozcan, Mesut. *Dersim (Zaza) Atasözleri*. Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1992.
- Poole, Stanley Lane (Ed). *The People of Turkey : Twenty Years' Residence Among Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians, Turks, and Armenians*. London: John Murray, 1878.
- Potts, D.C. and D.G. Charlton. *French Thought Since 1600* [1972]. London: Methuen & Co., 1974.
- Rohat *Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatında Kürtler*. Istanbul: Fırat Yayınları, 1992.
- . *Ziya Gökalp'in Büyük Çilesi : Kürtler*. Istanbul: Fırat Yayınları, 1992.
- . *Yaşar Kemal'in Yapıtlarında Kürt Gerçeği : Çukurova-Van Karşıtlığının Çatısı*. Istanbul: Fırat Yayınları, 1992.
- Saxokia, Tedo. "Megrel - Laz Kültüründe Akrabalık, Evlenme ve Cenaze." *Tarih ve Toplum*. Vol 24, No. 140, 1995: 35-42.
- Sevilla-Sharon, Moshe. *Türkiye Yahudileri*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993.
- Shaw, Stanford J. and Ezel Kural. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Vol II. [1977]. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Shaw, Stanford J. *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*. London: Macmillan, 1991.

- Spinner, Jeff. *The Boundaries of Citizenship Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in the Liberal State*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994.
- Sweetnam, Denise L. *Kurdish Culture : A Cross-Cultural Guide*. Bonn: Culture and Science Publications, Dr. Thomas Schirmacher, 1994.
- Tanpınar, Ahmet Hamdi. *19 üncü Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*. 5th ed. Istanbul: Çağlayan Kitabevi, 1982.
- Tuglaci, Pars. *Osmanlı Döneminde İstanbul Kadınları*. Istanbul: Pars Yayın ve Ticaret Ltd Şti., 1984.
- . *Osmanlı Saray Kadınları*. Istanbul: Cem Yayınları, 1985.
- . *Ermeni Edebiyatından Seçkiler*. Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992.
- Uyguner, Muzaffer. *Sait Faik Abasıyanık : Hayatı, Sanatı, Eseri*. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1964.
- . *Reşat Nuri Güntekin : Hayatı, Sanatı, Eserleri*. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1967.
- . *Halide Edip Adivar : Hayatı, Sanatı, Eserleri*. Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1968.
- Uzun, Mehmed. "Welât-e Kheribiye." *Kurdish Studies : An International Journal*. Vol 5/1&2, 1992: 80-88.
- Ünlü, Mahir and Ömer Özcan. *20. Yüzyıl Türk Edebiyatı 1-4*. Istanbul: İnkilâp Kitabevi, 1991.
- Veinstein, Gilles (Ed). *Salonique, 1850-1918 : La ville des juifs et le reveil des Balkans*. Paris: Autrement, 1992.
- Volkan, Vamik D. and Norman Itzkowitz. *Turks and Greeks : Neighbours in Conflict*. England: Eothen Press, 1994.
- Yakar, Aytekin. *Türk Romanında Millî Mücadele*. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1973.
- Yalçın, Sıddıka Dilek. *Haldun Taner'in Hikâyeleri ve Hikâyeciliği*. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1995.
- Zürcher, Erik J. *Turkey : A Modern History*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1995.

---. *The Unionist Factor : The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1915-26.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984.



- ve Edebiyat Dergisi*. Vol. XXII [1974-76], 1977: 163-168.
- . *Halide Edib Adivar'ın Eserlerinde Doğu ve Batı Meselesi*. İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1978.
- . *Mukayeseli Edebiyat*, İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1992.
- Ergin, Osman. *Türk Maarif Tarihi*. Vol. 1, 2. İstanbul: Eser Matbaası, 1977.
- Evliya Efendi. *Travels in Europe, Asia and Africa*. Trans. Joseph von Hammer. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968.
- Finn, Robert P. *The Early Turkish Novel 1872 - 1900*. İstanbul: Isis Yayıncılık, 1984.
- Göçgün, Önder. *Türk Edebiyatı Araştırmaları*. Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1991.
- Gökalp, Ziya. *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilisation*. Trans. and ed Niyazi Berkes. London, George Allen and Unwin , 1959.
- Göksu, Saime and Edward Timms. *Romantic Communist : The Life and Work of Nazım Hikmet*. London: Hurst and Company, 1999.
- Grimm, Miller Michael. *The Karamanlı-Turkish Texts : The Historical Changes in their Script and Phonology*. Michigan: University of Michigan, 1974.
- Guest, John S. *Survival Among the Kurds : A History of the Yezidis*. London & New York: Kegan Paul International, 1993.
- Gürsel, Nedim. "Sait Faik'in Eserinde İstanbul Rum Topluluğu." [1986] (Trans. Şirin Tekeli). *Toplum ve Bilim*,. Vol. 40, 1988: 58-75.
- . "Some Jewish Characters in Modern Turkish literature." [1987] (Trans. Eric Fassin and A. Levy). In Levy, Avigdor (ed), *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*. Princeton N.J: Darwin Press, 1994. Pp 647-665.
- . "L'univers de Mario Levi : l'exil et l'écriture." In *Paysage littéraire de la Turquie contemporaine*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993. Pp. 143-149.
- Habib, İsmail. *Tanzimattanberi 1 : Edebiyat Tarihi*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1942.
- Halman, Talat Sait. (Ed). *A Dot on the Map*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana

- University, 1983.
- Hasluck, F.W. and M.M. *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*. Vols. 1&2.  
UK: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1929.
- Hassanpour, Amir. *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan 1918-1985*. San  
Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992.
- Heazell, F.N. and Margoliouth, Mrs (Ed). *Kurds and Christians* [1913]. UK: Wells  
Gardner, Darton and Co., 1984.
- Hizarcı, Suat. *Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar : Hayatı, Sanatı, Eserleri*. 2nd ed.  
Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1964.
- Kaplan, Mehmet. *Türk Edebiyatı Üzerinde Araştırmalar I*. Istanbul: Dergâh  
Yayınları, 1976.
- Kansu, Ceyhan Atuf. "Ulusal Kurtuluş Savaşı Üzerine." *Türk Dili*. Vol. 34, 1976:  
2-6.
- . "Aliye öğretmen, Ayşe Hemşire, Halide Onbaşı." *Türk Dili*. Vol. 34, 1976:  
41-48.
- Karpat, Kemal H. *Ottoman Population 1830-1914 : Demographic and Social  
Characteristics*. Wisconsin, USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985.
- Kazamias, Andreas M. *Education and the Quest for Modernity in Turkey*. London:  
Allen &Unwin, 1966.
- Kinnane, Derk. *The Kurds and Kurdistan*. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Kreyenbroek, Philip G. "Kurdish Identity and the Language Question." In Atabaki,  
Turaj and Dorleijn (Ed), *Kurdistan in Search of Ethnic Identity*. Utrecht:  
Margreet Houtsma Foundation Publications No1, 1990. Pp. 53-69.
- Kreyenbroek, Philip G. and Stefan Sperl. *The Kurds : A Contemporary Overview*.  
London: Routledge, 1991.
- Kudret, Cevdet. *Türk Edebiyatında Hikâye ve Roman 1859 - 1959* [1967]. Vol. 2.  
2nd ed. Istanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1970.
- Kurdakul, Şükran. *Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatı*. Vols 1-4. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınları,  
1992.

- Kut, A. Turgut. "Ermeni Harfleriyle Basılmış Türkçe Atasözleri Kitapları." *Türk Folkloru*. No. 53, 1983: 5-6.
- . "Ermeni Harfleriyle Basılmış Türkçe Halk Kitapları." *Halk Kültürü*. 1984/1: 69-79.
- . "Ermeni Harfleriyle Basılmış Türkçe Destanlar : 1." *Halk Kültürü*. 1984/3: 65-73.
- . "Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Telif ve Tercüme Konuları." *Beşinci Milletler Arası Türkoloji Kongresi* (Istanbul - 23-28/09/1985). Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1985. Pp. 195-214.
- . "Ermeni Harfleriyle Türkçe Basılmış Şarkı ve Kanto Mecmuaları." *Müteferrika*. Autumn 1993/1: 19-43.
- Landau, Jacob M. *Pan-Turkism in Turkey : A Study of Irredentism*. London: Hurst, 1981.
- Lee, A. Robert (Ed). *Other Britain, Other British Contemporary Multicultural Fiction*. London: Pluto Press, 1995.
- Levy, Avigdor (Ed). *The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire*. Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1992.
- Lewis, Bernard. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. 2nd ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Lodge, David (Ed). *Modern Criticism and Theory*. London: Longman, 1988.
- Lodge, David (Ed). *20th Century Criticism*. London: Longman, 1991.
- Mango, Andrew. *Atatürk*. London: John Murray, 1999.
- McCarthy, Justin. *The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire*. New York and London: New York University Press, 1983.
- McCarthy, Şimşir, Lowry, and Öke. *Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey (1912-1926)*. Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Publications, 1984.
- McDowall, David. *A Modern History of the Kurds*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1996.
- Millas, Herkül. *Türk Yunan İlişkilerine Bir Önsöz : Tencere Dibin Kara*. Istanbul: Amaç Yayıncılık, 1989.

- . "The Exchange of Populations in Turkish Literature". Paper submitted to the conference titled *The Compulsory Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey : Assessment of the Consequences of the Treaty of Lausanne Convention* at Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University: 17-20 September 1998
- . *Türk Romanı ve "Öteki" : Ulusal Kimlikte Yunan İmajı*. Istanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2000.
- Miller, Michael Grimm. *The Karamanli-Turkish Texts: The Historical Changes in Their Script and Phonology*. Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1974.
- Moran, Berna. *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış*. Vols 1-4. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1994
- Ozcan, Mesut. *Dersim (Zaza) Atasözleri*. Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 1992.
- Poole, Stanley Lane (Ed). *The People of Turkey : Twenty Years' Residence Among Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians, Turks, and Armenians*. London: John Murray, 1878.
- Potts, D.C. and D.G. Charlton. *French Thought Since 1600* [1972]. London: Methuen & Co., 1974.
- Rohat *Çağdaş Türk Edebiyatında Kürtler*. Istanbul: Fırat Yayınları, 1992.
- . *Ziya Gökalp'ın Büyük Çilesi : Kürtler*. Istanbul: Fırat Yayınları, 1992.
- . *Yaşar Kemal'in Yapıtlarında Kürt Gerçeği : Çukurova-Van Karşıtlığının Çatısı*. Istanbul: Fırat Yayınları, 1992.
- Saxokia, Tedo. "Megrel - Laz Kültüründe Akralalık, Evlenme ve Cenaze." *Tarih ve Toplum*. Vol 24, No. 140, 1995: 35-42.
- Sevilla-Sharon, Moshe. *Türkiye Yahudileri*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993.
- Shaw, Stanford J. and Ezel Kural. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. Vol II. [1977]. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Shaw, Stanford J. *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*. London: Macmillan, 1991.

- Spinner, Jeff. *The Boundaries of Citizenship Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in the Liberal State*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994.
- Sweetnam, Denise L. *Kurdish Culture : A Cross-Cultural Guide*. Bonn: Culture and Science Publications, Dr. Thomas Schirmacher, 1994.
- Tanpınar, Ahmet Hamdi. *19 üncü Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*. 5th ed. İstanbul: Çağlayan Kitabevi, 1982.
- Tuglaci, Pars. *Osmanlı Döneminde İstanbul Kadınları*. İstanbul: Pars Yayın ve Ticaret Ltd Şti., 1984.
- . *Osmanlı Saray Kadınları*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınları, 1985.
- . *Ermeni Edebiyatından Seçkiler*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992.
- Uyguner, Muzaffer. *Sait Faik Abasıyanık : Hayatı, Sanatı, Eseri*. İstanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1964.
- . *Reşat Nuri Güntekin : Hayatı, Sanatı, Eserleri*. İstanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1967.
- . *Halide Edip Adivar : Hayatı, Sanatı, Eserleri*. İstanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1968.
- Uzun, Mehmed. "Welât-e Kheribiye." *Kurdish Studies : An International Journal*. Vol 5/1&2, 1992: 80-88.
- Ünlü, Mahir and Ömer Özcan. *20. Yüzyıl Türk Edebiyatı 1-4*. İstanbul: İnkilâp Kitabevi, 1991.
- Veinstein, Gilles (Ed). *Salonique, 1850-1918 : La ville des juifs et le reveil des Balkans*. Paris: Autrement, 1992.
- Volkan, Vamik D. and Norman Itzkowitz. *Turks and Greeks : Neighbours in Conflict*. England: Eothen Press, 1994.
- Yakar, Aytekin. *Türk Romanında Millî Mücadele*. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1973.
- Yalçın, Sıddıka Dilek. *Haldun Taner'in Hikâyeleri ve Hikâyeciliği*. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1995.
- Zürcher, Erik J. *Turkey : A Modern History*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1995.



---. *The Unionist Factor : The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1915-26.* Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984.

